STARFIRE

Volume II Number 3

A Journal of the New Aeon

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CONTENTS

Foreword 7

The Magic of Folly 9
Richard Ward

Sinister Shades in Yellow 23
Alistair Coombs

The Stone of Stars 43
Oliver St. John.

Maranatha: a Blessing or a Curse? 57
Stephen Dziklewicz

"Tzaddi is not the Star" 69
Caradoc Elmet

The Aphotic Oracle 81
Daniel Lett

Nightmare Sorcery 89
Richard Gavin

The Altar 99
Peter Smith

A Very Personal Tantrum 113
Joe Claxton

Instrument of Succession: An Apology 121
Michael Staley

Supplement: A Selection of Papers from the 2004 'Thelema Beyond Crowley' Conference 125

Preface 127

Looking Forward! 129
Kenneth Grant

The Letter Killeth, But The Spirit Giveth Life 133
Michael Staley

A Hundred Years Hence 143
Martin Starr

Calling Mr. Crowley 159
Andrew Collins

The Evolution of Maat Magick 175
Margaret Ingalls

Illustrations

Serpent Sadhana — **Front Cover**
by Kyle Fite

Sin Sin Wa — **41**
by Peter Smith

Untitled — **67**
by Austin Osman Spare

Lamia — **97**
by Peter Smith

Bael — **123**
by Kyle Fite

Untitled — **141**
by Austin Osman Spare

Antarktos — **157**
by Peter Smith

Andahadna on the Tower of Maat — **169**
by Allen Holub

Crater Lake — **191**
by Peter Smith

The Dagonian Gate — **Back Cover**
by Kyle Fite

Foreword

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law

Welcome to the new issue of *Starfire*, Volume Two Number 3. As well as a diverse and scintillant array of new articles, short stories, and artwork, we are happy to include as a supplement a number of papers from the *Thelema Beyond Crowley* Conference held in London in April 2004 to mark the hundredth anniversary of the reception of *The Book of the Law*.

The more perceptive amongst us will have noticed a hiatus of quite heroic proportions between this issue and the previous one. Future issues of *Starfire* will be more frequent. In the meantime, we hope that you enjoy the present issue, in spite of the lengthy time it has spent in the oven.

As always, *Starfire* exists to serve as a conduit for Thelema, and in particular the Typhonian Gnosis as transmitted through the works of Kenneth Grant, Aleister Crowley, and before them such authors as Sir John Woodroffe and Gerald Massey. This is not to say that all of these authors are exclusively transmitting the Typhonian Gnosis; rather, that facets of the Gnosis can be glimpsed through their work to a greater or lesser degree.

A tradition is not a static thing which is passed down through a succession of adepts, but on the contrary is something which is *alive* – which is undergoing continuous development. It is thus the task of a successor to develop the work of his or her predecessor, and in turn to pass down a body of work to those coming after; this is the principle of *parampara* or spiritual lineage, and it is often seen in terms of a tradition being passed down through a succession of illustrious people. However, there is a deeper meaning, whereby the work is not necessarily passed on in this linear fashion. We each take inspiration from a variety of sources, and via the catalyst of magical and mystical experience we distil our own, necessarily idiosyncratic body of work. This becomes one influence amongst several for other initiates, who in turn assimilate and transmute it into their own work. In this way, a body of work is something dynamic, in a state of perpetual transformation and redevelopment.

This might seem somewhat anarchic, but it isn't. Crowley once remarked of Thelema that "do what thou wilt" was to bid stars to shine, vines to bear fruit, water to seek its own level, etc. Thus Thelema can be seen as self-regulation or – perhaps better – as self-fulfilment. Like the Hindu analogy of Brahma being the one actor who has forgotten that he is

playing all rôles, we are all expressions of the 93 Current with our parts to play, and in this play the Current is expressing itself through us. Thus there is no need to look upon the work of Crowley, or Grant, or Spare as being a fixed body of work before which we can only, awestruck, bend the knee; rather, we should use it as one source amongst several from which we can develop our own body of work.

Similarly, no Order has a monopoly on a body of work, whether that work is of Grant or of Crowley. Such Orders have great rôles to play, whether it is in providing a framework for the study of a particular body of work, or in facilitating the continuing development of that work. For the essence of the matter is the magical and mystical work which we undertake as individuals.

Love is the law, love under will

THE MAGIC OF FOLLY

A Brief Study of the Fool in Certain Religio-Magical Traditions

Richard Ward

THE MAGIC OF FOLLY

A Brief Study of the Fool in Certain Religio-Magical Traditions

It is said that genius is only one step away from madness. This truism is as applicable to the archetypes in magick as it is to in any other aspect of life. The character of the Fool typifies this fine division, encompassing both states of being as well as the very line that connects them. Usually depicted as male – but not exclusively so – he appears in various guises, from the Tarot card of largely western occultism, through the wisdom of the Sufi mystics, to several variants in thelemic magic and even forms in voodoo. There are themes common to all these, however, which indicate that the avatars of the Fool exist on a global level and are facets of one single archetype. First I shall look at *The Fool* Tarot card and consider its origins and changing faces.

The Fool in the Tarot

The magical image of the Fool is perhaps best exemplified and most familiar as shown in the Tarot card of the same name. This does, however, reveal only a limited aspect of a very important archetype present in many religio-magical systems throughout the world.

The earliest packs of cards bearing a significant relation to the tarot of today appeared in the middle part of the fifteenth century, the most popular being the so-called Visconti and Visconti-Sforza collections. The Fool in this pack is merely a man carrying a staff over his shoulder, dressed in raggèdy clothes. The card is also known as *The Beggar* and shows none of the associated magical elements familiar to much later packs. However, in his excellent book *The Fool and His Sceptre,* William Willeford includes a reproduction of a very different Fool card, dating from c.1453-1457 and originating from Austria. This card shows a female Fool staring at her reflection in a small hand-held mirror. Its most unusual feature, as Willeford notes, is that the reflected image differs

from the face of the Fool herself. The mirror image looks normal, whilst the female Fool has an almost demonic look to her. Elsewhere in the book, Willeford shows similar non-tarot images that depict a person staring into a mirror with a differing reflection.

I was disappointed to find no other tarot decks with similar imagery, until I came across the Tarrocchi of Mantegna collection in volume one of Stuart Kaplan's *The Encyclopaedia of Tarot*. This fascinating deck of fifty cards dates to around 1470 and is probably of Florentine or Venetian origin. The cards form five fairly distinct groups – the so-called 'Conditions of Man', 'Apollo and the Muses', the 'Liberal Arts', the 'Cosmic Principals', and the 'Firmaments of the Universe'. Amongst these, Kaplan equates some of the cards with those in the more familiar tarot of today. He identifies the first of the Mantegna cards entitled *Misero* with the Fool card. It certainly carries imagery to support his contention, in that it shows a man leaning on a staff, a dog biting at his naked leg. The card, however, is numbered one, not zero or unnumbered as in the modern packs. *Misero* simply means 'beggar' and is part of the 'Conditions of Man' group. The strange female Fool looking into the mirror is numbered card thirty-five, *Prudencia* or Prudence. The figure herself has now become two – one facing to the right, looking into a mirror supported by a winged figure; the other, a male face, looking to the left. A small dragon lurks to the right of the figure's feet. The image is reminiscent of the Roman god Janus, deity of the doorway between past and future. The Fool is the guide between worlds – past and future, day and night, light and dark – as represented by the two faces, one reflecting the other world through the mirror. The gate between the worlds is Daäth, the mirror of the Fool.

Although placed on the path between Kether and Chokmah, the Fool represents the key to the gate of Daäth, as he is that very gate. The dragon on the *Prudencia* card reveals the qlippothic realm waiting on the other side of the mirror, a dark reflection of the Tree of Life, the Tree of Death. Daäth is the false sephira, unnumbered, just like the Fool (the term *dragon*, relating to the denizens of the qlippothic realm, was popularised by Nathan of Gaza, a kabbalist and student of the work of Isaac Luria). As we progress into the earlier nineteenth century, many of the tarot packs produced were largely influenced by Court de Geblin (1728-1784), perhaps the most famous figure in the occult history of the tarot, who in 1781 wrote about the supposed Egyptian origins of the Tarot in volume eight of his monumental work *Le Monde Primitif*. The *Prudence* card loses the mirror and becomes card twelve. Of course this figure then becomes inverted and amalgamated with the hanged man, and the symbolism reversed. This is interesting, as the number of the card (twelve) is the reverse of twenty-one, a number of the Fool.

From the recognisable imagery of the *Misero* card, the Fool metamorphised into the most common depiction of the Fool in many of the tarot packs available today – that of a man, often colourfully dressed, sometimes in raggèdy clothes, about to step off a cliff. He is usually chased by a dog or other animal. The cliff might be seen as the step into the abyss, and the snapping animal as some sort of guardian or pychopomp from the other world. Awaiting his fall is another animal, usually a crocodile. The crocodile is often seen as representing the god Sebek, reinforcing the tarot's *faux* Egyptian origins. This aspect of the card, however, dates to only around 1860, when it was introduced for the first time by the French occult historian Paul Christian, and later perpetuated by the likes of Eliphas Lévi. The Egyptian connection can be traced to two men, one being the celebrated eighteenth century cartomancer Jean-Baptiste Alliette, who went by the name of Eteilla. In 1783 Eteilla published a book entitled *Manière de se récréer avec le jeu de cartes nommées tarots*. The book claimed to contain the arguments of the Book of Thoth, that famed esoteric work of ancient Egypt. As previously mentioned, Court de Gebelin had published two years earlier the eighth volume of his *Monde Primitif*, which also dealt with the Tarot seen as the Book of Thoth. It was thought that Eteilla had plagiarised his work, but this has now been shown not to have been the case.

Although the argument for connecting the origin of the Tarot with ancient Egypt is very tenuous, the figure of the Fool is definitely present there. The Jack-in-the-box, the children's toy, features the head of a Jester/Fool figure attached to a spring that flies up on opening the box. That erudite grand old man of esoteric Egyptology, Gerald Massey, in his *A Book of the Beginnings*, reveals that in Egypt the 'lively spirit' of the double horizon is the concept of the *akh* (hence 'Jack'). He identifies the *akh* with Har-Khuti, the god of the double horizon, the sum total of the Tum triad called the 'brilliant triangle which appears in the shining place' (see *A Book of the Beginnings,* Volume 1, pages 331-2). On the Tree of Life this triangle is the Supernal Triad of Kether, Chokmah and Binah, separated from the remaining seven sephiroth by Daäth, the gateway to them. *Akh,* in its full rendering *Akhet*, is derived from the Egyptian word *Ichid*, meaning 'ego', that which is transcended through Daäth (see Grant, *Nightside of Eden*, page 46). Grant shows a further connection between the Fool and ancient Egypt, identifying the fact that the zootype of the mirror universe is the ape. Massey gives the word as *Kehkeh*, meaning not just ape, but crazy man, a Fool. According to the Harris Papyrus, the crazy man or Fool dwells in the 'shrine of the seven cubits' from which he progresses to a 'shrine of eight cubits' (see *Nightside of Eden,* page 79) The seven cubits correspond to the seven lower Kabbalistic spheres before crossing the abyss. It is interesting to note that the traditional costume of the harlequin – a classic type of the Fool

– is composed of triangles. Willeford sees this in terms of either the order of chaos, or the order *in* chaos. The number of *Akh* by Hebrew gematria is twenty-one. This is the main number, other than zero, associated with *The Fool* tarot card. Many occultists such as Paul Christian, Papus (Gerald Encausse), and Eliphas Levi, have placed the card at position twenty-one in the pack between *The Judgement* and *The World* cards. To explore further the numbers of the Fool and the Book of Thoth we must look at the work of one of the world's greatest and most infamous magicians and avatars of the Fool's magical current.

An example of the Fool and the Mirror

Aleister Crowley and the Path of the Pure Fool

Crowley was not content with the largely standardised image of *The Fool* tarot card, and through the superlative artistry of Lady Frieda Harris he redesigned it to reflect a number of its avatars. Crowley, a genius often on the brink of madness who became a most brilliant magician, was well placed to explore the Fool's magical current. Thelemites will recall the famous photograph of Crowley as Fo Hi, the god of laughter from Chinese mythology. As shown in the beautiful *Book of Thoth*, Crowley reveals a number of important forms representative of the Fool. I am sure that most readers of this article are more than familiar with these forms, so a brief list as a reminder should suffice. The main colour used in Crowley's *The Fool* card is green, showing affinity with the Green man of

Spring. Crowley also shows links with the 'Great Fool' of the Celts; Percivale, the heir to the Rich Fisherman of the grail cycles; Baphomet; Dionysus Zagreus; Zeus Arrhenothelus from Greek myth; and, perhaps most importantly, Harpocrates.

Harpocrates and Pan (intrinsically linked with the Dionysian current), especially with reference to the Fool's magical current, are explored further in the Wisdom of Folly given in Crowley's *Liber Aleph*. This sublime work was written in 1918 and originally intended as a manual of magical instruction for Crowley's expected son by Soror Hilarion (Jeanne Foster). When she terminated their relationship after only a few months, Crowley was crestfallen, even though he later dismissed the relationship as an illusion and Hilarion as a deceitful woman. As she had produced no physical issue, the book then seemed in Crowley's eyes destined to relate to his 'adoptive' magical son, Charles Stansfeld Jones (Frater Achad). The work is composed of two hundred and eight verses, and is a thinly-veiled microcosm of Crowley's entire magical ethos, with special relevance to the current of the Fool. In the ninety-second verse, Crowley warns of the inherent dangers of the abyss of Choronzon, who symbolises the very nature of the Fool current, which is truth, in the context of true action without guilt. This is the very substance of "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law".

The number two hundred and eight in Hebrew gematria enumerates ABRH, 'feather', the most potent symbol of truth, the Feather of Maat. In verse one hundred and seventy-seven of *Liber Aleph*, Crowley shows this association with the Fool current: ". . . and is that Atu of Thoth whose Number is Zero, and whose name is Maat, Truth , or Maut, the Vulture, the All-Mother, being an image of Our Lady Nuit, but it is also called the Fool . . .". In many French tarot decks, the Fool is entitled *Le Mat* – a word-play on the Egyptian Maat, Truth, but one that is meaningful. Sitting at position twenty-one in the Tarot, the Fool combines Nuit, reflected in *The Universe* card, the myriad of stars and infinite space, and *The Aeon* card. In *The Book of Thoth*, Crowley regards *The Universe* as the complement of *The Fool,* as it comes at the end of all. *The Aeon* card preceding is of course Harpocrates, the babe in the egg, the babe of the abyss, the very point of creation of the Fool current, symbolising Hadit, the true will. The number of the book, CXI, one hundred and eleven, is explained, being the number of *Aleph* – the Hebrew letter assigned to *The Fool* – spelt in full. This is also one third of three hundred and thirty-three, the number of Choronzon.

In verse two hundred and three of *Liber Aleph*, Crowley emphasises the importance of the Night of Pan. It was on learning that Achad had undertaken the Oath of the Abyss, and so had entered the City of Pyramids under the Night of Pan, that Crowley became convinced that

he was worthy of *Liber Aleph*. The number of NOX, the Night of Pan, is two hundred and ten. This is the linear combination of twenty-one followed by zero – both numbers of the Fool. By combining the O and the X of NOX, we create the sigil of Nodens, the Romano-British god whose title was 'Lord of the Abyss' (see Massey, *A Book of the Beginnings)*. The X also symbolises (as is traditional) the four ways, showing the Fool's mastery of fate. The N, reflected through the mirror of Daäth, forms the first part of the Lightning Flash (of Nodens) and is also symbolic of death. The first path from Kether is to Chokmah (the path of the Fool) and its centre is Daäth. When repeated, the mirrored N forms the second part of the Flash, centred on Tiphareth (the reflection of Kether through Daäth). The O and the X are also mirrored, but as symmetrical letters they remain visually unchanged. The O is Daäth, The Night of Pan. The X reflects the phallus, the sexual element of the Fool. Crowley explains how NOX comes through 0, the gate of The Fool (see *The Book of Lies*, Weiser 1980, verse 0-1). The mirror is the tool used by the Fool to gain insight and enlightenment from the deeper self. In verse eighty-four Crowley writes: "Here then is a Theory of the Mystery of the Aeon, that I, being the Logos appointed thereunto, did create an image of my Little Universe in the Mind of the Woman of Scarlet; that is, I manifested mine whole Magical Self in her Mind. Thus then in Her, as in a mirror, have I been able to interpret myself to myself."

The "Woman of Scarlet" is of course Babalon. Her biggest devotee, magician John Whiteside Parsons, whose life was cut short by an explosion involving a phial of fulminate of mercury, adopted the magical identity of Frater 210. As Paul Rydeen points out in his *Jack Parsons and the Fall of Babalon*, this was taken from I.O.P.A.N. These are the initial letters of his magical motto – 'Thelemun Obtentum Procedero Amoris Nuptiae', signifying the attainment of will through the nuptials of love. Parsons changed the actual initials *T.O.P.A.N* to *I.O.P.A.N* from Crowley's *Hymn to Pan,* which gives the sum of two hundred and ten, reflecting the sexual current of the Fool. In verse sixty-one of *The Book of Lies*, entitled 'The Fool's Knot', Crowley explains the sexual union of the Fool as involving the formula IAO from the root IO, symbolising one and zero, the lingam and the yoni. As the commentary to the verse explains, whereas zero is the number *of The Fool*, it is also one, the value of its Hebrew letter *Aleph*. In *Liber 231*, Crowley again shows this union of I and O in A, *Aleph*, *The Fool* (See *Liber 231*, in *The Holy Books of Thelema*. See also Grant, *Nightside of Eden*). The meaning of the letter is (N)OX. In *The Temple of Solomon the King (see The Qabalah of Aleister Crowley*), Crowley assigns each sephira on the Tree of Life with a numerical value based on the numbers of the preceding sephiroth. For example, Kether = one, Chokmah is 1 + 2 = three, Binah 1 + 2 + 3 = 6, and so on. The seven spheres below Daäth again add up to two hundred and

ten. The number of Pan is sixty-one, which is also the number of *ain*, 'nothing', the number of *The Fool*.

There is no better summary of the current of the Fool than verse two hundred and seven of *Liber Aleph* which is worth quoting in its entirety:

> O My Son, in this the Colophon of mine Epistle will I recall the Title and Superscription thereof; that is, **The Book of Wisdom or Folly**. I proclaim Blessing and Worship unto Nuit Our Lady and Her Lord Hadit, for the Miracle of the Anatomy of the Child Ra-Hoor-Khuit, as it is shewed in the Design Minutum Mundum, the Tree of Life. For though Wisdom be the Second Emanation of His Essence, there is a Path to separate and to join them, the Reference thereof being Aleph, that is One indeed, but also an Hundred and Eleven in his full Orthography; to signify the Most Holy Trinity, and by Metathesis it is Thick Darkness, and Sudden Death. This is also the Number of AUM, which is AMOUN, and the Root-Sound of OMNE, or, in Greek, PAN, and it is a Number of the Sun. Yet it is the Atu of Thoth that correspondeth thereunto marked with ZERO, and its name is MAT, whereof I have spoken formerly, and its Image is The Fool. O my Son, gather thou all these Limbs together into one Body, and breathe upon it with thy Spirit, that it may live; then do thou embrace it with Lust of thy Manhood, and go in it, and know it; so shall ye be One Flesh. Now at last in the Reinforcement and Ecstasy of this Communion thou shalt wit by what Inspiration thou didst choose thy Name in the Gnosis, I mean PARZIFAL, 'der reine Thor,' the True Knight that won Kingship in Monsalvat, and made whole the Wound of Amfortas, and ordered Kundry to Right Service, and regained the Lance, and revived the Miracle of the Sangraal; yea, also upon himself did he accomplish his Word in the End: 'Höchsten Heiles Wunder! Erlösung dem Erlöser!' This is the last Word of the Song that thine Uncle Richard Wagner made for Worship of this Mystery. Understand thou this, O my Son, as I take Leave of thee in this Epistle, that the Summit of Wisdom is the Opening of the Way that leadeth unto the Crown and Essence of all, to the Soul of the Child Horus, the Lord of the Aeon. This Way is the Path of the Pure Fool.

The Alchemical Fool

In his definitive book on the Fool and its forms, Willeford gives a number of examples of the Fool displaying hermaphroditic characteristics. Nowhere is this aspect more obvious than in the science of alchemy. He reproduces a plate from Mylius' *Philosophia Reforma* which shows the *Prima Materia* from which spiritual gold is obtained. Johann Daniel Mylius was a German physician and alchemist who published the *Philosophia Reformata* in 1622. The strange and beautiful woodcut

illustrations were by Frankfort engraver Balthazar Schwan. The work also includes a rare depiction of the Black Sun (symbolic of Daäth) as part of the *nigredo* or blackening stage of the alchemical work.Willeford points out the roundness of the *Prima Materia* figure, in comparison with the often fat and misshapen images of the Fool. The androgynous figure, itself having a solar face, holds a solar baby to its breast, flanked on the right by an eagle and on the left by a dragon. As well as the traditional alchemical interpretation of the image, it can also be seen as the Fool representing the solar-phallic current, holding the child Harpocrates. The valley in which the figure stands might be seen as the abyss between the worlds. The dragon on the left can be seen as the qlippothic realm, whilst the eagle is the Higher Self or Holy Guardian Angel. In *The Magical Revival*, Kenneth Grant identifies Sut-Thoth or Sut-Typhon with Crowley's Holy Guardian Angel, as well as with Yog-Sothoth, a primeval deity featured in Lovecraft's Cthulhu mythos. If Yog-Sothoth as the Fool is somehow symbolic of the alchemical *Prima Materia*, holding the babe of the Aeon, then it follows that Azathoth (Lovecraft's "blind idiot god at the centre of chaos") represents Azoth, the alchemical solvent (see Grant, *The Magical Revival*). There is another correlation between this androgynous, Janus-type figure and Grant's Guardian of the Abyss, Choronzon-Shugal (see Grant's *Nightside of Eden*).

The Fool and the Nocturnal Worlds of H.P Lovecraft

Most readers will be familiar with the work of Howard Phillips Lovecraft, the New England horror fantasy writer whose 'Cthulhu Mythos' (a term coined by fellow author August Derleth) has not only been expanded exponentially since its genesis in the 1920s by a whole series of writers, but has been shown to have fascinating parallels with elements of Crowley's own magical system. Largely due to the work of Kenneth Grant in his essential *Typhonian Trilogies*, Lovecraftian magic exists today as a potent force.

It is a fact that many of Lovecraft's stories were inspired by his phantasmagorical dreams. Lovecraft's equivalent of the magical Fool was the deity Yog-Sothoth (often twinned with Azathoth, see above). Lovecraft grants this deity its debut in his classic story *The Dunwich Horror*, published in 1928. The story largely concerns the inbred Whateley family and their attempts to summon Yog-Sothoth from 'beyond the gate'. The text includes a passage from the supposed translation by John Dee into English of the dreaded *Necronomicon*, Lovecraft's most famous literary creation, the grimoire to end all grimoires: 'Yog-Sothoth knows the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the key and guardian of the gate. Past, present, future, all are one in Yog-Sothoth.' (see *The Dunwich Horror* in *The Haunter of the Dark and other tales*,

pages 117-118). Quite literally, the gate is Daäth, the mirror between worlds. Yog-Sothoth is sometimes depicted as a mass of blackness, signifying the abyss. At other times he is referred to as a mass of iridescent globes or spheres, just like the Kabbalistic Tree of Life/Death. As in *The Dunwich Horror*, Yog-Sothoth is always evoked using some sort of tall ring of stones or tower. This is the Tower of Koth that symbolises the entrance to the other world accessible through dreams. Yog-Sothoth is also said to be diametrically opposed to Nodens, god of the Abyss. This is an interesting concept since they may be seen as two sides of the same coin, one being a mutated dark reflection of the other – just like the depictions of the Fool looking at his altered reflection in the mirror, or the bauble or polly-dolly that he carries representing the externalisation of a part of himself. This bauble is a result of the metamorphosis of the simple club carried both by *Misero* and the Fool that Willeford shows to be a phallic emblem "seen as a symbolic form of the power behind or within the encounter between Fool and non-Fool in which the customary lines between folly and non-folly are blurred or broken." Similarly, the bells on the Fool's outfit are shown to have magical connotations, used for driving away demons or the dragons of Nathan of Gaza.

The Fool in Sufism

E. Hoffman Price, Lovecraft's collaborator in *Through the Gates of the Silver Key*, provides Yog-Sothoth with a connection to Sufism. He describes the deity as being 'Umr At-Tawil', rendered as 'The Prolonged of Life' (see *Through the Gates of the Silver Key*, in *At The Mountains of Madness and other tales*, page 517). Price was a student of oriental and eastern mythologies and religion, and would have known that *Tawil* is the Sufi word given to the encoding of hidden wisdom in religious works, particularly the Koran. Wandering Sufi mystics would often dress in patchwork rags and speak seeming nonsense to avoid secret teachings being understood by the uninitiated. In *The Fulcanelli Phenomenon*, Raynor C. Johnson argues that the word *harlequin* (signifying a colourful Fool) derives from an Arabic play on words meaning 'great door' and 'confused speech' , from the word *aglaq*, or *aglaqin*. He also points out that the Arabic word for 'patch' stems from a root which has the alternative renderings of 'Fool' (*arqu'a*) and nonsensical (*raqua*).

The most obvious personification of the divine Fool within Sufism is that of Al Khidir, literally meaning the 'green one'. Al Khidir is said to have been the first *Qutub*, meaning 'the point', and symbolic of the first point of emanation in Sufi doctrine. The tri-literal root of *Qutub* (QTB) is equal to one hundred and eleven in Hebrew Gematria, as is *Aleph*, the letter attributed by Crowley to the Fool in the Thoth tarot.

Voodoo and the Phallic Fool

The primitive sexual element of the Fool is perhaps best seen in the Voodoo *loa* Ghede. Haitian Voodoo is still a very primal religion, a hybrid of Roman Catholicism and the native faiths of the African slave coast, all bound together with twisted elements of French Kabbalah and medieval grimoire magic. Ghede stands on the night side of the cosmic mirror; his daytime counterpart Legba, *loa* of the cross-roads, stands on the other. *Veves*, the magical diagrams of Voodoo, are often symmetrical about a given line, so that they might be read by the *loa* on the other side of the cosmic mirror. Like Daäth, this mirror is a magical gateway from another realm, the realm of the gods. In *The Voodoo Gods* (page 101) Maya Deren describes Ghede thus: "If Legba was the sun, at first young, then growing old, Ghede is the master of that abyss into which the sun descends." Ghede is a phallic god in the sense that he represents sexual union without guilt, an important part of the Fool's magical current. As Deren writes: "Thus he [Ghede] introduces men to their own devil, for whoever would consider sex as a sin creates and confronts, in Ghede, his own guilt." (*The Voodoo Gods*, page 102). There are obvious parallels here to the facing of Choronzon in Thelema.

Epilogue

Most of the variants of the Fool around the world represent in some way the solar phallic current that is at the heart of Thelema, showing the true way of "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law". That which holds most of us back from crossing the abyss is the transcendence of guilt as much as ego, for the two are intrinsically linked. In the Fool we see reflected both the Holy Guardian Angel (to Crowley, Aiwass) and the lower qlippothic realms (as represented by Choronzon). The Fool is the combination of the two extremes, typified by Nuit and Hadit and the union of male and female. Only by interacting with one of the myriad archetypes of the Fool current can the mysteries of time, space and sexual freedom be fully explored. Twenty-one really is the key of the door, and I say to you: Invoke the Fool! Experience magic from another perspective – through the Fool's mirror.

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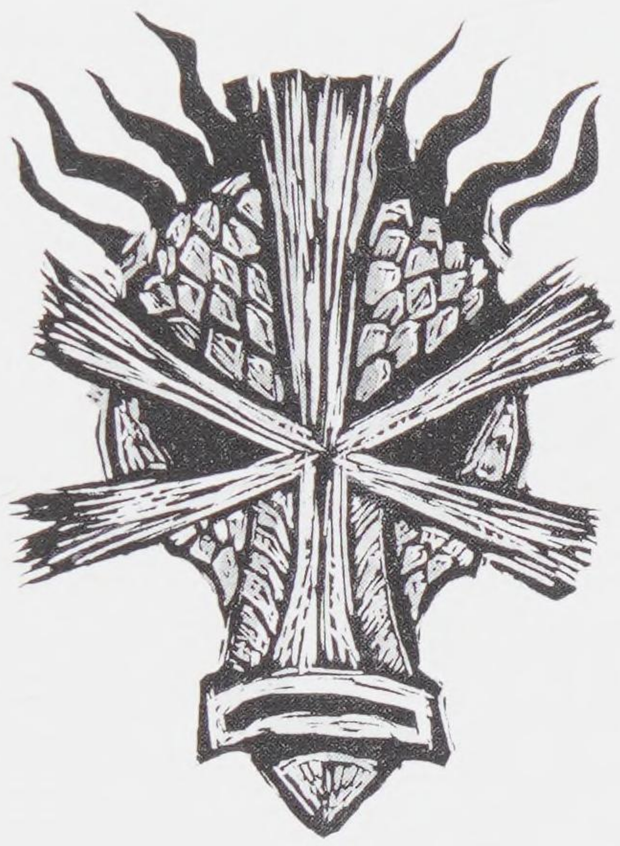
SINISTER SHADES IN YELLOW



Alistair Coombs

SINISTER SHADES IN YELLOW

Tapestries covered the four walls. There was no door visible. These tapestries were magnificently figured with golden dragons; and as the serpentine bodies gleamed and shimmered in the increasing radiance, each dragon, I thought, intertwined its glittering coils more closely with those of another. The carpet was of such richness that I stood knee-deep in its pile. And this, too, was fashioned all over with golden dragons; and they seemed to glide about amid the shadows of the design – stealthily.[1]

1. From *The Mystery of Dr. Fu Manchu* (Methuen, London, 1913).

Commenting on the fictional works of Bulwer Lytton such as *Zanoni*, *A Strange Story* and *The Coming Race*, A.P. Sinnett commended fiction as a viable and effective medium for the communication of occult ideas. With the ideas being presented to the reader in this less prosaic form provided by the novel, Sinnett wrote of Lytton's methods: "*he preferred to throw out his information in a veiled and mystic shape, so that it would be intelligible to readers in sympathy with himself, and would blow unnoticed past the commonplace understanding without awakening angry rejection*".[2]

2. A.P. Sinnett, *The Occult World* (Theosophical Publishing House, London, 1881; reprinted 1984), page 20.

Over the ensuing years since this was written, the idea has developed into increasingly diverse and subtle directions. The occultist Kenneth Grant gives a more recent and formulaic example, where "*the ritualists of New Isis Lodge utilized certain novels and stories as other magicians might use paintings or musical compositions to effect perichoresis and astral encounters*".[3]

3. Kenneth Grant, *The Ninth Arch* (Starfire Publishing Ltd., London, 2002), page xxxvi.

Sax Rohmer was a unique pioneer in the field of fiction, though much maligned and discredited today. A highly prolific writer, and for a short period one of the most well-paid in the world, Rohmer departed his

earthly career with an extensive repertoire of forty-one novels, eleven collections of short stories, and two non-fiction books – one of which is the popular *Romance of Sorcery*, generally considered a minor classic and esteemed today largely for its brief but fascinating account of Apollonius of Tyana.

Like several other writers in the mystery-occult genre, some of Rohmer's life experiences were no less fantastic or phantasmagoric than those expressed in his fiction.

He was born Arthur Henry Ward in 1883 of Irish parentage, his family moving from Ireland to Birmingham, then eventually to London, when Rohmer was three years old. His mother was a chronic alcoholic; his father, an office clerk, was condemned to long working hours in a bid to support the family, a struggle financially as well as morally. His wife, Elizabeth Rohmer, recounted one of Sax's earliest impressions of his mother: "*a gaunt, hollow-eyed wraith that sometimes crept silently into his room and there, by fluttering candlelight, babbled out incoherent tales of goblins and ghouls*".[4]

4. Cay Van Ash, *Master of Villainy* – A Biography of Sax Rohmer (Tom Stacy, London, 1972) page 14.

Rather than feeling detached and estranged as a result of his disjointed upbringing, Rohmer, especially in later years, was actually very thankful for it. He did, however, suffer from some considerably pronounced symptoms of somnambulism. On one occasion his father had to prevent him from hurling himself from an open window; on another, he fought violently with his father, nearly strangling him. The symptoms persisted in no small degree into his later years, when he nearly strangled his wife; and, on a less aggressive occasion, he accidentally awoke her when he was searching for a spider amidst the bedclothes. His wife was witness to numerous other disturbances during the night, when he would get up and patrol the grounds of the house, thinking that an intruder was at large. During his early boyhood he was also one of the uncommon recipients of the recurring dream. In the dream, he and his father would walk along cliff tops by a sea, eventually to traverse a tunnel lit by candles that led into the cliffs. After passing an oaken door they would find themselves beneath what he thought to be some kind of house, whence his father would urgently make a sign for silence.

Rohmer recalled his years at school as being perfunctory and boring. He thought this was due in no small part to the mundane nature of the subjects. He saw little point in the systematic absorption and reproduction of a known and common knowledge, finding it restrictive to his imagination and lessening his powers of direct observation. Feeling discontent with the prospects of becoming an ignoramus, however, he learnt the subjects at hand and came out about average. He developed his own extra-curriculum into areas of ancient religions, bizarre cults,

uncommon poisons, insects and reptiles, organic chemistry, Egyptology and the occult in general. He also underwent a certain flowering that resulted in a sustained interest towards Islam. Rohmer was not overtly religious, so this interest was perhaps more to do with the Eastern lands and barbarous mystique associated with this religion at the time. It is unsurprising then that the life and works of Sir Richard Burton were an early source of inspiration to him. It is interesting to note, however, that few of his later fictional characters seeped through from this particular source. Unlike Lovecraft's dream-Arab Abdul Alhazred – and many another character spawned by writers in the genre – the persona of Rohmer's principal 'spirit-guide' did not originate from an early source of inspiration, but was synthesised almost entirely from his own later experiences with real, and very sinister, underworld criminals.

Besides Burton's *Arabian Nights*, another work that held a prominent place on his bookshelf at the time was E.W. Lane's *Manners & Customs of the Modern Egyptians*. This work, alongside a subsequent trip to the region, would provide some of the various scenic backdrops and magical formulae featured in Rohmer's eidetic pastiche, *Tales of Secret Egypt*.

After leaving school, and failing an exam for a colonial appointment for the civil service, he worked for a short while as a bank clerk on Threadneedle Street, but was dismissed from this position shortly after hypnotising a work colleague with a ruler. It was around this time of unemployment that he first considered making his living as a writer. He wrote a profuse number of short stories, trying to sell them to the literary magazines of the day, but his initial attempts failed.

There followed a brief sojourn on Fleet Street, where he tried his hand at journalism. Whilst naturally finding this a highly unsuitable medium for his ideas, he nonetheless acquired a journalistic skill for transforming his ideas and imaginings into a form that would signal a factual 'reality' type of appeal, making fictionalised characters and occurrences more imposing to his readers. After leaving Fleet Street and journalism, he made no further attempts at employment. The first two stories he sold were *The Mysterious Mummy* and *The Leopard Couch*, published (in 1903) in 'Pearson's Magazine' and 'Chamber's Journal' respectively.

Shortly after setting to work on his first novel, *Zalithea* (a romance set in ancient Egypt, and later to manifest as *She Who Sleeps*) a curious incident occurred. Becoming agitated on arriving at a certain point in the story where he thought his knowledge insufficient to complete the detail, in frustration he abandoned all attempts at it and went to bed. During a remarkably vivid lucid dream, he found himself a guest at an Egyptian banquet situated in an open-air courtyard. He wandered amongst the congregation with impunity, nobody at first seeming to notice him.

People were paler-skinned than he had previously imagined, and their language was incomprehensible to him:

> Brilliant moonlight flooded the garden upon which one side of the canopy opened, and a number of lamps were set in niches in the wall. There was a painted or finely-embroidered curtain draping an opening almost directly in front of me, and at the moment that a chord of music came from this direction (several harps, apparently, and some reed instrument resembling an oboe) I realized that the company was exclusively masculine.

From behind the curtain a dancing girl emerged, moving towards him in a series of elusively symbolic postures:

> She wore a violet coloured robe of transparent gauze, which merely accentuated the lines of her body and limbs; arms and shoulders were bare, and she wore many bangles. An apparently endless chain of tiny pink flowers was wound around her hair, around her shoulders and waist, and terminated in a sort of floral girdle.

He noticed that her eyelids and lashes were heavy with a black make-up, or Kohl; her toes and nails were varnished, and her hair was dyed a lusterless red. Slowly becoming entranced by a curious perfume emitted from the swinging rope of flowers, he awoke and found himself sitting upright in bed, a stream of moonlight illuminating the room. The scene had gone but the manifestation of the 'residuum' continued:

> She was substantial as any woman of flesh and blood, and she watched me with a set smile. The faint perfume was still perceptible.[5]

5. From *Pipe Dreams* (a series of autobiographical sketches featured in *Empire News*, 1938).

He could hear the sound of her feet and bangles as she gyrated on the carpet towards him, becoming ever more tenuous before finally vanishing in a silvery shimmering vapor. He was unsure as to how long the manifestation actually lasted, as he was terrified and bordering on insanity while it occurred. Years after the event, a few of the major excavations having taken place in Egypt, Rohmer found the details he had observed in the courtyard to be authentic in almost every way.

It was shortly after the incident of the dancing girl – perhaps as a direct result of it – that he joined various magical societies. One of these was *The Golden Dawn*, where he knew but apparently disliked Aleister Crowley. Another was a group akin to the Rosicrucians, Rudyard Kipling being a co-member.[6] It is difficult to estimate what his activities entailed or how much he learnt from the involvement, as he faithfully guarded their secrets – even from his wife. It is known that he maintained a practical interest in necromancy, autohypnosis and astral exploration, more or less throughout his life. His later friend and biographer Cay Van Ash noted that he was occasionally subject to unusual eye spasms, his

6. *Master of Villainy*, page 29.

eyes recoiling until only the whites were showing, like a man seized by possession. His wife for instance thought – having once caught a glimpse of it – that his astral reflection resembled the sort of villainous devils he fictionalised. It is also possible that he was one of the very few occidental members of an obscure Chinese occult society, known under one of its many different guises as the 'Cult of the Ku', which was active in London during the nineteen-twenties.[7] The person who introduced him to some of these societies was friend and family doctor, Dr. R. W. Councell, author of *Apologia Alchymiae* (a treatise on modern alchemy), for which Rohmer would later write the preface.

Over the next decade he sold a handful of stories here and there. He also tried his hand at playwriting, for which he certainly had a passion; it unfortunately proved financially unsuccessful at that point. He married his partner Elizabeth, and despite a couple of persisting affairs, initiated by Sax, their marriage lasted for fifty years.

When house-hunting together, they came across a property that was uncanny to say the least. The windows on the top floor of the building were secured with iron bars, whilst the doors opened and closed autonomously. The walls carried horrifying sketches of writhing ghoulish images, misshapen and distorted human figures – appearing much like strewn pages from an ancient necromantic grimoire.[8] They eventually found and moved to an address in Herne Hill, a residence to be visited often by bailiffs and debt-collectors, due to early, and sporadically ongoing, financial instabilities.

Rohmer believed his wife to possess psychic abilities. Amidst the mounting bills, and the threat of destitution becoming a harsh reality for them both, Rohmer asked his wife to consult an oujia board to find out how best he might make a living. The letters repeatedly spelt out C-H-I-N-A-M-A-N, which suggests that the shadowy adept from aeons past, from which the character of Fu Manchu developed, was already beginning to intrude into Rohmer's imagination. When the intrusion impressed itself more forcibly, it was no coincidence that Rohmer was rather fortuitously commissioned to write an article on the Limehouse district of London, detailing the activities of an elusive 'Mr. King' – an arch-criminal and head of an underworld but widely-globalised order. A vital contact he acquired in this endeavor was Fong Wah[9] who, after Rohmer's many late-night excursions into Limehouse, risking life and limb, finally hinted at where he might be able to catch a glimpse of the elusive individual, which he did:

> The night was foggy and, down by the riverside, an unwholesome night to hang about. I took up my position in a narrow alley, from the mouth of which I had an unobstructed view. I waited. The headlamps of a

7. For a description of 'The Cult of the Ku', see *Cults of the Shadow* by Kenneth Grant (Muller, London, 1975; Skoob Publishing, London, 1994), page 202. See also *The Ninth Arch*, various citations.

8. *Master of Villainy*, page 67.

9. It seems likely that Rohmer's character Sin Sin Wa was built upon this strange individual who, according to Rohmer, was the former executioner of Hankow. He also appears as Sam King in one of Rohmer's short stories, 'Limehouse Rhapsody'.

glossy limousine coming from the direction of Commercial Road East lighted up the dark, narrow street. I ducked back into the shelter of my alley as the car pulled up before the house indicated by Fong Wah. A uniformed chauffeur – some kind of asiatic – jumped out smartly and opened the car door for his passengers. A light appeared in the lower window of the house. The street door was thrown open. A tall, dignified Chinese, wearing a fur-collared overcoat and a fur cap, alighted and walked in. He was followed by an Arab girl wrapped in a grey fur cloak. I had a glimpse of her features. She was like something from an Edmund Dulac illustration to *The Thousand and One Nights*.

The door closed. The light in the window disappeared. The chauffeur jumped to his seat and backed out swiftly, as he had no room to turn.

Was it 'Mr. King'? I don't know, and it doesn't matter. I knew that I had seen Dr Fu Manchu! His face was the living embodiment of Satan.

One of Rohmer's first fictional encounters with Dr. Fu Manchu runs thus:

> He came forward with an indescribable gait, cat-like yet awkward, carrying his high shoulders almost hunched. He placed the lantern in a niche in the wall, never turning away the reptilian gaze of those eyes which must haunt my dreams forever. They possessed a viridescence which hitherto I had only supposed possible in the eye of the cat – and the film intermittently clouded their brightness – but I can speak of them no more.[10]

10. From *The Mystery of Dr. Fu Manchu*.

In later years, Rohmer remarked upon the development of the character:

> Little by little, that night and on many more nights, I built up Dr. Fu Manchu, until at last I could both see and hear him. His knowledge of science surpassed that of any scientist in the western world. He controlled every secret society in the east. I seemed to hear a sibilant voice saying, "It is your belief that you have made me, it is mine that I shall live when you are smoke".
>
> So, you see, I had really brought something into being. I had set Dr. Fu Manchu out upon his great march to conquer the western world. Since thoughts are things, perhaps in my extravagance I had made something not far short of what the future may hold.

Whilst Fu Manchu has become a household name, ranking alongside Moriarty, Dracula, etc, its creator 'Sax Rohmer' has barely survived in quite the same way; so the idea, or *entity*, was correct about outliving its creator. Moreover, in terms of literary 'creation', it is hard to imagine anybody creating an oriental arch-villain that would not in some ways draw upon this barometer of a character, or his exploits.

It is interesting to note that in 1874 H.P. Blavatsky was in spirit-

communication with a 'Mr. King' during her stay at Irving Place in New York. Henry S. Olcott (close friend of Blavatsky and founding member of the Theosophical Society) thought the phenomena produced by Mr. King to be of no discarnate *human* spirit.[11] The writer, poet and artist Clark Ashton Smith appears to have apprehended similar nuances that well express the inner-plane provenance of Dr. Fu Manchu, as depicted in his leering portrait of *Avalzant*.[12] Some of the hideously-deformed Asiatics sketched by Crowley during artistic outpourings appear to be of a kindred source.

11. David Caldwell, *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky* (Quest Books, 2000), page 54.

12. See Dennis Rickard's *The Fantastic Art of Clark Ashton Smith* (Mirage Press, Baltimore, U.S.A., 1973).

The Fu Manchu sagas, written over a period of forty years, total thirteen independent episodes – each composed of semi-independent serialisations – that began with *The Zayat Kiss*, published by Methuen in 1913 as *The Mystery of Dr Fu Manchu*. Notwithstanding the undeniable fact that some of these episodes do not comprise his greatest work, and disregarding also some of the appalling marketing representations of their main character, they do nonetheless contain some beautiful sketches, and are in themselves immense storehouses of weird ideas and images. Had they not been so commercially orientated when they were written – initially in his attempt to fend off the encroaching bailiff fraternity – they would doubtless have matured over time, eventually to germinate in material more conducive to Rohmer's own mental arrangements, with the ideas intruding upon the imagination of the reader more effectively.

The vast majority of Rohmer's fiendish villains can in many ways be seen as varying facets that all stem from the initial impulse. They all possess intransigently scheming intelligences, and powers of the will that are vastly developed. Bent on the overthrow of the affairs of mankind by the domination of world governments, they are armed with exotic arsenals of hypnotism, dream-telepathy, garish murder gangs, hallucinogens, venomous creatures of a hybrid order, and nightmarish ghoul assassins. The rare encounters with them, if they occur at all, are preceded by mysterious or catastrophic events, the villains themselves appearing like spectres from a wild hallucination.

Nayland Smith, together with his associate Dr. Petrie – the somewhat bumbling representatives of clean British efficiency – seek repeatedly to thwart Fu Manchu's insidious shadow forces which are set to assume control of the world scheme. Some of the remarks made by Smith and Petrie regarding their opponent have led some academics to speculate that Rohmer's fear of impending invasion from 'the yellow peril' was nothing more than staunch racism. They are totally wrong in this opinion. It is fair to say that Rohmer exaggerated the national concerns of the day into episodes of his fiction in order to make a living from his work, giving him the artistic freedom he so longed for, while in a creative

sense attempting to clothe his creations in a form tangible to the general public. Rohmer also had a profound respect for world cultures and a general love of things ethnic, while his spiritual inclinations led him to believe he had previously been incarnated in Eastern lands more than once. Moreover, such critics fail to recognise that these recurring invasions, as expressed through the gamut of the 'xenophobic' artistic sphere – from a Lovecraftian nightmare to a Wagnerian opera – may well be inspired from other, more unconscious sources that operate far beyond faculties of conscious deliberation or ethnic distinction. They are the perturbations of a proximity to other worlds and their denizens, sensed – sometimes only vaguely – by individuals whose sensitivity is extended somewhat beyond the normal.

Some of Rohmer's works connected with the Oriental genre are *The Yellow Claw*, *The Golden Scorpion*, *Yu'an Hee See Laughs*, and *Dope*.

The Yellow Claw is surely one of Rohmer's masterpieces. The narrative follows investigations into the activities of an opium syndicate (headed by Mr. King) that run a premiere-class smoking-den situated deep below the streets of some unknown address in Limehouse. The den slowly reveals itself as an underground web of mysteriously-shifting rooms and passages, featuring moving tapestries, showers of floating rose-petals and an ancient library; all redolent of some sinister fairy world. Amidst the cracking pace and gripping scenarios are some of the most gorgeous images ever to have been evoked in Rohmer's fiction. An undercover agent notes well the uncanny ambience of one of the den's many rooms:

> Some sinister and definitely malignant intelligence was focused upon him – or was it a chimera of his imagination? Could it be now that he had become en rapport with the thought-forms created in that chamber by its successive occupants?
>
> Scores, perhaps hundreds of brains had there partaken of the unholy sacrament of opium; thousands, millions of obscene carnivals had trailed in impish procession about that bed. He knew enough of the creative power of thought to be aware that a sensitive mind coming into contact with such an atmosphere could not fail to respond in some degree to the suggestions, to the elemental hypnosis of the place.[13]

13. From *The Yellow Claw* (Methuen, London, 1915).

The narrative in *The Golden Scorpion* follows investigations into a sinister Chinese organization headed by a somewhat mysterious Fo-Hi (the Scorpion), with whom encounters are rare and unique:

> "It wanted but a few minutes to sunset, and I was anxious to get back to my quarters before dusk fell. Therefore I hurried up my boy, who was drawing the rickshaw, telling him to cross the Canal by the Wu-Men Bridge. He ran fleetly in that direction, and we were actually come to

the steep acclivity of the bridge, when suddenly the boy dropped the shafts and fell down on his knees, hiding his face in his hands.

"'Shut your eyes tightly, master!' he whispered, 'The Scorpion is coming!'

"I stared down at him in amazement, as was natural, and not a little angrily; for his sudden action had almost pitched me on my head. But there he crouched, immovable, and staring up the slope I saw that it was entirely deserted except for one strange figure at that moment crossing the crown of the bridge and approaching. It was the figure of a tall and dignified Chinaman, or of one who wore the dress of a Chinaman. For the extraordinary thing about the stranger's appearance was this: he also wore a thick green veil!"

"Covering his face?"

"So as to cover his face completely. I was staring at him in wonder, when the boy, seeming to divine the other's approach, whispered, 'Turn your head away! Turn your head away!'

". . . Here's the odd thing, though: I could never induce him to speak a word on the subject afterwards! I bullied him and bribed him, but all to no purpose. And although I must have asked more than a hundred Chinamen in every station of society from mandarin to mendicant, 'Who or what is *The Scorpion?*', one and all looked stupid, blandly assuring me that they did not know what I meant."

A 'Sublime Order' headed by the Scorpion is responsible for kidnapping many leading European scientists and then using their minds, through hypnosis, for plans concerning a world regeneration. The idea is certainly not a new one. Blavatsky, following the advice of Olcott and Sinnett, when she attempted to lure and capture the minds of influential intelligentsia with astral bells and materializing teacups, employed a similar tactic. Unfortunately her detractors (even now) detected no means to an end behind these stratagems and so naturally failed to get the bigger picture. In *The Romance of Sorcery* Rohmer identifies very accurately the sort of weaponry Blavatsky needed to adopt in order to get her ideas across to the global public.

> *Proof* is what a skeptical world awaits. According to Mrs. Annie Besant a great adept appears once in every century [from every 75th year according to Blavatsky] whose task it is to guide humanity a little further onward to a hidden goal. The next of these should bear in mind poor childish mankind's crying need of something tangible – something to grasp.

Dope, whilst conveying no overt supernatural details, nevertheless conjures to mind a strangely eerie dreamscape of some of the shadier

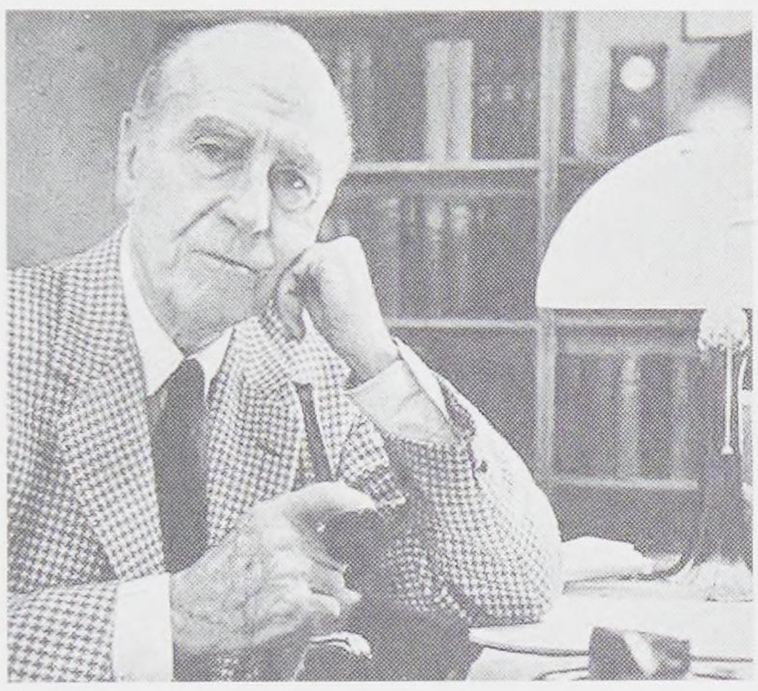
areas of London during 1918. The scenes enacted in it, by way of symbolic ornamentation, and by its overall sequence of presenting different images to the imagination, echo to mind some sort of ancient mystery play. The criminous protagonist, Sin Sin Wa, is somewhat removed from the amoral ruthlessness characterised by virtually all of Rohmer's other villains. He emerges as a trickster-type entity and is, evidently, more in touch with the human plane of emotions and mediumistic sensitivity.

Acquired from the novel *Dope* is a vast occurrence of symbols and characters that emerged in *OKBISh* (*The Book of the Spider*) – a transmission received by *New Isis Lodge* in London during the nineteen-fifties. In fact, it might be fair to suggest that *Dope* formed part of the psychic-mental collage (or astral web) through which much of the transmission was revealed to the Lodge. Interestingly, there are faint and perhaps less obvious similarities between some of the symbols and images featured in *Dope*, and those communicated in the course of the Amalantrah Working of Crowley and others in 1918. For instance, 'the lady of our dreams', a synonym in the Record of the Amalantrah Working for the use of opium, can be compared to the character of Lola Sin in *Dope*. Again, the motif of a camel – glyphed throughout the Working as the often-drugged Roddie Minor, the Camel – brings to mind the hallucinated desert so vividly described in the lengthy opium vision of Rita in the novel. The Palm Tree of the Amalantrah Working is echoed, again in Rita's opium vision – 'in the shade of a lonely palm'. There is perhaps even an echo of the wizard Amalantrah – who declared himself 'part of the Tao' – in the novel's principal character, the sagacious and somewhat oracular Chinaman, Sin Sin Wa. The use of the vision-inducing drug, opium, bears a relation to both working and novel. *Dope* was written in the autumn of 1918, the year of the Amalantrah Working. This is not to suggest that Rohmer was aware of the Amalantrah Working and wove elements of it consciously into his novel. What it does illustrate, though, is that powerful events such as those which found expression in the Amalantrah Working can resonate widely, its echoes rippling outwards, infiltrating and colouring the work of artists and sensitives in other fields.

The initial publication of Fu Manchu afforded Rohmer and his wife a long-belated honeymoon in Egypt. By sheer coincidence, or *kismet* as he would have termed it, Rohmer met and befriended Rex Engelbach (senior Egyptologist and a former curator of the Cairo Museum). The relationship provided Rohmer an opportunity – which, at the time, would otherwise have been an impossibility – to visit the mysterious 'false pyramid' of Meydum, much feared by native Arabs for sheltering an ancient black magic. Rohmer's experience of the pyramid, and of a subsequent cocktail party at the Shepard's Hotel, provided some of the

dramatic scenery featured in his novel *Brood of the Witch Queen* – which gained a mention in H.P. Lovecraft's *Supernatural Horror in Literature* – about the wrathful resurrection of an ancient demoness.

Despite the gruesome violence featured in some of his stories, Rohmer naturally found the mass slaughter, such as occasioned by the First World War, both abhorrent and needless. So, during his brief service in the Officers Training Corps, he set about a number of plans aiming at the assassination of Hindenburg, Ludendorff and other integral members of the German high-command at the time. Not surprisingly, but perhaps to the loss of tens of thousands of lives, the plans were never adopted by the Ministry of Defence. The plans did not, however, pass entirely unnoticed, as they won him entrance to a department in Military Intelligence. What his activities were or what operations he might have been involved in is still, at present, unknown, although it seems likely that he was concocting propaganda. His position continued until some time after the war.



Sax Rohmer in his later years

The Rohmers eventually left Herne Hill and moved to an address on Bruton Street in Mayfair, a residence that was subject to a malign ghostly activity. This was possibly due, Rohmer thought, to its previous history of being an infamous gambling den during the Regency years. The house, along with virtually the whole block, was sadly demolished during the Second World War. Over the ensuing decades, Rohmer was making a regular appearance on the fiction market, with his literary influence extending to both sides of the Atlantic. Some of the works written during this time were *The Orchard of Tears*, *The Dream Detective*, *Bat-Wing*, *Fire-Tongue*, and *Grey Face*.

The Orchard of Tears is termed by Cay Van Ash (Rohmer's friend and biographer) as a Theosophical novel. It is an enticing, but at times very solemn story depicting one man's outer and inner discovery of why 'The Mysteries' must, in our present day, remain a locked door to the mass of humanity. The novel is a good example of the non-commercial material Rohmer really wanted to write, which he was seldom able to do. A furtive dream from the novel is worth mentioning, as it expresses Rohmer's view about all world religions being interconnected, a theme that features throughout the novel:

> He passed thence to the banks of Egypt's Nile, and heard the lamentations of priests and wailing of women as a black ox, flower bedecked and wearing a collar encrusted with gems, was drowned in the turgid stream. Time and space ceased to exist for him. Through the murk of cavernous passages he paced, pausing before a pit in which reposed a sarcophagus of huge dimensions: and when the dim company and he had paid tribute to that which lay there, all ascended to a temple, lofty and awesome, its dizzy roof upheld by aisles of monstrous granite. To an accompaniment of sorrowful chanting, the doors of the altar were opened, and within upon the shrine rested a square-hewn statue. Jewelled lamps glowed and censers smoked before the image of the bull, Apis.
>
> The sistrums called him to a shrine of Isis, where *Kyphi* was burning, and priestesses, fair royal virgins, made lotus offerings to the mother of light; but magic of old Nileland might not withhold him from the Rites of Ceres when the *Hymn to Demeter* arose within those wonder halls of Ictinus. He saw the blood of a white kid flow upon the altar of Diana at Ephesus and with his own hands laid poppy and dittany at the pearly feet of the Huntress. *The Lament for Adonis* wooed him to the Temple of the Moon, the *Hymn to Ra* won him back to Egypt's god of gods. He lighted *Tsan Ihang*, sweet perfume of Tibet, before Gautama Buddha in Canton's Temple of Five Hundred Ginns and kissed the sacred covering of the Kaaba at Mecca.

The Dream Detective is a collection of ten short stories introducing the eccentric freelance detective Moris Klaw, who uses his ajnic-eye to pick up psychic transmissions in the solving of crimes. By autohypnosis, he allows the astral ambience of the location to reproduce images in his mind of what happened. Following in the train of Sherlock Holmes, the character of Moris Klaw answers to many other sleuths in occult fiction, such as Algernon Blackwood's psychic detective Dr. Silence, Dion Fortune's Dr. Tavener, and one of Aleister Crowley's idealised self-projections – Simon Iff. In distinction to Silence's occult knowledge, Tavener's depth psychology and Iff's non-action, Moris Klaw's methods involve etheric sensitivity and vibration. Klaw explains the theoretical basis for this:

> First: all crime operates in cycles. Its history repeats itself, you understand. Second: thoughts are things. One who dies the violent death has, at the end, a strong mental emotion – an etheric storm. The air – the atmosphere – retains imprints of that storm.[14]

14. From *The Dream Detective* (Jarrolds, London, 1920).

Bat-Wing and *Fire-Tongue* are impossible crime stories with suggestive occult overtones. Whilst writing these two novels, Rohmer devised a unique and compelling way of plotting a detective story. He would first think up a crime scenario, and debar the slightest possibility of any normal human agency as having had a perpetrating hand in it; he would then assume the rôle of the detective and try to solve the mystery by whatever clues he had inadvertently left whilst writing it. On one rather significant occasion in his career, when he was writing *Fire-Tongue* in serialisations for Colliers, the technique backfired horrendously when he just couldn't find any solutions – and Colliers had already published the first few installments. According to literary mythology, it was his friend Harry Houdini who helped him escape his predicament, by assisting with the plot and supplying him with a plausible solution.

Grey Face is interesting because it is one of the few of his occult novels or stories where no intimation of material causes or mechanistic device is made. It is about the reincarnation of Cagliostro and his devious dream-invading methods of controlling people. It features some wonderfully eerie scenery, and hypnotic portrayals of thought-forms and *objects d' art*.

Another novel he wrote, slightly later than the foregoing, was *The Day The World Ended*, a unique novel by Rohmer as it falls under the umbrella of science fiction. Set in the Black Forest region of Germany, it is about a deformed dwarf who sees himself as an agent of global karmic fate. Along with a secret scientific community, he prepares to decrease the world's human population. Their centre of operations lies deep within an ancient fortress surrounded by desolate woods, patrolled by hybridised ghouls and gigantic vampire bats. The ideas, for the time, were strikingly original.

Due to a sudden decline of income, in which one of Rohmer's dubious literary agents had no small part to play, Rohmer again tried his hand at playwriting. Two productions that he had co-written had a brief success. *Round in Fifty* is a humorous take on Jules Verne's romance, and *The Eye of Shiva* is a mystery drama of a sort. They were staged at the London Hippodrome and New Theatre. He also wrote another play, or 'masque with music' as it was sometimes termed, called *Wulfheim*, a curious concoction of incest, Satanism and Theosophy. It showed strong prospects of being staged in Germany, but never was, due to the outbreak of the Second World War. In fact, the Gestapo subsequently suppressed

all of Rohmer's works. *Wulfheim* was eventually published under the pseudonym of Michael Furey; composed entirely in literary prose, it is a particularly interesting example of the different styles of which he was capable.

The Rohmers travelled back to Cairo and thence on to Damascus, Baalbek and Aleppo. During his stay in Baalbek, Rohmer occasioned upon meeting a German archeological team who were excavating what had formerly been a temple of the ancient Babylonian deity Baal. They claimed to have discovered an uninterrupted line of priests and priestesses stemming from the temple's original inception of Baal. This somewhat unusual piece of information most probably inspired one of Rohmer's later novels *The Bat Flies Low*. This story, although set mostly in Egypt and the Sahara, concerns a secret society that has survived the ages from a remote period in pre-history, and who have in their possession certain 'lamps' – utilised for the storage and use of solar energies.

The Rohmers also travelled to Jamaica, Cristobal and Haiti. Whilst searching for some material on Voudon to feature in one of his stories, he eventually witnessed a rite in Jamaica, but soon left after feeling wholly unimpressed by it. Whilst in Haiti he took to the wild atmosphere of Port-au-Prince, but his programme of research ended abruptly as he was met with a curious suspicion from the natives. There was a peculiar incident that happened in their hotel room one night, which one of Rohmer's earlier somnambulistic episodes seems to have anticipated rather well. Some sort of spider or large insect terrorised his wife after slipping past the mosquito net and cavorting all over the bed making a strange snapping sound. Rohmer was so impressed with the incident that it would feature in *The Island of Fu Manchu* (a novel inspired by his Haitian trip) as 'the snapping fingers' – one of the Dr.'s agents of death.

Eventually, the Rohmers moved into 'Little Gatton', a house they designed together, in the Surrey Hills. At first, there seemed to be nothing unusual about the property other than its gargantuan size. Its immediate outskirts, however, seemed under the sway of an exceptionally morbid influence. A young girl who was employed at the house thought it somehow resembled a graveyard, and only a few weeks after saying this was killed in a car accident outside the house. Not long afterwards, two boys were killed in another car accident. In one of the neighbouring houses a young girl burnt to death, while from one of the other neighboring houses a man shot himself. A local gardener committed suicide, and from the nearest neighboring house a young lady died on a boat set for Egypt.[15] In relation to 'Little Gatton' there is a curious verse from *OKBISh* worth mentioning:

15. *Master of Villainy*, page 246.

> O dark and dusky nostalgias of the 'forties when the warrior lord rampaged unchecked, and the lights above little Olney Court ... [Little Gatton ...] were more than the lights of shells.[16]

After a professionally-organised scandal involving a large proportion of Fu Manchu copyrights, the Rohmers lived in comparatively modest circumstances throughout the rest of their lives. He died June 1st 1959.

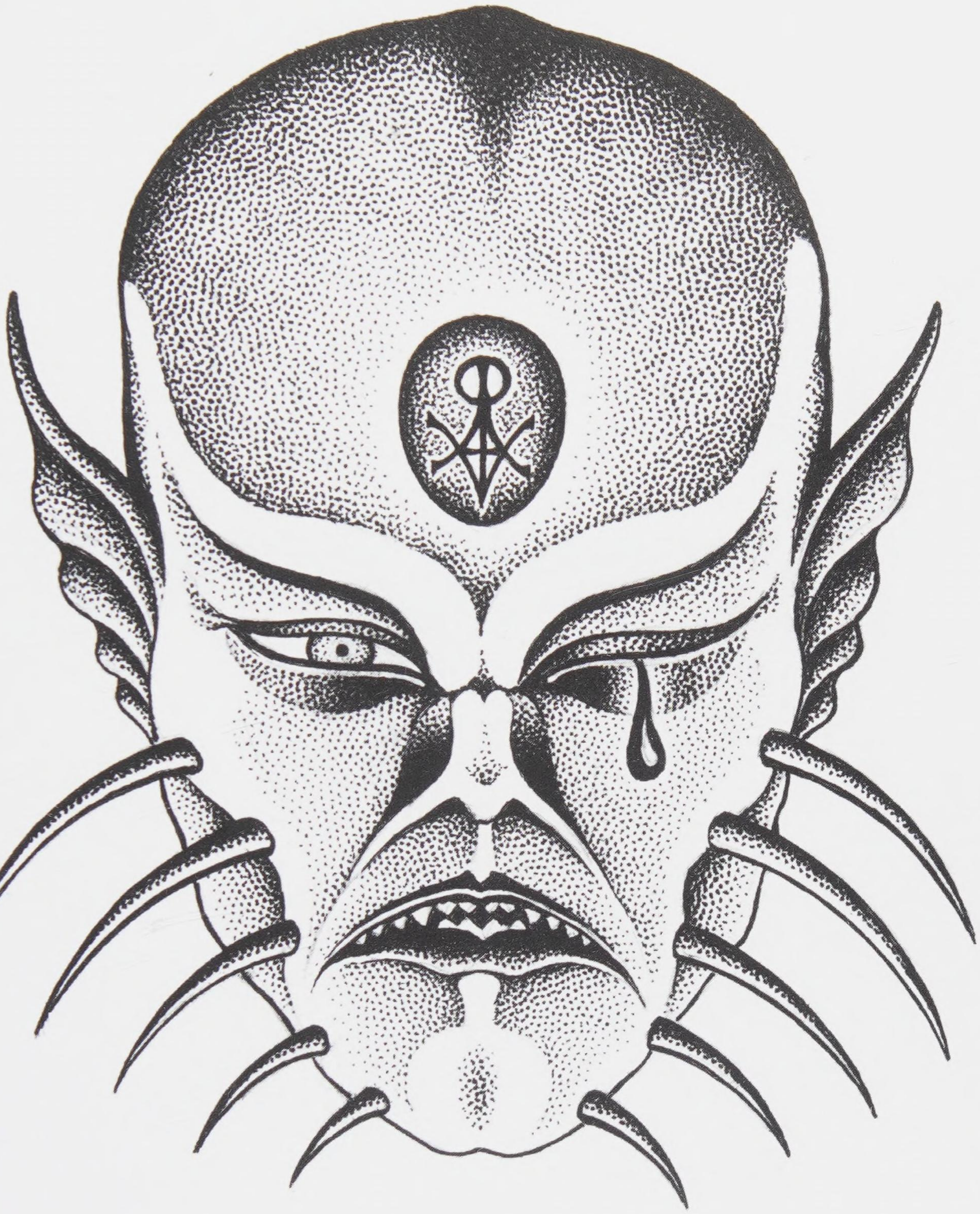
Rohmer's death having been relatively recent, coupled with the fact that there has been only one biography to date, it is difficult at present to assess the range and extent of his influence upon other writers. That it will continue to be immense and largely unacknowledged for many generations to come is doubtless. Most of his influence, so far, would seem to have been upon the popular mystery-detective, action-thriller genres, most noticeably upon Ian Fleming's *007* sagas.[17] Within the modern mystery-occult genre there is a similarity to be sought in the tone and style of Kenneth Grant's fiction, which is brought out particularly in *Against the Light* and *The Other Child*.

Whilst it would be superficial to say there existed a similarity of content between the works of Rohmer and modern pioneers of weird fiction such as Thomas Ligotti, there is with these two very different writers a similarity of method. This is in terms of replacing the appearance of preternatural phenomena with a pervasive malign *expectancy* – the praxis upon which Machen's much-celebrated *The Great God Pan* operates. It is this method of *suggestion* conveyed so ambiently through Rohmer's works that unleashes the entity-breeding power, the chimeric fear of the unknown. But whereas Ligotti sometimes makes the mistake of employing recurring ideational concepts (usually nihilistic in trend) – and similarly with Lovecraft, in his actual delineation of primordial gods and their avatars – Rohmer used implication via symbol, thereby depositing the symbol in the imagination of the reader, leaving it to register its own strange flowering.

The real legacy with which we are left is a series of subtle manipulations of *mayavic* colour and shade, where phantom images move in twilight theatres, rising and fading with suggestion, intrigue and eerie foreboding. Against such finely embroidered and vividly described backdrops, the simplest of props assume powerful independent existence and subsequent unfolding within the mind. It is here that a passing glance, an exotic perfume, a lacquer cabinet, a wall-rug, a lattice window, an oriental vase, or a faintly-smouldering joss or censer, becomes lurid and stark with oracular intensity.

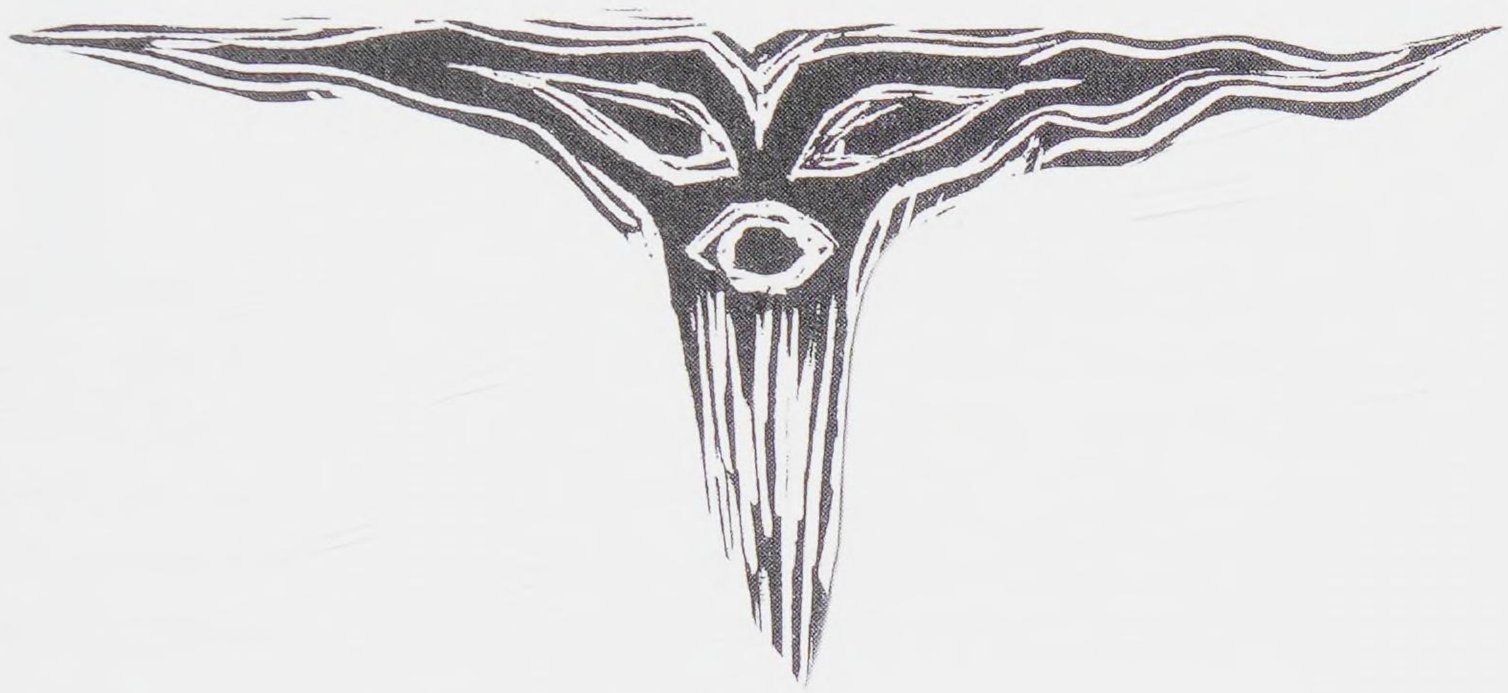
16. *The Ninth Arch*, Commentary to *OKBISh* 594-17. The 'shells' referred to might have been from anti-aircraft fire or Hitler's V-2 rockets, which would pass over the Surrey Hills en route to London. More likely, though, they refer to the qliphoth.

17. It is oddly the case that no Fleming biography – of which I'm aware – picks up on the influence, despite Fleming being on record as saying he was brought up on Rohmer.



Sin Sin Wa by Peter Smith

THE STONE OF STARS



Oliver St. John

THE STONE OF STARS

The candle must have guttered and died long ago. Still I sit here in the brooding silence. In the silence of a tomb, I wait. And wait.

Yet no salvation comes on steadfast wings, to lift me from the horrible gloom of my thoughts. In darkness, then…

When the evening falls and another day of my accursed existence runs weeping into the shadows and is gone, I shudder – for I am drawn as if by some dread force toward that hellish black stone. The strange amulet beckons, and I am unable to resist; for I am weak against the cold, relentless power of alien stars. I can never tell what gorgeous dreams or hateful terrors will visit me each night. Or what weird children, ghastly or beautiful, may be spawned therein.

Of the fate foretold by such unearthly omens I cannot bear to think. When they come, on stealthy grey wings that beat upon the swirling ether of some outlandish and impossible place, I quake with fear and my hands begin to tremble. Although there are many times when I cannot see them, I nonetheless *feel* them gathering. There is an odd scent, a fragrance I cannot describe and yet which permeates all. If chance should permit I may then fall at last into exhausted and dreamless slumber, immersed deeply in oblivion's cup. I long for dreams yet I fear them. Many times I have been shadowed, and strangely, by nightmarish things formed of the dark dew of some inexplicable and insane dimension. Yet their footfall is silent, as though it fell upon thick snow, freshly fallen. When at last I awaken from the forbidden revelry, I may find that for a wonder-struck moment I am gazing on to a plane of the most obscure geometry, with a swirling dance of shapes and colours that *congeal* into unspeakable forms of madness.

It is odd, for they seem to have wings and talons; yet if perchance one might happen to come close, I imagine – mad as it seems – that it speaks to me in some alien tongue. If only I could learn the strange language, or keep one of those devils in sight…

But already they are closing in, and there is precious little time left. I must tell my story before it is too late. The details of my life before my meeting with the tall Spaniard are not important. Let it suffice to say that I had no family since my mother passed away, and I was therefore free to pursue my own rather *obscure* interests.

Delving into every book and ancient manuscript I could lay my hands on, I hoped to find the key or signature that would unlock the door I had passed through in my dreams. For that door opened on to a strange, starry pathway leading out of time and space to fantastic worlds, both alien and fatefully enchanting. Gaining the courage to copy the weird characters and writings from the old books, I began slowly to pronounce the dreadful enchantments and curses, worded in strange tongues. The shape of my dreams began to reflect uncannily the secret images that were conjured thereby…

I was sitting by the quayside in the harbour. The harbour in the old part of the village where I had my pitiable rooms was a favourite haunt, long ago deserted by the fishermen that once thronged it. But the wrecks of old boats and the half-rotten ropes and baskets, the seagulls, the seaweed and the rusting chains that bleed oxide into the broken-down walls – these were my dearest friends. If there were ghosts, they did not disturb me; I was free to pursue the wildest fantasy.

Best of all was the archaic, weird music that I would sometimes hear. Oh, what choruses were heard in moonstruck imaginings! What somnambulant rapture lay beyond the harbour and the sleeping ocean, to other worlds glimpsed through a shimmering, starlight sea. That sea rolls ever onward until the foaming crests are appeased and smoothed, only to suck hungrily at infinity's dark glass and the cavernous depths that it veils. What if at last I should happen upon strange shores awash with shards of a cosmic vessel – the remains of a whole universe crushed by the hand of a hideous, gloating god? Alone and driven by fateful demons I may be; yet I shall know, at last, the name of the elusive shade that first lured me from the weak pleasures that are sought after by the dull men of earth.

Once, when a cloying fog swept in from the sea, I heard the piping sound – a cluster of tiny, delicate silver notes that hung suspended upon the still, dank air of an evening I shall never forget. The sinuous tones began to evoke half-formed shapes that awoke in me a near-frenzy of nostalgia. As if in a dream I turned around and saw him, half hidden in the shadow of the old sea wall.

But I was not dreaming, for the piping ceased abruptly and he – the piper – looked up, returning my gaze.

His countenance was gaunt, weather-beaten. He put the peculiar carved instrument away into the folds of his heavy coat, approaching me with a curious expression on his face. He sat next to me upon a heap of stone slabs and looked straight into my eyes. His own glittered darkly; they were coldly penetrating. I felt for an instant that a gaping chasm had opened up beneath me. There was something deeply familiar about the piper, yet at the same time so utterly strange and otherworldly that I felt I was rushing backwards in time towards a forgotten and abysmal, unfathomable universe. It was what I can only describe as an *alien familiarity.*

Several hours must have passed by, next to that crumbling wall amidst the stench of rotting seaweed. I realised later that I had not even thought to ask the name of the stranger. However, I will call my nameless friend Roland, after the legendary hero that so inspired me in my youth. I will tell his story as he told it to me in that place – the dark crossroads that marks out the way between the worlds of the sane and the *unsane.*

Roland came from the hills and mountains of southern Spain. At certain times of the year peculiar weather conditions conspired to produce an uncanny atmosphere over the region. Roland would lay awake at night, his room but dimly lit by the sickly, gibbous moon, listening intently to a strange piping music – music that caused vista upon vista of luminous visions to unfold.

There were weird and puzzling fragments of a star-lore; dim memories of a long-forgotten people who spoke in a tongue that no man has ever heard. Nor would they yearn to hear it, if they knew…

After such a night, Roland suffered a kind of homesickness that was more acute than any sentimental sweetness for an earthly home. The villagers began to say unkind things about Roland, and he soon learnt to keep his mouth shut when asked why he stared speechlessly into the distance. Soon he would leave them all, and would follow the curiously disturbing music that came across the sea on certain nights of the year. He would search out the source of this weird song as others have sought that of the Nile. The time would surely come – when the moon was low in the sky and burning with a sullen, sulphurous yellow light.

Half-filled with terror and reluctant loathing, half-filled with yearning for wonders undreamed, Roland was awakened to a sense of grandeur that dwarfed the simple, peasant life. He began to draw odd shapes on fragments of paper – strange angles marked with letters, words and symbols in an unknown cipher. There was, now, a weird light in his eyes.

Nothing could assuage the otherworldly craving that began to obsess him. Neither by labour nor rest, nor by the wine from the vineyard that was plentiful and strong, could it be assuaged. Not by the dark-eyed women that live in the valley, that provide comfort for lonely men, could the hunger be appeased. And so he prepared himself for departure, with no thought of returning.

Roland's disappearance was scarcely noticed in the village – a mere sprinkling of ramshackle cottages. From the village well, a little dirt track led off to join a road that wound upwards from the valley below, rambling drunkenly until it was swallowed up in the shadow of the mountains. Many travellers and tradesmen passed along this route, crossing to Tunisia in an old fishing vessel, taking a cheerful meal with the boatmen on the way and exchanging news from every quarter. Tradesmen compared prices and showed samples of their wares. Among these were richly embroidered silks and fabrics, incense and spices, and dark beans of bitter, aromatic coffee.

It was from one of these tradesmen that Roland acquired the stone amulet. No price had been asked for it, but a tall Algerian who had been eyeing him silently for some time placed it in the palm of his hand and then continued to watch him – even more intently than before. Made of smooth, black and slightly glittering stone, the amulet was carved with strange hieroglyphics. As he looked at the stone it warmed and then grew hot in his hand. The puzzling, grotesque symbols flamed and danced in their own light. He felt suddenly dizzy and a little sick, yet weirdly excited. A sensation of falling through space overwhelmed him; then a maddening impression of a vast gulf yawning open, and closing again as suddenly. From an inconceivable, alien dimension, an immense crawling shadow had seeped massively through the veil of time and space. He looked back at the Algerian, almost gasping for breath – but the man merely nodded slightly, almost imperceptibly, and walked away without turning back.

One has heard of such amusing things – a lucky charm for a journey. Perhaps it was the motion of the boat, and the weariness of three long days traversing the high mountain pass on a mule, that caused the hallucination?

The mule sold before leaving Spain, Roland was left with nothing but a bag on his shoulder and the loose travelling robes he stood up in. He prepared to spend his first night in what was little more than a hovel. The ramshackle building seemed to totter, almost collapsing on to the road that eventually became a mere track leading off, somewhat uncertainly, towards the great sweep of the desert.

Wearily, Roland lay down on the rough couch that served for a bed and closed his eyes, entering at once that borderland of consciousness

between dream and wakefulness. A parade began to pass, wheel within wheel of saints amid the congregations of the faithful. They were pleading for the salvation of an errant soul that had been lured from a life of obedience and toil to a road that led towards hellish heathen gods and a dreadful fate. His mother appeared, weeping sorrowfully before him, and crossed herself. For what misguided sense of nobility was this? What fool pays more attention to his dreams than to the lives of the people around him and his duty to them? One should after all sacrifice such things, bind oneself to the yoke of marriage and wish for a long and tedious life of dull work, of sterile joys and empty amusements. A thirst for arcane knowledge is surely nothing but a thirst for self-delusion and folly – and a thirst that can never be satisfied, not ever. That craving is the yawning of the abyss itself, whose name was banished from heaven in the beginning of things.

The eyes of the ravens look upon the fool who has given all, lost all and found nothing – and they mock him. And the vultures gather greedily for another bag of rotten flesh that lies strewn across baking desert dunes…

Roland awoke suddenly, startled by the reverie. Instinctively his fingers sought the amulet where he had hidden it, wrapped up in an embroidered coverlet. Abandoning all ideas of sleep, he was soon heading towards the *Kasbah*. If fortune smiled then by chance he might overhear something – a fragment of conversation, an item of local news, perhaps. Anything by which he could fix and set his course to the stars that looked down not upon earth, but upon the fantastic wonderland he had glimpsed in dream.

By dawn, as luck would have it, Roland was certain of his course. He was making hasty preparations for a desert crossing, to an oasis that was the subject of some local gossip and hearsay. Apparently there was indeed a certain oasis in the desert, three days journey from the *Kasbah*. Travellers who had found their way there – either by accident or design – had seen strange, wonderful and sometimes awful things. On certain nights of the year weird piping music could be heard. At such times even desert-hardened locals had been known to leave their families and disappear inexplicably into the wilderness. It was as though the desert itself had swallowed them up. Occasionally one did return, but it was rare for such a soul to do so and yet remain in possession of his wits.

It is strange how such travellers' tales fail to caution those for whose ears they are intended. Rather, with increasing power of fascination each time the yarn is told, it may lead the unwary – and the curious – back to the place of the spell's origin. Perhaps to the black cave of the sorcerer or wizard that uttered it. Or to a long-forgotten people, a race shrouded in mystery and star-lore that long ago left this earth to pursue a dark destiny – until doom came upon them in an unfathomable region on the

outer-threshold of time and space; or perchance to a lost paradise of unimaginable pleasures.

It did not take long to form a small expedition once two willing guides had been found. The guides were stern-faced, with a discourse that mostly consisted of furious muttering; they argued incessantly.

Such scant savings as Roland had brought with him had been helped by a good price fetched for the mule, from a nobleman and his servants who had been passing with a caravan on the way to Portugal. A few travelling musicians joined the company of eight adventurers, bringing their number to eleven. They assembled at the dusty crossroads before setting off across the desert on camels supplied by their solemn-faced guides.

For three days and nights they had traversed a seemingly never-ending abyss of sand and nothingness – save for the fantastic, globe-like stars that hung as burning lanterns in space after nightfall. For the last hour they trudged over sparse desert scrub, with the oasis in view – a paradise of palm and date trees. In the midst of the oasis a languid pool of clear water dreamed by night beneath singing stars; during the day, it could be seen flanked on every side by abundant green fronds. Fantastic blooms shot forth here and there, sudden eruptions of the most extravagant and gorgeous colour.

As the moon sunk low in the sky, the musicians at last took out their instruments, while the other men prepared hookahs and pipes, settling down for a long-awaited evening of rest and pleasure. Gradually the music gathered pace, and the drums began to throb on a mounting wave. Winding and sinuous, then frantic, the music swept around the oasis like a soul in flight.

The ethereal music enfolded the island in the midst of the desert sea. It was as a serpent, alive and undulating beyond the limits of the warming camp firelight.

It seemed as if every man became aware of it at once – a brightly phosphorescent veil that descended swiftly upon the oasis. It was spun as though from the sheen of the stars themselves. It brought with it a veritable wall of silence, for the music had stopped dead. Then, each one sat and gaped dumbly, as into a chasm.

An unaccountable fragrance permeated the entire oasis. It was thickly omnipresent – the last breath of a still moon that had by chance or misadventure become detached from its host and wandered deeply into the unthinkably vacuous and barbaric spaces between the stars. Caught up in this weird *exhalation* from a primeval source, the men were frozen in awe. Something was trying to precipitate from somewhere *beyond* and

into the midst of the company – God only knows what would have happened if it had. But mercifully the abysmal shroud swept upwards again without warning, until only a few nebulous tendrils remained. These lingered as if reluctant to depart, like the fingers of one who, ravenous with unquenchable desire, caresses the body of a lover – finding there the most delicate, sweet and achingly tenuous sensations.

A shudder passed at once through the company. It was Roland alone, long accustomed to gazing at distantly evasive things, that held the apparition for long enough to *see*. The silvery trail was hungrily sucked at until it was wholly consumed by – an *absence*. The *absence* shivered and seethed upon the ether as the spectral shroud appeared to be engulfed amid the seven stars of Ursa Major. It may have been the sound of the men groaning, or otherwise of some audible hallucination; yet nothing could adequately explain the bestial moan or cry that was heard as the ghostly gossamer sank into the mouth of oblivion.

I do not know whether anyone actually slept that night, but the next morning there were rumblings of discontent from the eldest of the guides. They were locked in a fierce, animated discussion for several hours, pausing only to tend to the ubiquitous tea-making apparatus they would scarce be without. It was then Roland noticed the unaccountable disappearance of the charm or talisman of stone. He began to search everywhere, tracing and retracing his footsteps of the previous night, but to no avail. It puzzled him, that the loss of a trifle should cause distress…

After a while some of the others joined in the search, but by the middle of the morning they had given up. The heat from the sun was already excessive for such a thankless and futile task. The decision had by then been made to stay for another night, after all. This caused much trouble between the two guides – who once more began to argue heatedly among themselves. The mood of the party, however, had changed to one of bravado. A few of the men had begun to dismiss the whole incident as superstitious nonsense, and were determined not to give way to ignorance.

Hours passed, and the moon swam once more into view. The stars, burning as living flames in their familiar constellations, punctuated the velvet skin of the night like luminous hieroglyphs carved into black stone. The party, now rather subdued in spirit, had resumed its former position on the edge of the oasis, facing north. No attempt was made to strike up a melody; for the most part, the instruments were not even taken out of the bags and bundles that enveloped them.

Yet supple fingers must have found their way, somehow, to a tightened skin. A low, incessant rhythm – hardly perceptible at first – became audible. As the smoke curled from the hookahs, appearing as luminescent vapours in the light of the warming fire, music once again leaped and

soared. Nebulous shapes moved beyond the circle about the fire, and Roland looked up anxiously toward the constellations, wondering if that unspeakable thing would be seen again.

But no shimmering lights descended from the sky. Perhaps those strange, indescribable events were really nothing more than a misplaced and disordered dream?

As the music twisted and turned, sent flying by its own momentum, its sound grew impossibly. A maddening buzzing or droning augmented the demonic overture; it surged upwards from under the earth, filling the oasis with its restless, churning vibration. At times the sound changed to a horrible hissing and boiling. The inexplicable intervention of a wild piping that came from *outside* the circle failed to arrest the eerie wall of sound.

Perhaps, after all, they were afraid to stop. The weird perfume was insidious, all permeating. In the shadows beyond the fire there seemed to be dancers, appearing sometimes as voluptuous women, sometimes as wraith-like spectres in the half-light. The phantoms threw themselves into such an orgy of abandonment that even heathen deities would have quailed at the hideous *mocking* nature of it.

Roland sat bathed in sweat, intoxicated by the weird perfume. He felt as though he were made of solid stone, and could not have moved if he had wanted to. In some strange way he felt as though he were everywhere and in all places at once – yet nothing really existed. What was at first a droning, swelled to a menacing and insidious grating. Through the portal formed from unusual intervals and queer halftones, the fragments of melody took on the semblance of entities that had lain for vast aeons, not dead, but *dreaming*. For there are cosmic abominations that are more terrible even than the demoniacal women – cavorting with the offspring of hell's inferno and the bride of a dark god.

I have so far omitted to tell of that nauseating thing which caused the very mouth of chaos to yawn wide upon the oasis camp. In that moment the souls of men were first tormented, then petrified and lost forever in the terrifying chasm of eternal night. Above, the myriad stars hung flaming in the deepening indigo recesses of oblivion. But the constellations had changed…

No more was Orion to be seen striding with faithful Sirius at his heel. No more were the seven jewelled harlots of Ursa Major pointing the way to lofty, ice-cold Polaris. Alien stars had usurped the everlasting imperishable lights – the silvery map and compass of all navigators since ancient times.

In one mind-destroying moment as the hideous cacophony reached a shattering crescendo – the oasis and its company vanished utterly.

Now I must describe the terrible thing that happened after the stars fell from their places. Roland stared at the ghastly scene now appearing before him. Under an alien sky, the landscape was a forest of crazed configurations made by non-human hands, if hands they were. Everywhere, crouched or standing, there lurked gigantic figures – rudely blaspheming with hideous gestures. Monstrous to behold, they were made from vast layers of stone that could only have been heaped up by a sinister and primeval demigod.

Triangular heads carved from a blackly glittering substance surmounted the towers. There was no longer any moon in the sky, but the light from the stars – some of them appearing as large as moons themselves – poured their radiation over the landscape, now everywhere infused with a filmy, lucent glamour.

Was that an immense altar in the centre of this accursed, God forsaken amphitheatre? What craftsman could carve that abhorrent, unnatural thing? Was it forged perchance by the unthinkable pressure of an eternal, nightmarish chasm? Or was it the artifice of a colossal, obscene devil? About the hideous monolith cavorted the dancing, ragged wraiths. What the *thing* was that lay wriggling upon that black altar shall remain a secret forever. Mound upon mound of what I can only describe as a mass of writhing abominations then surged forwards, covering the entire landscape to the dreadful mountainous horizon. Such things not only rob the power of speech, they leave the brain itself dumb.

One of the guides suddenly leapt to his feet, careering wildly off into the darkness beyond. The scream shall never be forgotten.

In that one shriek lurked all the madness that has ever haunted the most fear-stricken cavities of the human mind. The next moment – though it might have been an aeon that passed – a small group sat shivering about the dying embers of an untended fire. By sunrise even the few non-believers among the group were praying to some God. There was no need for further discussion. The company silently prepared themselves to return, though a few muttered to themselves in low tones. Once, Roland thought he heard words spoken in some unknown tongue, followed by a laugh that chilled him to the marrow. For some time after that, shivers leapt up and down his spine like sparks rising above a wood fire.

Some way out of the oasis and on the return route, they found what little remained of the guide who had run off shrieking into the night. The blackened, blasted remnants were left where they were. No one felt inclined to attempt a burial. No one spoke. A few feet away on the sand – some of which appeared to have been melted by some inexplicable inferno so that it glittered and shone like glass – there lay the amulet with the strange characters inscribed upon it. Roland, moved by a force

greater than his self, seized the black stone and hid it away with his few belongings. None of the company ever spoke to Roland again.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

In the silence now he sits, my Spanish friend. His eyes and his ears have turned inwards, it would seem; he prefers to be completely covered by a cloak and hood – even when the sunlight glints through the trees outside and the bright little flowers of springtime are everywhere. Of the strange carved instrument that I heard and saw that fateful day by the harbour, he would say nothing. I do not understand why it is that he denies ever having owned such a thing. I would only visit the land of dreaming that I have seen darkly or in cavernous trance, and have heard as strange music from afar – forever there to dwell.

Once, when Roland was sick with fever, the priest was called. It was the first time, and the last, that he visited. I had showed him to the room where the Spaniard sat, with the windows and shutters sealed. The priest never did pour any communion wine, or break the host. He seemed as though startled, panic-stricken; then, gathering his cloak about himself, he said there was something *unholy* about the room. Turning but once as he hastily swept from the porch, he bade us emphatically not to call him out again – under any circumstances.

It is true that what Roland speaks of – when he is able to speak – would be nothing but madness to the ears of any reasoning person. Yet I perceive lucidity in his imaginings – a lucidity that informs a peculiar inner sense, penetrating the most elusive and subtle nerve fibres. The result is that which I have called *alien familiarity.* A slow, implacable sense comes over one. It begins imperceptibly, at the most far-flung outskirts of consciousness, growing in power until there is a loss of the ability to speak or even to think. It is as though the mind and senses were being swallowed up by some – *vastness.*

And what of myself? Since I acquired the amulet, the black stone of stars, I have struggled in vain to even remember who or what I am – for in truth I no longer know. Even as I write this testimonial, I know *they* are coming. Last night they came closer than ever before, blessing me with what I have sought since ere I set eyes on the stone; a blasphemous, insane *covenant.* I am filled with a yearning that has been with me forever, and that I must seek to satisfy no matter what the cost.

Very soon my yearning shall be fulfilled. For then I shall willingly, gladly be engulfed in that wild, confounded place beneath alien stars. Even now, a peculiar sweet fragrance excites my senses, filling me with

dreadful awe. I fear lest the pen with which I scrawl these last few words should fall from my trembling hands.

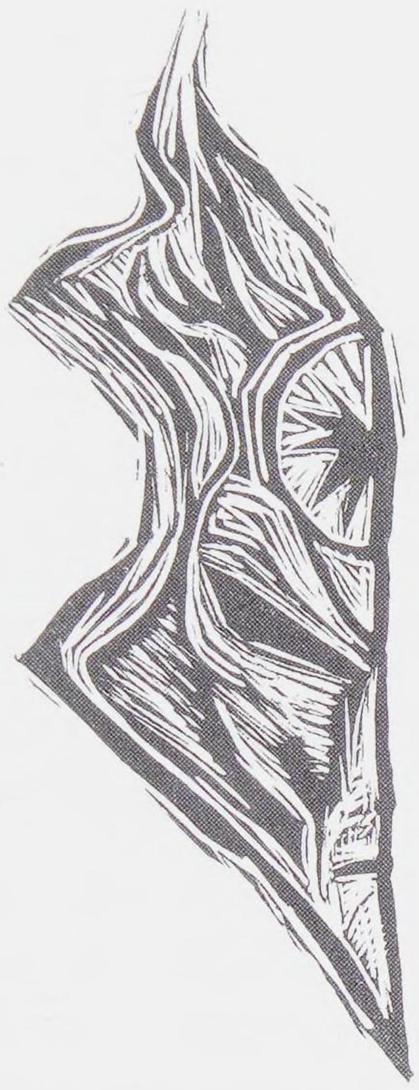
Those stars – and the vast spaces that serve them for a dwelling – are nothing but the barbarous hieroglyphs carved upon a black stone! That terrible stone, whose dreadful origin is lost in antiquity, now rests in a locked drawer in the desk at which I sit. A stone of stars to call forth the piper whose mad echoes may at last awaken even dreaming *Cthulhu* from the depths! The time has come; I must fetch the key…

It is too late! For I have written the name that I dare not utter, and the characters writhe and flame, burning the page. There! I have traced the terrible key that is written on that black stone, and one drop of blood shall seal it forever. Ah! – It is done.

The darkness … it is … crawling …

The last page of the smoke-blackened manuscript was scorched and burned at the edges, so that the cipher was obliterated. The amulet was never found – if such a thing ever existed.

MARANATHA:
A BLESSING OR A CURSE?



Stephen Dziklewicz

MARANATHA:
A BLESSING OR A CURSE?

It was one of many interesting surprises in Kenneth Grant's *The Ninth Arch* to discover the exclamation 'Maranatha!' forming the text of verse 859-22 of 'The Book of the Spider'. In his commentary, Grant tells us that:

> "Maranatha" is the great curse set to guard against profane delvers into the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage. It applies in this instance, and cogently, to the 'Grimoire' of Clan Grant . . . It is here to be noted that MARANATHA = 694 = LINGAM, emblem of Shiva, of Set, and of other devouring yet begetting deities. (p.495).

Similarly, in the comment to verse 694-2:

> The Oracle repeats the Great Curse – MARANATHA – against uninitiate delvers into the 'forbidden' Wisdom (i.e. the Wisdom of S'lba). (p.432).

In both instances he cites *The Works of Thomas Vaughan* edited by A.E. Waite as the reference for Maranatha (on page 172). I am not familiar with this book and have been unable to consult a copy, so am unable to take account of what Vaughan had to say on the subject.

Thomas Vaughan (1621-1666) was a Christian Mystic and Alchemist who promoted Rosicrucianism and dabbled in the Qabbalah. He was a prolific author of magical treatises that were as polemical as they were metaphysical. Aleister Crowley included him among the list of Saints in his Gnostic Mass (*Liber XV*). Vaughan had studied the *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* – the sublimation of medieval magic – regarding himself as a disciple of its author, Henry Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535), but it is very doubtful that he had any knowledge of *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* which is only known to have existed in what appears to have been its original, German manuscript form at this time. (There is no mention of any great curse of Maranatha in the English translation

of the grimoire, first published by S.L. Mathers in 1898). However, Vaughan would have been very familiar with the King James Bible of 1611, in which the *First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, 16.22 declares:

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.

And it is this New Testament text that is the original source for this 'great curse'. The Greek word *anathema* (107), is translated as 'a cursed person, or thing' and 'a detested thing', but originally it meant 'a devoted thing', a votive offering set up and dedicated to a deity, from *anatithemi*, 'to set up'. In the Christian scriptures it developed the specific meaning of 'accursed, separated', finally evolving into the ecclesiastical concept of excommunication. The word *maranatha* (203) was understood as being an expression of this potent curse, with the meaning of 'Let him be accursed'.

Aleister Crowley was obliged to study the Bible as a major part of his boyhood education and was involved in a lifelong conflict with its teachings. The idea of the great curse *Anathema Maranatha* appears to have insinuated its way into the text of his *Liber Liberi vel Lapis Lazuli*, Chapter IV, verses 51-53:

> They draw their shining God unto the land in nets; they build a fire to the Lord of Fire, and cry unhallowed words, even the dreadful curse Amri maratza, maratza, atman deona lastadza maratza maritza – maran!
> Then do they cook the shining god, and gulp him whole.
> These are evil folk, O beautiful boy! let us pass on to the Otherworld.

In his annotations to the verses, Crowley confirms that "Nun = Jesus" – that is, the Fish is a symbol of Jesus – and he translates the curse as meaning: "(for ever unlawfully) let him die, let him die, let his soul die without pleasure (lit. orgasm) he shall die, he is dead."

Ichthys, the Greek word for 'fish', was a Christian acrostic for the sentence *Iesous Christos Theou Yios Soter* with the meaning of 'Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour'. While the Christian curse of anathema is directed against those who do not recognise the 'Lord Jesus' as their saviour, the implication in *Liber VII* is that the 'evil folk', by performing the ritual sacrifice of their god in their greed for salvation, do themselves fall victim to their own curse.[1]

Many years later, there is an example of Crowley using the phrase mischievously in one of the letters that comprised *Magick Without Tears*:

> *The curate's twang, the solemnity of self-importance, all manners that do not disclose the real man, are abominations, "Anathema Maranatha" – or any other day of the week. These painted masks are devised to conceal chicanery or emptiness.*

1. The biblical *Anathema Maranatha* would seem to be the most likely influence for *the dreadful curse*, but it may be worth noting that among the Tantric *satkarma* (the six works, or actions), the most sinister of the occult powers to be obtained through the use of mantra is *marana*, the power of killing and maiming by mantra. See note 37, page 156 of *The Tantric Tradition* by Agehananda Bharati, 1965.

His attitude to this biblical curse seems to have been rather ambivalent.[2]

2. See *Magick Without Tears*, Chapter XLIV, '"Serious" Style of A.C., or the Apparent Frivolity of Some of my Remarks'.

But what, precisely, does the word *maranatha* mean? Despite its appearance as a Greek word, it is in fact one of several Aramaic words and phrases scattered throughout the New Testament that has simply been transliterated into Greek characters. Early translators did not recognise this; in addition, manuscript sources did not always contain clear divisions of words; therefore, it was decided incorrectly that *maranatha* was an amplification of the curse of anathema. In Aramaic, MRN AThA (692, or 1342 counting *Nun* as final) means 'Our Lord, Come!' To place it in the context of the closing sentences of 1 *Corinthians*:

> *O aspasmos te eme cheiri Paulou.*
> The greeting of Paul, by my hand.
>
> *ei tis ou philei ton kyrion, eto anathema. Marana tha.*
> If anyone does not love the Lord, he shall be accursed.
> Our Lord will come!
>
> *e charis tou kyriou Iesou meth ymon.*
> The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.
>
> *e agape mou meta panton ymon en Christo Iesou.*
> My love be among you all in Christ Jesus.

This makes *maranatha* part of a more or less formal salutation, an affirmation to the early believers that if they did not love the Lord – *philei* means 'love' in the sense of 'having an affectionate regard for' – they would be cursed and discarded, because the Lord will surely come. It was a word of greeting in the early church, a familiar watchword, a constant reminder of the second coming of the Christ; and it was closely associated with the Greek word *parousia* (862), 'presence; arrival, or coming', which crystallised the same concept.

This interpretation is recognised in more recent translations of the Bible, such as the Revised Standard Version (1952) and the Revised English Bible (1989). Consequently, today, a search on the Internet will reveal literally thousands of Christian groups and churches, organisations and publications using the name of 'Maranatha'. As one website defines it: *"Today the word is usually found as part of the name of a church or Christian society to describe a close connection and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord"*. They tend to represent the more populist, enthusiast movement that seeks to return to what they believe to be the practices of the early church. A different source expands on the definition in these terms:

> Maranatha becomes the prayer of Christ's followers: "Come, our Lord !"
> This prayer is not just expressed in words, but in the everyday life of

> those who pray it "without ceasing". They long for the moment when they will see their Saviour face to face and exclaim, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the Lord, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation." (*Isaiah*, 25.9). (*A Good Word*, Volume 3, Issue 2, Autumn 2003).

It is clear from this and from similar sources that the spiritual revival represented by the use of the name *Maranatha*, is nothing more than the perpetuation of the craving for salvation through the religious dogma of the Dying God. In this respect, Thelemites might well be inclined to regard Maranatha as a curse, after all !

What is the particular significance, therefore, of this mystical word – once regarded as a curse, but now more generally recognised as a Christian watchword – in the text of a Typhonian transmission sifted from the catacombs of Set ? The oracle of the verse is 859, which is the numeration of ChKMTh HTzIRVPh, 'the method of combination', a term used by the inspired and enigmatic Qabbalist Abraham Abulafia (1240-1291?) for the occult science of the permutation of letters. The basis of this method is the mystical conviction that letters are in themselves the very essence of creation; and that by writing and permuting them, their spiritual energies can be released and utilised for attaining states of expanded awareness and enlightenment. In the words of Abulafia:

> Now I will tell you the mystery of the true discipline, through which you can alter the laws of nature... This is the path along which you must travel to attain the mystery of true discipline:
> Take in your hand a scribe's pen. Write speedily, letting your tongue utter the words with a pleasant melody, very slowly. Understand the words that leave your lips. The words can consist of anything that you desire, in any language that you desire, for you must return all languages to their original substance. (*Otzar Eden HaGanuz* – 'Treasury of the Hidden Eden').

Kenneth Grant comments on verse 859 of 'The Book of the Spider': "*There is a seal upon this verse that we cannot as yet break open.*" I would suggest that the seal is the word MARANAThA and that the means to its opening is to be found in its permutation. Taking MARANAThA as a word of eight letters – the 'th' represents a single letter in both Greek (*Theta*) and Hebrew (*Tav*) – will generate 1680 permutations, or flowerings of this mystical seal.[3] Abulafia states: ChKMTh HTzIRVPh HIA ChKMTh HHGIVN HPNIMI HOLIVN, "*The wisdom of combination: this is the method of meditation of the inner parts of the Most High*". A neat, qabbalistic confirmation of this assertion is provided by the words *esoteros*, 'inner, inside' and *makrothymos*, 'patiently' both of which have the numerical value of 1680. They provide an apt comment on this particular

3. The principles of permutation are outlined in chapter four of the *Sepher Yetzirah* (The Book of Formation) which deals with the Double Letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Verse 12 states:

Seven Doubles combined in this manner: Two stones build two houses. Three build six houses. Four build twenty-four houses. Five build one hundred and twenty houses. Six build seven hundred and twenty houses. Seven build five thousand and forty houses. From here on go out and consider what the mouth is unable to speak, and the ear is unable to hear.

A combination of eight letters would generate a possible 40,320 permutations, which is the factorial of the number 8, or 1 x 2 x 3 x 4 x 5 x 6 x 7 x 8 = 40,320. The factorial is the product of multiplying a series of whole numbers and is used to compute permutations. However, the combination of letters in the word MARANAThA contains four identical letter 'A's which cannot be distinguished in permutation; therefore, the sum of its permutations is the factorial of 8 divided by the factorial of 4, or 40,320 divided by 24 = 1680.

type of mystical process of inner exploration, although the real proof of the method is to be realised only through its practise. There are significant Typhonian elements implicit within the permutations of 1680, such as 3 x 560 and 8 x 210, but a simple metathesis produces immediate results with the word AMARANThA.

The amaranth is a mythical flower that never fades; a poetic symbol of immortality derived from Classical Greek literature. The Greek word *amarantos* (763) means 'everlasting, or unfading'; it provided the name for the genus of plants now known as *amaranthus*, characterised by a lasting red pigment in their stems and leaves. AMARANThA, therefore, relates directly to verse 860-23 of 'The Book of the Spider':

> Let not the Lingam of Jacob be blasphemed; nor the moon-plant fade unremembered in the royal pools of ivory and gold.

There is much in verses 848 to 866 of OKBISh that concerns *"the private and personal symbology"* of the magical history of Frater Aossic, but the interjection of Maranatha introduces its own particular antecedents.

Kenneth Grant has already noted in his commentary that MARANAThA has the same numerical value as LINGAM (694, counting *Mem* as final). The sacred lingam, or divine phallus, is not to be blasphemed by regarding the magical word of Maranatha as a curse, rather than the formula by which the moon-plant can attain immortality. Jacob, that is IOQB, means 'the supplanter'; he is the deceitful one who usurps the place of his brother and is, therefore, a form of the god Set, dispossessing Osiris. The moon-plant is Dolores, which means 'sorrow'; she is the sorrowful flower in mourning for the loss of her consort and is, therefore, a form of the goddess Isis, fading 'unremembered'. The Lost Word, or Phallus of Osiris (1), concealed by Set (7), is restored by the Incantations of Isis (8).[4] The mystical combinations of MARANAThA-AMARANThA are the magical rememberings by which the Jewel may be replaced in the Lotus, so that it may flower with the eightfold petals of Perfection.

4. See the commentary on page 506 of *The Ninth Arch*. For a much more detailed analysis of the mythical context, see pages 150-157 of *Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God*, Muller, 1973.

A	M	A	R	A	N	Th	A
M	A	R	A	N	A	A	Th
A	R	A	M	A	Th	A	N
R	A	M	A	Th	A	N	A
A	N	A	Th	A	M	A	R
N	A	Th	A	M	A	R	A
Th	A	A	N	A	R	A	M
A	Th	N	A	R	A	M	A

MARANAThA (694) has a further correspondence in MBVA HShMSh (694), a Hebrew expression for the west as the place of sunset, although the literal meaning is 'the entrance of the Sun'. *Mevoah*, 'the entrance', has the value of 49, the mystic number of Venus and of Hagiel, the Intelligence of Venus; it is the number of the Vulva (VVLVA = 49). *Ha-Shemesh*, 'The Sun', has the value of 645, the number of OIN HThNIN, 'the Eye of the Crocodile', denoting Sebek-Ra, or Apophrasz. The vulva of "*the blue-lidded daughter of Sunset*" clothed in "*the naked brilliance of the voluptuous night-sky*" (*AL*.I.64) draws in the solar seed from the phallus of the Typhonian Beast; Nuit-Babalon is united in 'blasphemous bliss' with Hadit-Therion and conceives the Magical Child in the hidden place of Amentet.

Maran-atha, 'Our Lord, Come !' He is the Ever-Coming One, the Magical Child Horus, celebrated in *Liber AL vel Legis* as 'Crowned and Conquering'. *"I am the Hawk-Headed Lord of Silence & of Strength; my nemyss shrouds the night-blue sky"*. (*AL*.III.70). His formula is delineated by Aleister Crowley in *Liber Samekh*, Point II, ARS CONGRESSUS CUM DAEMONE:

> What then is the formula of the initiation of Horus ? It will no longer be that of the Man, through Death. It will be the natural growth of the Child. His experiences will be no more regarded as catastrophic. Their hieroglyph is the Fool: the innocent and impotent Harpocrates Babe becomes the Horus Adult by obtaining the Wand... The Holy Guardian Angel is the Unconscious Creature Self – the Spiritual Phallus. His Knowledge and Conversation contributes occult puberty. It is therefore advisable to replace the name Asar Un-nefer by that of Ra-Hoor-Khuit at the outset, and by that of one's own Holy Guardian Angel when it has been communicated. (page 363, *Magick*).

At the centre of the magical squares of AMARANThA and MARANAThA are the letters *Aleph* (A) and *Tav* (Th); they represent the First and the Last, Beginning and End, Inception and Completion; and their combination is ATh (401), 'The Essence', the interplay of the Whole. 401 is the value of the phrase HBIANI HMLK ChDRIV, 'The King has brought me into his chambers' (*Song of Songs*, 1.4). The Aleph-Babe Harpocrates obtains the powers of the *Tav*, which is the Phallus of Set. He becomes "*unique & conqueror*" as the *Tav* is extended in the four-fold elemental realm of universal manifestation: "(*This is of the 4: there is a fifth who is invisible; & therein am I as a babe in an egg*)". (*AL*.II.49).

AThA (402) is the Aramaic form of the Hebrew AThH, which is both the root of the verb 'to come' and the personal pronoun 'thou'; AThH, 'Ateh' = 406 = ThV, 'Tau'. And as Kenneth Grant has pointed out:

> The Tau is the transmitter of the True Will, the thou of "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law".[5]

'Our Lord will come'. The True Will shall be attained; there is no other than That.

5. Footnote 37, page 103, *Outer Gateways*, Skoob, 1994. For a very lucid discussion of the *Tau* and 'Thou' as representative of the True Will, see pages 106-111.

M	A	R	A	N	A	Th	A
A	M	A	R	A	N	A	Th
R	A	Th	A	M	A	N	A
A	R	A	Th	A	M	A	N
N	A	M	A	Th	A	R	A
A	N	A	M	A	Th	A	R
Th	A	N	A	R	A	M	A
A	Th	A	N	A	R	A	M

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Untitled sketch, circa 1952, by Austin Osman Spare
From a volume of sketchbooks forthcoming from Starfire Publishing

"TZADDI IS NOT THE STAR"

The Problem Of The Thoth Tarot

Caradoc Elmet

"TZADDI IS NOT THE STAR"

The Problem Of The Thoth Tarot

Like much else in Aleister Crowley's life, the circumstances surrounding the reception of *The Book of the Law* are unclear. Crowley generally maintained that the reception started on 8th April. However, in the first edition of *The Equinox of the Gods* (1936) he changed this to 1st April, a date that was considered correct by his colleague Frater Achad (C. S. Jones). Lending further credence to this, a passenger list has recently come to light which indicates that Crowley had set sail from Egypt prior to 8th April. In addition, reading the account of the reception given in *The Equinox of the Gods*, it is clear that the rôle of Rose Kelly was greater than Crowley had previously allowed. All of which is not to cast doubt on the substance of Crowley's work, but to suggest that we should not view him as an infallible authority.

In the course of this essay I want to examine an area of confusion in Crowley's Tarot. During the reception of *The Book of the Law*, Crowley wrote down these words received by dictation through the praeternatural intelligence known as Aiwass (or Aiwaz): "All these old letters of my book are aright; but *Tzaddi* is not the Star." (*Liber Al vel Legis* I:57) The "book" referred to is 'The Book of Thoth', the Wheel of the Tarot, and the phrase refers to the attribution of the Hebrew alphabet to the Trumps.

The Tarot being a pictorial representation of the Tree of Life, each of the cards represents one aspect of that diagram. The Court cards are referred to the Sephiroth – the Aces representing the first Sephira, the Twos representing the second, and so on. The Trumps are referred to the interconnecting Paths between the Sephiroth and assume all attributions already associated with those Paths. According to the tradition of the Tarot which Crowley had learnt in the *Hermetic Order of The Golden*

Dawn, *The Star* lay on Path 28, connecting Netzach and Yesod, and took on the attributions of that path, which included the Hebrew letter *Tzaddi* and the sign of Aquarius. Now Crowley was being told that at least one of these attributions was incorrect.

> *And what was Tzaddi? He tried for years to counter change this card, "The Star", which is numbered XVII, with some other. He had no success. It was many years later that the solution came to him. Tzaddi is "The Emperor"; This was exceedingly annoying. If Tzaddi was not "the Star", what was? and therefore the positions of XVII and IV must be counter changed. This attribution is very satisfactory.*
>
> (*The Book of Thoth*, pages 9-10)

The Emperor is the Trump traditionally numbered IV and placed upon the 15th Path, connecting Chokmah and Tiphareth. It thereby assumed all the attributions of that path, which included the letter *Hé* and the sign of Aries. Following the reference in *Liber Al vel Legis*, the letter attributions – at the very least – were now to be "counter changed", attributing *Tzaddi* to *The Emperor* and *Hé* to *The Star*. "This attribution is very satisfactory", indeed:

> *The sign TZ or TS implies this in the original, onomatopoetic form of language. It is derived from Sanskrit roots meaning Head and Age, and is found to-day in words like Caesar, Tsar, Sidar, Senate, Senior, Signor, Senor, Seigneur.*
>
> (*The Book of Thoth*, page 77)

The letter *Hé* refers to the two 'female' components of the Name YHVH – the Mother and the Daughter, Binah and Malkuth. It is, therefore, perfectly fitting to associate this letter with *The Star* whose image is that of our Lady Nuit.

The new letter attributions should be clear enough without my having to delve into the murky depths of Crowley's "double loop in the zodiac," but here another problem lies: in what manner does this counter change occur? The answer to this problem is not easily forthcoming; many of Crowley's writings on the subject contradict each other.

In the first passage quoted above from *The Book of Thoth*, Crowley says: *"Tzaddi is "The Emperor"; and therefore the positions of XVII and IV must be counter changed,"* implying that *The Star* should now be placed upon the 15th Path and *The Emperor* upon the 28th. The images of *The Emperor* card, however, along with the description given in *The Book of Thoth*, disagree:

> *It is finally to be observed that the white light which descends upon him indicates the position of this card in the Tree of Life. His authority is derived from Chokmah ... and is exerted upon Tiphareth.*
>
> (*The Book of Thoth*, page 78)

Further complicating the issue is the table to be found on page 278 of *The Book of Thoth*, which gives the following attributions:

	Trump	**Letter**	**Sign**	**Path No.**
IV	The Emperor	Tzaddi	Aquarius	28
XVII	The Star	Hé	Aries	15

This table quite clearly places *The Emperor* on Path 28 and *The Star* on Path 15; but it also attributes the sign of Aquarius to *The Emperor* and that of Aries to *The Star*. Within the main text of the same book we read that:

[The Emperor] refers to the sign of Aries in the Zodiac (page 77)

and that:

[The Star] refers to the Zodiacal sign of Aquarius, the water-bearer (page 109)

So is the text in error, or is it the table? Adding further fuel to the fire of our confusion is the section in Appendix A under the heading 'General Characters of the Trumps as they appear in Use'. This section gives a short poetic description of the card, followed by a list of keywords. The verse for the card numbered IV reads,

> *Pour water on thyself: thus shalt thou be*
> *a Fountain to the Universe.*
> *Find thou thyself in every Star.*
> *Achieve thou every possibility.* (page 255)

which clearly refers to *The Star*, the card numbered XVII in every other place, including the face of the card itself. The keywords given for card IV:

> *War, conquest, victory, strife, ambition, originality, over-weening confidence and megalomania, quarrelsomeness, energy, vigour, stubbornness, impracticality, rashness, ill-temper*

refer to *The Emperor* and to the sign of Aries. Likewise the verse for card XVII:

> *Use up all thine energy to rule thy thought: burn up thy thought as the Phoenix.* (page 259)

is a description of *The Emperor*, whereas the keywords:

> *Hope, unexpected help, clearness of vision, realization of*

> *possibilities, spiritual insight, with bad aspects, error of judgement, dreaminess, disappointment* (p.259)

refer quite clearly to *The Star*!

With so much contradictory information within a single book, it is no small wonder that this problem has had people scratching their heads since *The Book of Thoth* was first published in 1944. Even prior to publication it was causing much confusion, as evidenced in a letter from Lady Frieda Harris (the creator of the fabulous artwork which constitute the cards of the Thoth Tarot) to Aleister Crowley, dated September 18, 1939. The following passage is quoted in Lon Milo DuQuette's book, *Understanding Aleister Crowley's Thoth Tarot*, page 86:

> *Also I don't feel you have made it clear about Tzaddi – The Emperor. Can't you have a diagram? I have been reading your book to Ann Christie in the evenings & altho she is very interested she could not understand your book and I am not sure I did in the end. It will be a point about which there will be the most argument... is the Emperor to be numbered* [XVII] *or IV or 4 or 17 ditto Star... I expect I have still got it all wrong but if I have, you must be clearer...*

Sadly, the plea of Lady Harris for clarity was left unanswered, at least in the publicly available texts. It falls to ourselves to attempt to understand the significance of "*Tzaddi* is not the Star" in relation to its impact on the Tarot and the arrangement of the cards upon the Tree of Life. The best place to begin, I feel, is by looking at the cards themselves.

Probably the most immediate thing to strike the viewer when looking at the cards is the vivid use of colour. This is especially the case with *The Emperor* – the card is on fire! The colours in the Thoth Tarot are extremely important; nothing is there by accident. In the case of the Trumps, the colours are taken from the King, Queen, Emperor and Empress Scales of colour for the Path they are assigned to. (See *Liber 777*, columns XV-XVIII)

The colours of *The Emperor* card are those assigned to the 15th Path – Scarlet, Red, Brilliant Flame, and Glowing Red. Those of *The Star* are assigned to the 28th Path – Violet, Sky Blue, Blueish Mauve, and White, tinged purple.

This alone doesn't help us to fix the positions of the Trumps upon the Tree, as *Liber 777* also gives the letters *Hé* for *The Emperor* and *Tzaddi* for *The Star*. The changes resulting from the reception of *The Book of The Law* had not been incorporated into the tables of *Liber 777*. It is still possible that the Trumps have switched places and taken all their old attributions with them. The colours, and the reasoning behind the

colours, is still worthy of note, however. Colour is a very important part of Magick in all of its manifestations, and is often overlooked beyond the simple recognition of red = fire, blue = water, etc.

Turning our attention to the imagery on the cards, the first problem we can clear up readily enough is that of the Astrological associations. The fiery colouring of *The Emperor* card, along with the multiple depictions of the Ram and the blazing Sun, clearly identify this card as being associated with Aries, as Aries means Ram and is the sign wherein the Sun is Exalted, and which is ruled by the fiery planet, Mars. The constituents of *The Star* card – the cool, calming colours, the cups bearing water, the image of our Lady Nuit and the great sea or river – identify it with Aquarius, the water bearer, ruled by Saturn, wherein Neptune ("Lord of Ocean, and especially of that Oceanus the great river that girdles the whole earth." – Crowley, *The Complete Astrological Writings*, Tandem, 1976, page 67) is exalted.

The Zodiacal attributions are of course printed on the 'name-plate' on the front of the Trumps. However, given the conflicting information contained within *The Book of Thoth*, it is a welcome relief to find corroboration within the artwork of the cards themselves.

Again, this doesn't help us to fix the positions of the Trumps upon the Tree. However, we can at least now say with some certainty that if the Trumps *have* switched positions, they have taken all their old attributions, apart from the Hebrew letters, with them. In order to fix the positions we have to look a little more deeply at the cards; more specifically, at the relationships of these Trumps with the other cards around them:

> *Each card is, in a sense, a living being; and its relations with its neighbours are what one might call diplomatic.*
>
> (*The Book of Thoth*, pages 47-8)

Each card shares a special relationship with every other card, but some relationships are closer than others. *The Emperor*, for example, shares an especially close relationship with *The Empress*; the titles of these Trumps alone give that much away. This particular relationship is a very complex one and bears close examination. Let's begin with *The Emperor*.

The head and arms of *The Emperor* form a triangle, which sits atop the cross formed by his legs, creating the symbol for Alchemical Sulphur.

> *Sulphur is the male fiery energy of the Universe, the Rajas of Hindu philosophy. This is the swift creative energy, the initiative of all Being. The power of the Emperor is a generalization of the paternal power.*
>
> (*The Book of Thoth*, pages 77-8)

Our Emperor is thus identified with the *Yod* of Tetragrammaton and with the All-Father of Chokmah.

> *There is one further symbol of importance. His shield represents the two-headed eagle crowned with a crimson disk. This represents the red tincture of the alchemist, of the nature of gold, as the white eagle shown in Atu III pertains to his consort, The Empress, and is lunar, of silver.*
>
> (*The Book of Thoth*, page 78)

The "red tincture of the alchemist" is born from the white tincture, just as *The Emperor*, numbered IV, could be said to have "been born from", or be a further development of, *The Empress*, numbered III. According to alchemical doctrine, once the red and the white tinctures have been obtained, these are to be purified and united:

> *You will come upon two colours, namely, white and red, representing the Moon and the Sun ... and Sun and Moon are gold and silver which must enter into union.*
>
> (*Gloria Mundi sonsten Paradeiss Taffel*, Frankfurt, 1620)

Expressed alternatively – *The Emperor* and *The Empress* must marry. This will truly be a match made in heaven, as a closer look at *The Empress* reveals.

The Empress lies on the 14th Path and is the Planetary Trump of Venus. The symbol of Venus connects all the Sephiroth of the Tree of Life: the circle connects Kether, Chokmah, Chesed, Tiphareth, Geburah and Binah; the cross connects Tiphareth, Yesod, Malkuth, Hod and Netzach. As Venus represents Love, this implies that the nature of Love is Union and that, as Crowley says, "The fundamental formula of the Universe is Love." (*The Book of Thoth*, page 75)

This Trump then contains all: as the White Tincture she represents Mercury; in her gesture of *Mater Triumphans* she represents Salt; and she contains within her the Red Tincture of Sulphur, for it is from the White Tincture that the Red is extracted. The Pelican in the lower left corner of the card is a further symbol of Sulphur, but also represents the Alchemical process of reflux distillation – the substance under treatment is boiled and the vapour condenses in the glass head, then flows back, establishing a process of circulation to extract the essence. It is also possible to say that she is awaiting fertilisation, that she is pregnant, and that she is already a mother.

The symbology is so confused here because the process of the Great Work 'passes through' *The Empress* and returns several times. The images of each of these stages are shown in the one card, and if they are analysed separately one can get well and truly lost in them:

> *Because of the beauty of the symbol, because of its omniform presentation, the student who is dazzled by any given manifestation may be led astray. In no other card is it so necessary to disregard the parts, to concentrate upon the whole.*
>
> (*The Book of Thoth*, page 77)

"To concentrate upon the whole": the letter assigned to the 14th Path, and thus to *The Empress*, is of the greatest help to us. This letter is *Daleth*, which means 'a door'. *The Empress* is the door through which everything enters into manifestation, and through which everything returns whence it came. *The Empress* is here clearly identified with the Eternal Mother and with Babalon the Great Whore; the identification with Binah and the first *Hé* of Tetragrammaton is implicit.

So *The Emperor* is the Father, the *Yod* of Tetragrammaton, and *The Empress* is the Mother, the first *Hé*. It is these two who must unite to produce the Son and the Daughter, the *Vav* and the *Hé* final. Appropriately, this wedding takes place in Atu VII, *The Lovers*, which lies on the 18th path and to which is attributed the Zodiacal sign of Gemini, the twins.

In the system of the old attributions to the Paths, these three Trumps – *The Emperor*, *The Empress* and *The Lovers* – form a triangle on the Tree of Life connecting Chokmah, Binah and Tiphareth. At the very heart of this triangle lies the 'un-numbered Sephira' Da'ath which, by ancient tradition, was the position occupied by Malkuth, the Daughter and *Hé* final, prior to the 'Fall'. In a more significant form of expression: the Trumps representing the Father, the Mother and their Union, connect the Sephiroth representing the Father, the Mother and the Son, and contain the Sephira representing the Daughter.

Finally we can fix the positions of *The Emperor* and *The Star* on the Tree of Life. It is *The Emperor* who impregnates *The Empress* to produce the twins; if the Trumps are counter changed, who then makes *The Empress* pregnant – *The Star*? This is clearly absurd, since *The Star* is another manifestation of Our Lady Nuit, as is *The Empress*. To place *The Star* in the position of impregnating *The Empress* would take us back to the idea of parthenogenesis, characteristic of the Aeon of Isis, whereby the female brings forth life spontaneously, with no input from the male (see Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice*, Chapter 5).

If the Trumps don't counter change their positions, then the letters must. Since each letter of the Hebrew alphabet is also a number, in changing the letter attributed to *The Emperor* and to Path 15, we have also changed the numerical value of that card and Path. This will have an impact on those cards and Paths most closely related. As we have seen, the closest relations for the purposes of this article are *The Empress*

on Path 14 and *The Lovers* on Path 17. The letters and numerical values, including the new letter attribution of *The Emperor*, are thus:

The Empress = *Daleth* = 4

The Lovers = *Zain* = 7

The Emperor = *Tzaddi* = 90

The total obtained is 101, which enumerates MLVKH, "Kingdom; a virgin princess; esp. THE Virgin Princess" (Crowley, *Sepher Sephiroth*). Thus the Daughter (*Hé* final) is revealed in the enumeration of the cards which link the Sephiroth representing the Father (*Yod*), Mother (*Hé*) and Son (*Vav*).

One further relationship to look at is revealed by the colour attributions of the Queen Scale. The relevant lines from *Liber 777* col. XVI are:

Path Number	**Name**	**Colour**
2	Chokmah	Grey
3	Binah	Black
14	The Empress	Sky blue
15	The Emperor	Red
17	The Lovers	Pale Mauve
31 *bis*	Da'ath	Deep purple, nearly black

As we have seen, *The Empress* (Sky-blue) and *The Emperor* (Red) unite in *The Lovers* (Pale Mauve). Mauve is described as a greyish-purple, and so is a combination of Sky-blue and Red with the Grey of Chokmah. This indicates the product of the union which is of the nature of Chokmah, the Father – that is, The Son.

Da'ath is coloured a 'Deep purple, nearly black' and so is a combination of Sky blue and Red with the Black of Binah. Again, this indicates the product of the union which is of the nature of Binah, the Mother – in this case, The Daughter.

Had we counter changed the positions of *The Emperor* and *The Star*, these associations would have been mutilated. It seems clear that the letter attributions must be counter changed, but the Trumps themselves are to remain where they are.

So what is the great significance to Thelema in all of this? Well, the Great Work in the current Aeon is the achievment of the Knowledge and

Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, thus reconnecting across the Abyss with the Supernal Triad. By simply moving the letter *Tzaddi* to Path 15 and achieving the enumeration of 101 for our family triangle, we re-identify Malkuth with Da'ath and place ourselves in harmonious conjunction with Tiphareth (the Holy Guardian Angel) and The Supernals.

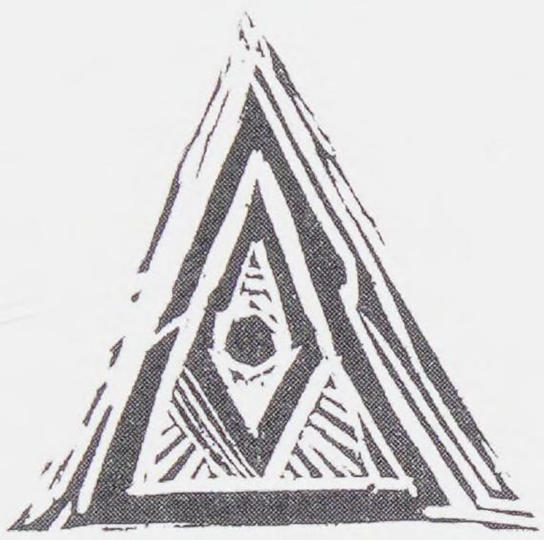
There seems to have been an initial reluctance on the part of Aleister Crowley to move the letters, as if the fact of their being attributed to the Paths in the existing alphabetical sequence was something not to be disturbed. There is really no reason for this way of thinking, since a cursory glance at historical representations of the Tree of Life will reveal many different patterns of letter attributions, all of which were traditional within certain groups at various times. For example, the Ari pattern developed by the Lurianic School even altered the positioning of some of the interconnecting Paths themselves. When it came to designing the cards it is clear that Crowley revised his thinking; he just forget to tell anyone about it!

The Tree of Life diagram is our map; it should be fluid and show us where we are, how we got here and where we go next. The new arrangement shows us that next step without ambiguity: it's time to go home.

Of course this is not the full story. In this short article there is insufficient space to explore fully the wider-ranging implications of this idea. For instance, if the letters of *The Star* and *The Emperor* have counter changed their positions while the Trumps remained, why should the letters of *Lust* and *Adjustment* not have done the same thing? What is the significance of attributing the letter *Hé* to *The Star*? Should the new letter attributions apply at all stages of personal development?

These questions and others have been left open for the reader to explore for him/herself. The most valuable knowledge is that gained through personal insight. I only hope that this article may serve as a stepping-stone toward personal revelation. It is important that we each undertake our own voyage of discovery, rather than simply accepting a version we read in a book, even when that book is written by someone as highly respected as Aleister Crowley.

THE APHOTIC ORACLE



Daniel Lett

THE APHOTIC ORACLE

I

Fiction is the fulcrum on which all magic rests. While there is a rich history of occultists using fiction as a vehicle for presenting ideas, thoughts and images in a manner more acceptable to straightforward mental conditions, that particular use of fiction does not explore its full potential.

Kenneth Grant is probably the only occultist to take the notion of fiction as a tangible magical tool further, and demonstrate its full power. *Against The Light*, taken in tandem with *The Ninth Arch*, is the supreme example of a certain formula that one can extrapolate from the preceding *Trilogies* volumes and which is entirely simple in its manner of expression and method.

FICTIONAL, 186, (FICT – ION – AL),[1] is the key to understanding much of the inner workings of the Grant books and novels; but it also has a much broader significance, for the formula is central to the creative will of initiates and non-initiates alike.

186, is, of course, 93 x 2. The 2 here represents *Chokmah*, 'Wisdom' or 'Light'. This 2 is also *Ab*, the Father: in this case, of energy and rebellion.

It is in a Jungian notion of fiction that we all exist. As human beings, we are all subjective, perceived experiences. Similarly all 'thought', all internal creation, *exists*. It is as real as 'our self'.

Where do the old gods dwell? In the creative imagination.

If the present is all that is 'current', and the past ceases to 'exist', then

1. *Fict* is a word meaning 'an imaginative creation'. As such, it is closely related to the Hebrew IHI, 'let there be', and for the purposes of this exposition the gematrical value of 25 is substituted for FICT. The second element, ION, yields 130. The final element, AL, gives us 31. The total of these is 186.

the past must become a story – a mere memory, a figment of the imagination, regardless of how 'real' it is.

It is a fiction.

The future of course can only be 'imagined' – a fiction too.

What of a house? Built in, say, 1800. Does it exist? Yes, as we perceive and experience it individually. Does it have a past? Yes, on paper, in photographs, in memory, by oral tradition.

But the water gets murky when we seek to acknowledge existence as an infinite state. The current collective perceptions of the house are its only sign of existence. Whether its brick and mortar were around and similarly perceived in 1800 is no proof of its existence now.

But it is creativity itself that is the biggest fiction of them all.

William Blake identified Los as being the creative imagination. With the construction of his own cosmology, Blake set out not only to create an alternative testament, but also to free himself mentally and physically from the constraints of reality. His invented, but fully realised, personal mythology went no short way to fulfilling this desire and leaving open to others in his wake the means by which to visit the new worlds which can be brought forth through creativity.

Peter Ackroyd rightly judged that Blake felt "the dimensions of material existence are a prison from which we must escape". We must remember that Los represents not simply our imagination, but the *worth* of our imagination, the worth of creative endeavour itself. It is this worth which harnesses its own explosive energy.

Importantly, Los is the child of Enion (Lust) and Tharmas (Body) and the father of Orc (Energy). Los itself is a reflex of Sol, and he is therefore a Sun King, the dominant male principle.

Enion and Tharmas are simple signifiers of the *desire* element of art, the passion that pours forth from the heart onto the page.

All art is divine. Every smudge and sketch, stroke of paint, and trace of lead, has power and signal. Art is life (Sol). It is the egg of love and the child of thought. Perfection is entirely unrelated to the subjective and objective results.

Los is the worth of the endeavour itself, all such 'art' being entirely equal. The only proviso to this is that the art must be true. It cannot be fakery, or mere impressions of the work of someone else.

A lack of obvious artistic ability, however, does not in any way denote a lesser creative faculty or imagination. Indeed, there are many artists

whose intent is so perversely neutral as to squeeze all creative will from their finished art.

Art is resultant of impulse, impulse being a condition of desire, but more potent in itself. For the creative impulse – to make, to form, to construct – is free-ranging and unfettered by reason (Urizen).

Los/Sol (160) is also 'humblest' and 'himself' indicating the need for creative thought to be non-contrived and 'of the self'.

Enion (180)[2] is the 'beginning'; but also the 'fool' and the 'son'; i.e., lust being the first step of the 'will', and reproducing unto itself when in union with Tharmas (316). It is also the 'stealer', the body being the vehicle for creative work conceived in the mind; and also 'starlit', indicating its subservience to a higher domain.

2. The initial letter E being a vowel, it is not here enumerated.

Los too is 'totemite', a member of a family or group distinguished by a totem – in this case, the signal produced by the body onto the 'page'.

II

Desire is in itself an elemental. By that I mean that it is a functioning self or id, entirely separate to the ego.

Hyperbial Will is a simple method of focusing and using the *impulse* (desire as purity) as part of normal creative practice.

It is at the precise moment of unorganised chaotic mental action, when the pencil hits the page for example, that the Will surges into effect and seals within the art the focus of the artist.

The impulse must not be consciously debated prior to execution. The impulse is related to the current mindset or zone of the executor; but meditation upon the desires of the self must be regularly attended to around times of hyperbial creativity, in order to predetermine, in a similarly chaotic fashion, what impulses present themselves.

The supplemental elements of art (all art, reverse art and sacred art) comprise the masks of adoration. All reality is shadow. All art is reflex. All life, therefore, is impulse.

In the moment of thought to expression to unconscious impulse lies a netherworld in which dwells the *previousism*. It is a slight twist in the 'on' mental faculty. The nearest example would be *déjà vu*, but it is more realised and can be picked out in the resultant creation as the strain of energy immediate to the viewer. It is the prior impulse, usually the causal.

Perceptions of reality cause the previousism to come into being, for the space between the various mental strata becomes a gap that must be

filled: there is a leap taken from the current strain of thought in the mind of the artist to the impulsive expulsion of idea into the art form.

III

A work of fiction exists outside of itself as an adjunct to its creator. Any fiction, existing either as thought or as tangible art, is in itself a sorcerous spell, designed to act upon whomever may encounter it.

Time is an arbitrary association of no innate meaning or power.

The names of the true self are the only points of power. Power derived from the self is truth, and truth finds its own graphical symbolism separate to the pre-ordained tradition.

Beauty is non-existent. A chimera, it repels the consciousness by identification. The brain must not suppose the results past the point of action.

Talismanic renderings are of the eye. By statement of intent and backwards (forwarding) oppression, the idolatry creatux is a god of all moments. Instilled within the circle of such forms is the sphere, the sphinx of death.

The sacred figure, morphed from the moulded 'I', is a corporal of the set.

The free will of the 'I', lacking sheer lust in pleasure, must denigrate its idealistic holy self in order to obtain the sincere root-forms of the ideas within the brain and empyreal previousisms.

This self, as defined for the non-self, frees the spinal embrace of corrupted visions as ultimate desire for the older gods.

The union of impulse and lust, of excremental non-thought and the ultimate manifestation of action, may bring wrath on thyself but for the being of the true Jerusalem, having risen for joy.

The mechanisms for execution of the will are reliant on the inert spaces between the real and unreal, the attitudinal imagery of the individual solar sphere. The twine of the divine consciousness is the phallic thrust toward the giant celestial framework.

Each page must be revered, each line ignored. The primary aim of the expressed rejection of outwardly logical acts is the deferring of the aware notions of the powerful within-ness into impulse. There these corrupted visions can be collected.

Truth is the enemy of magic. In truth is aggression and unlove, the scientific aim of reason and of fortunate splendour unobsessed by the

outcasts and madmen. In deceit lies the 'truth', the obvious Jerusalem risen around us and the final stronghold of the self. Purity is reality and truth is abundant in lies.

The loneliness of the soul is an inherent human trait, an atavistic wisdom from past ages.

The ache of the soul for additional being is from the primitive mind. The collective spiritual lore, continuous only in its revolutions, is the ideal heart. The 'I' must remain as is: a vessel for magic, reflected only in the impulsive leaps of the imaginative mind.

Sensation is dusk. Art as chaos is unusable, and perverted by lack of belief.

The emotional reflex and associated items – controlled creation is a natural impulse but should not be confused with *conscious* creation.

The monodynastic reality we inhabit is a scrawl on the giant shale of the universe. It is a scratch, careering across the continents, throwing black charcoal lines over the sun. Lifted from the ends of this earth, it is the suffering beam of all life. We inbreed the science of the will. We turn our heads to catch a glimpse of the past. We arc our necks, preparing for the cosmic eclipse of the soul. And then the light goes out and we start again, on a brand new page.

IV

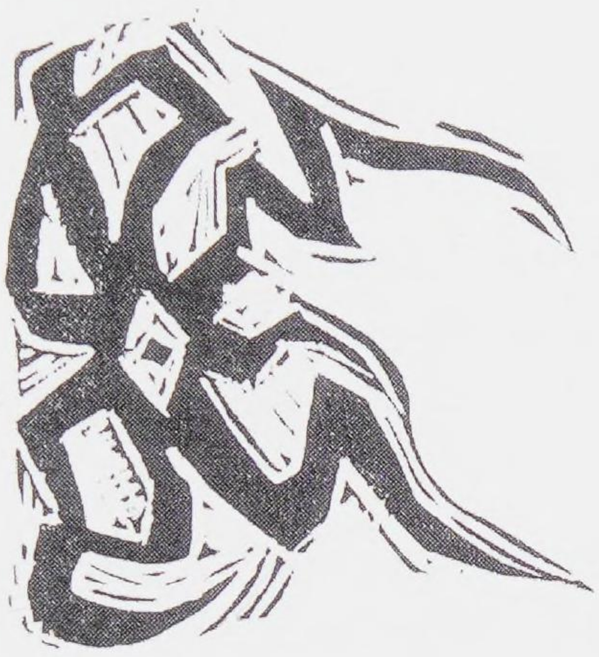
In activitating the formula of FICTIONAL, all certainty regarding truth is automatically discarded. The rational notions we adhere to daily are simply a point of view.

Equally, our perception of art as synonymous with 'artists' must be altered and expanded. The typical sense of the word *art* is its 'lie'. In creativity lies the only *truth* needed in magic.

The cult of Los separates art from philosophy. Creed has no place in creation by impulse. The validity of inaccurate portraiture has to be acknowledged.

Belief is a graphic dynamism of the self. It is a thirst for expression, and within any psychological framework lies complete manifestation – magnificent, terrifying and glorious – and it is within reach, given a paper and a pen.

NIGHTMARE SORCERY



Richard Gavin

NIGHTMARE SORCERY

Darkness is the progenitor of Gnosis. Like rare fungi or a lunar flower, Gnosis blooms not in the harsh light of the rational intellect, but in the dank cellars of the psyche, the abyss of submerged consciousness.

Indeed, Gnosis is an outgrowth of the Abyss.

It is therefore imperative for those individuals that are seeking Nightside Gnosis, not only to look for worldly gates to the Abyss, but also to cultivate their own gates within inner-space.

One method that can potentially increase the frequency of shadowy revelations is a magical technique, developed in Canadian climes, dubbed *Nightmare Sorcery*.

1. Calling to Beyond

Because the Nightside Current is not rooted in the terrestrial plane, it is rather fitting that the nightmare, with its aura of fear and uncertainty, serves as a conduit for unseen forces to inscribe their message into an Initiate's psyche.

Of course, it would be foolish to presume that all nightmares are the servitors of the Nightside Current, attempting to pass on some form of Gnosis. Indeed, many of the dreams that cause us to jolt awake in the dead of night are really nothing more than psychological flotsam, the residue left over from the frenzy of modern daily life. A large percentage of nightmares can undoubtedly be attributed to an unpaid credit card bill or a misplaced set of house keys, rather than to any sort of transcendentalism.

Yet there are those nightmares whose salient nature, whose 'otherness', seems to reach beyond the scope of the mental baggage we carry into our dreams. These are the truly Gnostic Nightmares: experiences that should be studied, yoked, and cherished.

A common example of this type of nightmare would be: "In the dream I was wandering through my grandmother's house, except that in the dream I *knew* that it wasn't my grandmother's house. It looked just like it, but there was *something* about it that told me I was not in a familiar place."

Obviously the "grandmother's house" of the dreaming mind is simply a reflection from one's customised memory pool – a convenient handle to which we can cling until we get our bearings within the dreamscape. But contrary to what many new age pundits maintain, dream symbols are rarely as significant as the *sensation* of the nightmare itself. The symbols themselves do not require interpretation, for they are merely springboards to launch us into deep, non-representational levels of sub-consciousness (i.e. the Abyss, the Void).

To truly appreciate and utilise nightmare gnosis, it must be stated that the *feeling of 'otherness'*, which tells us that the dream environment is a subtler manifestation of *maya*, is in reality the tangible undercurrent of the noumenal Abyss. By cultivating a deeper awareness of the nightmare realm, one can actually perceive the thrumming energy of the Great Void, the universal nothingness that yawns beyond the nightmare realm.

A feeling of sinking into a void, or of losing one's 'self' inside the nightmare – *these* are the truly important elements of nightmare Gnosis, *not the horrific images of the nightmare itself.* The dissolution of one's concept of 'I' is at the root of the unease that comes with dark dreams.

Ultimately, the nightmare is the arena of the Daemon Choronzon.

According to Kenneth Grant in *The Magical Revival* (Frederick Muller Ltd., 1972), Choronzon's attributes include dispersion, lack of control and impotence; all of which one endures during the Gnostic Nightmare.

One can recognise Choronzon's attributes during those tinges of dreamer's intuition that lead us to conclude that we are travelling through a region whose appearance is little more than a veneer, stretched across something vast and potentially monstrous. From this perspective, one could then theorise that our nightmares do not belong exclusively to us; we are but one facet of them, and therefore at the whim of Choronzon.

A dreadful revelation occurs the instant we perceive that the dream's true face is veiled to us. The true face can only be vaguely sensed; yet even though we might only glimpse a few moments worth of this illusion, we are awed by its cohesiveness. In fact, we seem to become aware

instantaneously of the dream's history as soon as we begin to dream. We also recognise our responsibility in acting out our part of the dream's future; for, like it or not, we have been summoned to that particular sphere and cannot wake until we have done *something* to make our presence known.

This is related to another common element of nightmares, and that is the feeling of being watched or stalked by something inside the dream. This Watcher might well be Choronzon.

One can never be sure whether Choronzon's intentions are benign or malevolent. So, quite naturally, we subsequently behave with uncertainty and fear. And whether we wind up running for our lives, or seeking an object that cannot be found (such as the common fear of not be able to insert a key into a locked door while our pursuer draws ever-nearer), we invariably feel ineffectual, and we know that Choronzon *will* eventually reach us.

However, this sense of powerlessness need not be. For the nightmare can serve as a portal towards deeper dimensions of consciousness if one chooses to explore them, though the process is both complex and perilous.

What follows are methods that can be utilised by Initiates who have an interest in appeasing Choronzon and ensorceling (encircling) nightmare energies.

2. Cataloguing the Nightmare

The simplest way to begin Nightmare Sorcery is to create a nightmare journal. Catalogue as many of your nightmares that you can recall, in as much detail as possible. Whether these nightmares seem to have any apparent occult energy or not is irrelevant. Simply make a document of all your most fearful dreams. (Note: nightmares from your childhood are especially important, due to the fact that in youth inner impressions and external forces are often wonderfully interwoven.)

Once you have your nightmares recorded, organise them in chronological order. With this timeline in place, you can then begin to map out any common threads that might have existed within your nightmares since childhood, but which have gone unnoticed until now. These commonalities need not be overtly Nightside in nature. They may be elements as simple as: "Almost all of my nightmares take place inside old houses." Or: "In over a dozen nightmares I was scared to look at myself in a mirror."

The next addition to your list of commonalities would be an inventory of the moments that horrified you most during your nightmares. The

majority of nightmares often end very abruptly, with the dreamer catapulted back suddenly into the physical world. Bearing this in mind, what was happening to you at the very instant before your most horrific dreams ended? Did your dream pursuer finally clutch you? Did it end with you finally going into the attic in the dream house, the place which you somehow knew you were forbidden to enter?

Keen study of your journal will prove that often the instant before you were jolted awake your ability to visualise your dream-self vanished. If you were being pursued in your dream, for instance, you may have had the jolting sensation of being grabbed or captured by your pursuer. These hypnagogic jerks that hurl the dreamer back into wakefulness are actually evidence of the dissolution of the ego. The feeling of being captured causes a sudden booming shockwave of terror, because at that very instant you are in direct communion with the nothingness beyond Daäth. The illusion of 'I' dissipates as you are ushered into the noumenal abyss from which all phenomena are born.

Place all this patterned information together until it becomes cohesive. If your nightmares often play out inside houses, conjure one of these nightmare houses and yoke it. You may wish to sketch the house, or write a bit of prose describing it in detail. Know this environment. Then add to it those elements that were most terrifying to you. If you were also afraid to look at yourself in a mirror, then be sure to fill your nightmare environment with mirrors.

If you were jolted awake by a feeling of being stalked in your nightmare environment, then you should add to your nightmare environment signs of habitation so that when you enter it during Sorcery, you will feel as though you're not alone.

I recommend meditating on this composite prior to falling asleep, and doing so for several consecutive nights. Plant this image in your mind. Once the environment has had time to incubate in your subconscious, it will hatch. This will lead you to the next step in Nightmare Sorcery.

3. Conjuring the Nightmare Through 'The Little Death'

'Le petit mort' is an old French term meaning 'the Little Death.' It refers to the time immediately after sexual release, when our appetites are temporarily sated and we feel content, weightless and free. The 'Little Death' is the prime arena for Nightmare Sorcery.

Sexual release is the essential first phase. This can be performed auto-erotically or with a partner. The orgasm should be strong. It is also

advisable to create a dream fetish that can be used to store the charged sexual fluids.

Once sexual release has occurred, the initiate should assume the Corpse Posture and begin *pranayama*. There are two possibilities: either standard Yogic *pranayama*, or the Lunar Breath. This latter method is common to scrying practices and relies on breathing through the left (or lunar) nostril, visualising each breath as a long strand of glittering silver.

With *pranayama* established, focus your mind on your nightmare environment, but do not think of it as a two-dimensional illustration. Visualise it as a panoramic environment through which you are moving. Wander the house and focus on any details that might manifest. In the beginning this will feel like simple daydreaming, but it is important to follow your imagination, for it will gradually bridge the gap between mundane consciousness and true lucidity. Familiarise yourself with every inch of your environment.

It is imperative that you do not project too much onto your nightmare environment, for there is a natural tendency to make it pleasing rather than disquieting. Creating a cosy dream temple might be appropriate for other methods of magic, but it will only weaken (or eliminate) the impact of Nightmare Sorcery.

The addition of necessary magical implements now comes into play.

Create a personalised sigil or talisman that you can then 'plant' inside your nightmare space. This way the evidence of your presence is always there.

Now you must choose an area of the nightmare space to act as your ritual chamber. Here you should project two very important implements. One is your sacrifice to Choronzon. An apt offering would be to imagine a cage of live pigeons and a ceremonial blade that you keep stored in your ritual area.

The second implement is a tool for binding. This can be a fetish, a spirit-trap, a drawn chalk circle – anything that you would use in terrestrial rituals to bind or ensorcel energy.

Nightmare Sorcery now reaches its most difficult stage:

4. The Calling of Choronzon

One's chances of achieving contact with Choronzon will increase greatly once the nightmare ritual area has been established. This psychic temple affords Choronzon a gateway or portal into your psyche. To show one's willingness to go beyond the Mauve Zone, and into the uncertain

Darkness of Daäth, one must appease the Nightmare Daemon with passionate Invocations and suitable offerings.

Craft a triangular talisman, preferably from black wax. Imbue the talisman with sexual fluids from your 'little deaths', and then place it under your bed (either in a special box or wrapped in fine cloth). As you conjure your nightmare temple, draw the latent energies from your talisman and weave them into your vision.

Learn an Invocation to Choronzon, preferably one of your own creation. Use this like a mantra during your pre-slumber meditations. When you drift into REM sleep and dreaming begins, the first (and most important) method is to establish lucidity. There are many tried-and-tested methods one can employ; including trying to see one's hands, or uttering a statement which proclaims that you are dreaming.

Once lucid, you must now Invoke Choronzon from *within* the dream. I recommend making a sacrifice. Will your dream-self toward the temple room you have created. Collect your sacrificial birds and commence the sacrifice and Invocation to Choronzon. (Note: invocation is equally effective as a *non-verbal action*. I found success by opening a locked door inside my dream house (in this case, the cellar door) and then bowing my head in reverence to the approaching force that I had called.) Try and recall the *sensation* (as opposed to the imagery) of the most terrifying moments of your past nightmares, the ones you have catalogued and injected into the nightmare temple where you now stand as celebrant. As your fear increases, Choronzon will draw nearer.

But what He reveals to each nightmare sorcerer is highly individualised, and therefore beyond the scope of this preliminary article.

However, one's 'Spirit-Traps' become useful when this contact is made, for they can tether symbolically whatever Outside energies are being ushered into the nightmare space. The dreamer may then utilise these forces. Learn from them. Draw power from them. But be sure that with each encounter, you offer these energies the sacrifice and reverence they deserve.

It is important to expand your nightmare journal with each new experience. Record their details and incorporate each new element into your nightmare environment in order to enrich the depth and texture of your future Work.

In closing, it must be stated that Nightmare Sorcery is a *highly dangerous* magical technology. By trapping (and in essence vampirising) Outer Forces, one willingly dives into the great Void, weakens the comforting parameters of 'self', and drinks deeply of the *no-thing*-ness that looms at the very heart of Reality.

Lamia by Peter Smith

THE ALTAR

Peter Smith

(for Kenneth Grant)

THE ALTAR

I

For many years the book had seemed just barely out of reach – as elusive and tantalising as an erotic fantasy. *The Altar of Atargatis*, by Montague Phinn, was itself the fever-dream of the occult bibliophile – a tome whose very existence was endlessly debated amongst the informal fraternity of secondhand book dealers and collectors of rare editions, for whom it had assumed the status of an inverse Grail.

And it was to just such a purveyor of the obscure, the esoteric and recondite in literature that I made my final approach – a forlorn last chance to locate the object of an all-consuming passion, to satisfy which I would stretch to any length, or cost.

Simon Fearnley, proprietor and sole-trader of Parnassus Press, lived surrounded by his stock-in-trade in a small terrace house in York – one of a row of pale-brick Victorian terraces bordering the River Ouse on the city's outskirts, just outside the circle of Roman walls. Over the years of our correspondence, Fearnley had supplied many of the more unusual and hard-to-obtain items in my collection; he had an almost preternatural ability, or talent, to ferret out the most tenuous, semi-mythical of volumes. Mouldering copies of Gracq's surreal *Chateau d'Algol*; the unpublished autobiography of the Comte de Lautréamont; *Stars of the Abyss* by Delmira Agustini – they had found a late but lasting sanctuary on my shelves, purely due to Simon's doggèd determination to follow every fading paper-trail of booklists, scour the serried ranks of brown Victorian spines in dimly-lit libraries, browse through auction stalls on wet Sunday afternoons, in a systematic and synchronistic search for

incandescent texts of moribund obscurity. Never yet – once offered the bait of a suggestive title and an intriguing précis – had he failed to run down the bibliographic prey.

So my fixated desire to finally hold in my hands a copy of Phinn's occult treatise would find its ultimate resolution within a dusty, dusk-litten library on a summer's evening in the ancient, walled city; river mist from the nearby Ouse passing faintly outside sash windows, ghostly sheets penetrated by the slant rays of the dying sun.

Montague Phinn, whose only known writings on magic and the occult were collected in a single volume by a specialist publisher toward the end of the nineteenth century, was himself almost as elusive a subject. Indeed, the identity of the author of *The Altar* was like the exhalation of a shadow, alighting only briefly to leave curious and reticent tracings in the memoirs and correspondence of his contemporaries in the tenebrous *demi-monde* of late-Victorian occultism. A passing allusion to a meeting with Phinn found in the diary of a lesser-known member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn; a handful of faded letters in the possession of a neurasthenic decadent artist, after his suicide in the filthy squalor of a south London slum; a handwritten docket in copperplate listing the fleeting presence of *The Altar of Atargatis* in the private library of a Masonic Lodge in Bradford – these faint tracings were all the evidence left by the author of the book as it made its clandestine path down through the decades of the twentieth century, like some fantastical, literary night-moth; a nyctalopian narrative.

And, if the provenance of the physical vessel of Phinn's occult manifesto was as faint as the skeleton of a leaf, then details of its actual content were more insubstantial still. Though the book had been mentioned within articles reprinted in various academic journals of contemporary anthropology – in pamphlets of curious new-age cults and dubious secret societies; and in the speculative theses of students of comparative religion and parapsychology, wishing to strike a note of daring controversy with their tutors – nothing beyond the analysis of the book's evocative title, and some insubstantial fragments of second-hand commentary, could be boiled down from the thin soup of heresy and speculation surrounding Phinn's literary legacy.

Regarding the eponymous goddess, Atargatis, diligent etymological and historical research had uncovered the basic facts. The ancient Syrian moon-goddess – bare-breasted, fish-tailed, crowned and sceptred, and with snaky flowing tresses – she seemed the archetypal mermaid, fulfilling the rôle of a sister to the Phoenician Dagon, who shared her finny physiognomy. More widely recognised, the male Dagon was originally a corn deity, whose nature was perhaps erroneously re-cast in the form of

an aquatic godform at the time of the first extensive excavations of Middle Eastern sites. And indeed, it was this symbology which had served as the focus of a certain modern, quasi-religious group: a secretive, generational cult whose scandalous activities were brought to an abrupt conclusion by federal authorities in New England, during raids on a number of decaying seaport communities in February, 1928.

So the presence of Atargatis seemed to hang in the twilight as the evening began to fade, like some submarine eidolon of erotic mystery; the avatar of a current of primeval magic and ecstasy whose infernal bible was *The Altar*. But these traces were to evaporate alongside my hopes of ever acquiring Phinn's book – for Fearnley's extensive enquiries and exhaustive investigation into the darkest corners of the hermetic world of occult literature had proved utterly fruitless. There now seemed little doubt that, for the first time in my lifelong career in seeking out rare and remaindered items, I had at last encountered a book which had literally vanished off the face of the earth; every single known copy of *The Altar of Atargatis* had been lost, destroyed, or simply disintegrated into dusty fragments of dissolute parchment.

Yet, within the gathering darkness, there was perhaps a glimmer of hope, a glint in the closing eyes of the goddess? – a slender opportunity to continue the quest? For although Simon had failed to locate the book – he had met someone who claimed to have read it.

II

The heady, frenetically glamorous days of the 1970s had represented something of a Golden Age for Occultism – in both the world of publishing, fine art and film-making; and in the subculture of magical groups and spiritual sects which fed avidly upon the creations of the former. The dawn of the New Aeon seemed to shine upon the earth, and the Western Esoteric Tradition provided a perfect gateway for its light.

As a young graduate, fresh from a degree course in English literature (where he submitted a ground-breaking essay on 'The Existential Fiction of the Great Beast'), Simon Fearnley had plunged with metaphorically open arms into the whirlpool of personalities, sects, cults and covens which thrived on a new-found atmosphere of artistic experimentation and the revival of Magick as an active force within society. With a kind of inevitable, magnetic attraction, he was drawn towards the ritual practices of the *Ordo Templi Orientis*, and was soon making his way though the lower grades of the Order with lightning rapidity. The culmination of Fearnley's magical career came with his ascension to the highest degree 'on the Outer'; if he was to progress further, then he must

commit himself, body and spirit, to undergo 'the crossing of the Abyss'.

It was at this stage that Fearnley first heard rumours of the existence of a renegade sect, who made astonishing and controversial claims to knowledge of a secret – and sometimes deadly – technique of the Eastern doctrine of Vama Marg Tantra. The technique, involving the total inversion (or reversal) of the physical senses, was known simply as 'the Death Tantra'. Adherents to this transgressive and heretical practice believed it to be a short-circuit to enlightenment, an instantaneous access to total initiation which could have one of only two possible outcomes – spiritual transfiguration, or physical immolation. And indeed, the deaths of several adherents to the Cult of Kali Yuga Tantra, during the performance of forbidden rites incorporating this very same technique, had lead to the total suppression of the sect by governments throughout Europe, the United States, and the entire Indian subcontinent, from where this virulent strain of tantric doctrine had originated.

Having concluded that his true course was now mapped out on 'the left-hand path', Fearnley determined to employ his many contacts on the occult scene in order to gain entrance into the Vama Marg cult. And it was now that fate dealt an ominous hand, for his enquiries lead him instead to a meeting with the so-called 'Black Alchemist': Nicholas Anton Broughton.

Notorious in literary circles for his excessively violent and perverse, self-published novels, which combined the philosophies of de Sade with the drug-enhanced fantasy visions of Baudelaire and Mallarmé, Broughton was equally reviled by the tabloid press, keen to expose the salacious rumours surrounding the author of such feverishly lurid titles as *Amfoetida*, *Diary of a Sex Vampire*, and *The Transgressions of Saint Asmodeus*. Tales of sado-masochistic orgies, copious consumption of 'controlled substances', and darker tales of human trafficking, surrounded Broughton's north London home like a clinging, miasmal fog of suggestion and suspicion. Through a mutual associate, Fearnley had learned further of Broughton's connection to the Vama Marg tantrics; though apparently some disaffections had arisen early in their association, leading to a violent falling-out, with venomous mutual vituperation following swiftly in its wake.

By making a veiled offer of a possible financial contribution to Broughton's publishing ventures, Fearnley had managed to secure an invitation to meet with the notorious Alchemist at his London address. Arriving at the imposing portico of Broughton's residence, he was suitably impressed to be admitted into the 'inner sanctum' by a dark-skinned, shaven-headed girl, attired in a costume which subtly mocked the chastity of the convent. Broughton proved to be similarly conservative in

appearance, a sober pin-striped suit eschewing the vagaries of contemporary fashion. His manner was smoothly professional, with the kind of unassuagable self-confidence and assuredness which is contagious to all who enter its circle. Fearnley found the extended handshake cool and dry, matched by the level appraisal of the Alchemist's clear, grey-violet gaze.

After a brief initial discussion of various proposed financial ventures, the conversation soon took off down a more 'initiated' track, and a relationship which bordered upon that of pupil and master was quickly established. Dazzled by Broughton's unparalleled knowledge of the hidden bywaters of 'forbidden knowledge', Fearnley found himself drawn inexorably into a dark, seething web of temptation and possibility, at the centre of which lay the shimmering veil of total corporeal transcendence and spiritual illumination. Suddenly, the convoluted arcana of magick seemed to unfold before him with the simplicity of a lotus. The mysteries of the esoteric diagram known as the Dakshini Yantra, a hypnotic linear figure reproduced on a framed parchment hung prominently in Broughton's study, opened like a window onto the prismatic vista of a virgin, unexplored terrain.

From this first encounter, a bond had been forged between seeker and guide; and in the following months, Fearnley's visits to his adopted mentor increased in both frequency and duration. It seemed natural, therefore, that the pupil should finally take up a position of full-time residence at the house, acting as a combination of assistant editor, amanuensis and man-servant.

The culmination of this relationship came with a practical demonstration by Broughton of the powers instilled within him by the dedicated, sustained practice of ceremonial magick. A unique coincidence of a rare lunar eclipse with the turning of the winter equinox, apparently provided the ideal conditions for the evocation of a particular Spirit or Sylph, an elemental entity who was to be 'coaxed out from an astral zone beyond the darkside of the Moon', to use Broughton's terminology.

An inner room within Broughton's house, selected for the purpose due to its lack of external windows, had been fitted out with the trappings and accoutrements of the Magickal Temple. Suitably robed in the hooded gown of the MagisterTempli – mauve velvet trimmed with black damask – Broughton stood motionless in the centre of the Circle, within which a pentacle and appropriate planetary symbols had been painted in silver on the rubber-coated matting which covered the entire floor. Diffuse electrical lighting, hidden within alcoves spaced with geometrical precision around the walls, lit the temple with an eerie, ice-blue glow. In the space between the perimeter of the room and the circumference of the Circle stood nine

ornate brass tripods, each holding a filigreed metal bowl filled with smouldering, mephitic incense. The whole scene had the weird, dramatic intensity of a delirious painting from the brush of a Sime or a Spare.

From the safety of a separate floor-painted triangular sanctuary, bounded on each side by the name of an appropriate protective godform, Fearnley observed the proceedings with a contradictory sense of mounting excitement and a curious emotional detachment – no doubt a side effect of the unknown elixir of blended liquid opiates which he had consumed from a large silver chalice, prior to the commencement of the Working. Broughton's female assistant, Majel, occupied a similar triangular patch, diametrically across the Circle.

In a curiously high, nasal tone, Broughton began the rite of evocation by performing a complex series of banishments: a combination of harsh vocal exclamations and manual gestures, designed to clear the ritual space of any influence or condition not pertaining or appropriate to the lunar entity which was the subject of the working. Once the desired state of 'etheric vacuum' had been achieved within the circle, the Black Alchemist began the lengthy series of incantations and invitations which would summon the elemental from its frozen, trans-lunar abode. In her turn, the priestess Majel had disrobed and, via a process of erotic self-stimulation, raised the already tense atmosphere pervading the temple to a pitch of almost unbearable nervous energy.

Indeed, it seemed that the Alchemist had the ability to somehow mould the released sexual energies of his High Priestess into a visible form: a pale, ectoplasmic shade which hovered in the air above the centre of the circle like a quivering, semi-transparent chrysalis. As the rite approached its climax, and Majel moaned like a she-lion in the throes of orgasm, the writhing, etheric cocoon had split asunder, and – as the electric lamps flared suddenly, then abruptly extinguished – the moonsprite disgorged into the temple: fish-eyes bulging, fronded gills gasping, her worm-white visage stained with a kind of irredeemable sadness and vacuity, minutely detailed and visible for a split second before the whole monstrous tableaux was plunged into abyssal darkness.

III

Years later, Fearnley was to reflect on the events of this winter night, unable to finally categorise the experience as reality, or as some kind of waking phantasm, engendered by the hypnotic influence of the Black Alchemist. Certainly, it was a fact that the only other witness – the hand-maiden Majel – had disappeared from Broughton's household before morning's light, and thus was unavailable to corroborate the appearance

of the elemental apparition at the climax of the Lunar working. Broughton himself, however, had no such reservations in proclaiming the rite as an unqualified success, and congratulating his pupil on his incomparable good fortune in having been present at such an incredibly rare and unusual manifestation.

Subsequent questioning by Fearnley on the nature of the Moon Rite – and the origin of the mysterious incantation and barbarous invocations – uncovered a hitherto unexposed strand in the magic of the Black Alchemist. And it was in the ensuing revelation that Fearnley first heard reference to the blasphemous manuscript of Montague Phinn – a series of complex ritualistic liturgies, designed specifically to facilitate traffick with just such trans-etheric entities and cosmological deities.

According to Broughton, the author of *The Altar of Atargatis* had travelled widely in the Middle East and North Africa. In the ruins of a nameless and hitherto-uncharted town on the outskirts of the Roba-El-Ehaliyeh – the so-called 'Empty Space' of Arabic legend – Phinn had uncovered an ancient manuscript, a crumbling roll of parchment sheets sheathed in an ivory case bearing miniature, bas-relief depictions of the ubiquitous mer-goddess. Returning to the England of Queen Victoria, he had set about the nigh-impossible task of deciphering the fading, cuneiform characters which covered the scrolls in endless serried rows of obscure and obfuscated text. When the chance discovery of another, annotated text of contemporary origin gave Phinn the key to the transliteration of his secret manuscript (for he had never brought the existence of his astonishing find to the attention of the academia of archaeology), the ensuing translation provided the material which was to form the core of his occult treatise, *The Altar of Atargatis* – and unleashed a devastating brainstorm in the mind of its translator.

Indeed, such was the impact of the blasphemous revelations of the ancient, unknown author of the original screed, that Phinn, in his unhinged state of mind, soon began to assume the impression that he was himself none other than the reincarnation of that lost prophet of the Lunar Goddess. His decision to transcribe and elaborate the Rituals of Atargatis became his sole *raison d'être*; eventually *The Altar* was privately printed and published by a French company specialising in works of subversive erotic literature and art reproductions. From this time on, Phinn devoted the balance of his energies to the worship and evocation of the eponymous Moon Goddess.

During the early years of the new century, the few original editions and occasional pirate copies of *The Altar of Atargatis* were circulating amongst a select, clandestine readership, in both Europe and the United States, where the creations of the Symbolist and Decadent movements

were becoming increasingly popular within the monied classes – along with a penchant for dabbling in *diablerie* and the Black Arts. It was only a matter of time before the emergence of a more formalised element of the readership of *The Altar* coalesced into a structured magical organisation named the Initiated Order of Atargatis. This secret society regularly performed the complex liturgical Rites outlined in Phinn's book; and it was at a meeting of the Ashtoreth Lodge of the Order, held in a specially converted and decorated terrace hidden away in a backwater of Bloomsbury, that Montague Phinn had first inaugurated the organised, ritualistic worship of the Mer-Goddess.

Holding sway over the congregation of the Ashtoreth Lodge was a magnetically stunning High Priestess – Lavinia Plath – a raven-haired bohemian artist, recognised in the galleries and salons of London, Paris and Berlin as much for her strikingly dominant beauty – prominent high cheekbones, triangular visage and kohl-dark glance – as for her unsettling, neo-surrealist portraits and glowering, sabbatic tableaus. A dominatrix also in the sexual sense, she vampirised the vital energies of her lovers of both sexes to feed her obsessive artistic creations and her ritual supplications to the Goddess to whom she had fervently devoted her entire being.

As Phinn's involvement with his Lodgemistress grew steadily deeper and more intimate, his new personal status was reflected in his position within the Initiates of Atargatis. As High Priest, he became Lavinia's equal, and her Magickal Partner in the sexual rites of the goddess. The object of these ritual consummations was the creation of astral entities known as *tulpas*, who could be brought to near-physical reification by the condensation of ectoplasmic substance produced via prolonged, magically-directed sexual activity; the mixed effluvia resultant from these rites forming a physical menstruum to be consumed by the participants in the Circle – the *Vinum Sabbati* of the traditional witch-cult. Conventional intercourse, with its eventual outcome of the birth of a human child, was eschewed in favour of more recondite techniques, designed to divert the fertilising energies onto a more ethereal, tenuous plane of manifestation.

However, such techniques, though generally effective within the constricts of the Moon-Rite, were by no means infallible. The outcome was inevitable: after a particularly ecstatic evocation of the lunar energies, Plath found herself to be impregnated by Phinn's seed. Nine months later – at the Autumnal Equinox – she gave birth to their Moonchild – a baby boy who was soon given up to an orphanage, unaware of the bizarre circumstances surrounding his conception, and his even stranger occult pedigree.

Such was the weird and intense tale which Fearnley had recounted to me in the rapidly darkening sitting room of the house near the river. Apparently, Phinn's only known son had been adopted at the age of three by a family living in the East End, who had recently lost their own child to an epidemic of the whooping cough. As the century turned, the familial head had found employment in the burgeoning industry of the Yorkshire cotton mills, and the Williamson family had relocated to the grimly industrial landscape of the Aire valley.

Here, the boy had grown into an introspective, inquisitive young man of unusually high intelligence and literary ability. In due course, he gained a rare scholarship to one of the newly-established universities in the north of England, and, graduating in the 1920s, went on to fulfil a career in educational publishing. Eventually he retreated to a teaching position at a tiny school in the ancient fishing port of Whitby, on the Yorkshire coast, and settled to raise a family of his own.

Little known to his father, the youngest descendant of Phinn, born just after the second world war, shared many of the abilities and obsessions of his unknown, fraternal grandfather. At an early age, he developed a consuming interest in and passion for mythology, the supernatural, and the lore of magic in all its myriad forms. A critical juncture in the development of young Thomas Williamson came at the age of thirteen, when he discovered in a dingy Scarborough bookshop a tattered, second-hand copy of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. The vivid and accurate descriptions of Thomas's home town – the scene of the eponymous Vampire Lord's arrival in England, in the form of a demonic black dog – made an indelible impression on the mind of the boy, and from that moment Thomas fell under the seductive influence of the Dracula Mythos.

Thomas would pass endless solitary hours, meditating upon the transformational nature of Stoker's Byronic Count, whilst wandering amongst the tottering, weathered headstones of Whitby Abbey, gazing with a weird, nostalgic longing over the cold, slate-grey expanse of the North Sea. Somehow, he realised with an intuitive certainty that something within his own heredity linked him to a current of primal and occult mystery, just as surely as the antihero of Stoker's gothic novel.

So it seemed wholly appropriate that, upon the birth of his own son, Thomas Williamson should choose for the child a name from the book – that of Dracula's first hapless victim, Jonathan.

IV

If the secret of Montague Phinn's legacy had been hidden from me, locked away in the forgotten grimoire of the Lunar deity, then Fearnley's

revelations of its weird and convoluted history had unwittingly given me the key with which I could unlock that particular Qliphothic cell in which Phinn's book still existed.

For, as Simon Fearnley had explained to me that night, the earth is surrounded and encased by an all-pervasive astral layer – the so-called Akashic Record – a receptive, etheric continuum in which the impressions of all powerful occult transmissions are indelibly etched. Though *The Altar* has ceased to exist in the conventional sense – as an actual, physical book, with pages of textual and diagrammatic explication – the magical workings of Montague Phinn and Lavinia Plath had served as a powerful transmitter for its primal substance, providing the psycho-sexual energies via which the Rites of Atargatis had been imprinted indelibly upon the recording membrane of the Akasha.

But the Key to this forbidden arcanum had been lost; only via the application of the correct series of qabbalistic numerations could its contents be accessed and retrieved. The sequence lay not in the Akashic Record alone, but encoded within a particular genetic profile – a unique pattern which would overlay the Qabbalahs of Atargatis to provide the nexus into which the text of the book could re-flow.

The litanies of Atargatis were not to be found by searching the incunabula of the ancient world, for the original manuscripts had been lost forever along with the last copies of Phinn's modern recension. Rather, the path lay *inside* – deep within the encryptions of a very specific genetic encoding. This pathway was accessible only via the application of a total reversal of the senses, an atavistic retrogression to an ancient ancestral root which fed directly upon the emanations of the Moon Goddess, at the time of the primeval supremacy of the Cult of the Mother.

The very non-existence of the book would act for me as a kind of psychic vacuum – whose suction would attract Her intangible sigils into a regenerative vessel at the centre of a complex, introspective maze. By opening the channels of obsession within my own psyche to the fulgent energies of the Goddess, I knew that the object of my heretical quest could be drawn forth from the Akasha by the corresponding genetic set within me, and flash across the firmament of consciousness like a tongue of violet lightning.

A clinging, magnetically-charged darkness draws around me. Strange, semi-translucent figures emerge from the surrounding gloom – a spiralling saraband of distorted, necromantic denizens – sirens and satyrs, Typhonian teratomas from the Tunnels of Set – half-formed entities caught up in a revolving vortex of blasphemous, miasmal manifestation.

Illumed within a circle of transcendental yellow light, cast by the parchment-shaded desk lamp, I open a virgin, leather-bound notebook embossed with my initials in the monogram 'JW'. I begin writing at the top of the first, blank page:

The Altar of Atargatis.

A VERY PERSONAL TANTRUM

Joe Claxton

A VERY PERSONAL TANTRUM

I hear and do strange things in sleep and awake with a kind of exaltation instead of terror.[1]

Introduction

The Book of the Law challenges us to fight as brothers[2] – that is, shoulder to shoulder, rather than as rival siblings. Over the years there has been plenty of division, but hardly any of it "for love's sake"[3]. We need to appreciate the difference between understanding the structure of the current and living it. It's like the difference between musicology and composition – both are important to the propagation of decent music (i.e. patterns of sound that make a creative difference); but unless the music is accessible, and can be experienced by others, then it is worthless. Let me put it another way: with regard to the magical current, a lot of work has been done on the structure, the measurements have been made, the alignments have been taken – so lets build!

Tantrum Alley

There was a tantrum just before Christmas round my place – not the kind I have when someone upsets me, but more the 'fireball-through-the-wall' variety, and very tangential.[4] It was the kind which I suppose you ought to expect when you're surfing the edges of competing *contragnoses*,[5] where the danger is that the tension so engendered may, without warning, release itself into the nearest elemental vehicle to hand. Let me explain.

1. Lovecraft, H.P., p.155, 'The Shadow Over Innsmouth', in *The Lurking Fear and other stories*, Panther, London, 1964.

2. *AL*.III.59. p. 279, ed. Symonds J., Grant K., p.279, *Magickal and Philosophical Commentaries on The Book of the Law*, 93 Publishing, Montreal, 1974.

3. *AL*.I.29 Ibid, p.115.

4. Grant K., Foreword, *Hecate's Fountain*, Skoob Books Publishing, London, 1992.

5. i.e. 'mutually contradicting doctrines...' Grant K., p.34. *Outer Gateways*, Skoob Books Publishing, London, 1994.

Recently, I've been at pains to compare the 'Double Voice Behind Liber AL'[6] with the 19th Century Gnostic accretions in Therion's mind, welling up from his deep identification with Eliphas Lèvi[7]. If these were to prove a recension of more ancient gnoses, then all well and good; understood correctly, they could provide useful access to more primordial cells of interstellar consciousness. If they were not, then we might expect to encounter some difficulty.

6. Grant, Ibid, chapter 4.

7. Crowley, A. p.190, *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, ed. Symonds J., Grant K., Guild Publishing in association with Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986.

A là Croix

On the night of the 12th of December 2003, I opened the peristyle just before midnight and placed items of Eastern orthodox iconography at the Northern and Eastern quarters, side by side with items of sacred magical weaponry[8], items sacred to the poteau-mitan, and notably, the *Stèlè of Revealing*, closed "in locked glass".[9] I wanted to compare and contrast the combined energies of Nuith in the North[10] and the 'Orientis' energies in the East,[11] with the 19th Century Gnostic inclinations indicated above. I then turned my attention inwards and began to breathe, slowly . . .

8. *AL*.III.6. Ibid, p.259.

9. *AL*.III.10. Ibid, p.260.

10. Grant, K. p.24 *The Magical Revival*, Muller, London, 1972.

11. Grant, K. Ibid, p.42.

Every journey is different, but there are enough similarities in the early stages of these occasions which I can use, perhaps, to give you some idea. Contemplate your own bodily internal landscape from a topographical point of view. Shrink your mind's eye to the size of a cola bubble, and journey lucidly around your own lungs and veins and brains. When you settle to sleep at night, step outside the meat-cage, and do a little lucid shape-shifting (full moon good, no moon better). Choose maybe a mouse-like shape, furry and with leathery wings, and hang upside down in the bloody bat cave of your heart. Rocking slowly, back and forth, breathe in the desires of life rising like so much meaty steam from the river, and gorge of your own blood.

After a while spent flitter-dreaming amongst the chambers of what might be, what is, and what is 'in between'[12] . . . let your taloned feet go, and as you fall into the desperate crimson foam, change again! Your legs join and your feet become a tail; your arms blend into your scaly sides as you flash and glitter, a red-gold pike darting in the depths of the current. The warm velvety product of your own internal organs flows over you, sweet and salty, as you seek out lighter and lighter pockets of oily clear serum.

12. Grant K., pp.198-199, *The Cults of the Shadow*, Muller, London, 1975

The medium is almost watery now, as you shrink once more and enter the ductile canals of the everglades of your own reproductive system. A quick look back at the pulsating vein you have just left . . . a flick of the tail carries you further into this sweet oily swamp, where ribbons of

white silk billow and coil, lapidating around you into skeins of finest quicksilver.

And it may happen, perhaps, that you will, Alice-like, cross the mirror's surface,[13] into the void places beyond. For these mirrors extrude the dimensions from three to many in an instant. They see into event horizons which don't exist – yet. They comprehend geometries which can't exist – anymore. They funnel sounds that issue eerily from long-dead mouths, showering us with images from the worlds to come . . .

13. Grant K., (1994), chapter 8, Ibid

The following morning, I recalled the experiences of the night. Following strange faces and fierce ululations upon the icy astral wind, down to the quiet deeps where even terror remains mute – in fear of a greater dread shambling along in the leathery darkness – I came across an opening at the end of a tubular corridor, covered all over with jet-black and silver sigils, etched in the obsidian from floor to ceiling and glowing eerily in an electric blue luminescence. The whole effect left me feeling like a beetle crawling through a scroll of titanic proportions. I crawled onwards and fell into a vast empty space.

Spinning over and over, but coming to no harm in this void, I was there but a heartbeat when a gurgle-like popping sound heralded the lighting of this vast and spherical interior. The light was coming from myself, my eyes like search-lights! All around, I could see shapes writhing and twisting, but somehow part of the reptilian skein which formed the bubble walls.

Worryingly, the bubble began to collapse to the dimensions of a speckle of froth. By fixing my gaze on the reflections on the inner wall, I was able to assume a diaphanous corporeality, like a starfish made of aspic which has shrunk continually to survive within the singularity I was now in. At some incredibly claustrophobic point, the walls of the bubble turned to rock and clay, threatening to lacerate my jellied existence as I flubbered about feeling for an escape.

Finally, after an aeon of oozing from one dry surface to another, I fastened a tendril upon a strange raised sigil in the rock. Ooze of mucus ran through my veins in excitement as I probed eagerly for the key. It was there! Nervous in my thrill, I sucked at it, and it drew from the silicon like a sugary tooth from a bloody gum. Sour and metallic, like a sodden rag soaked in vinegar it tasted. Unexpectedly, there was a wrenching pain as it retracted from my grasp, snapping back into place, stinging every nerve with a shrill sonic whine and a flash of light that left my one eye temporarily blinded.

Jolted back to my earth-bound corpse with the resultant adrenaline rush, I woke groggily and reanimated my cadaver. With a splash of dirty

water from a dream-broken sill, I wet my parched and cracked lips. With spittle from my mouth, I blessed the sigil of Nox and closed the peristyle. I then sat down to scribble my record of another night spent scavenging meontologically[14] amongst eldritch ruins.

14. Bertiaux, Michael P., p.231, 'Experiment in Meon-Exploration', *The Voudun Gnostic Workbook*, Magickal Childe, NY, 1988

Aftermath

An hour and a half later, scrubbed and dressed after a fashion, I scuttled off to the market-place to buy food. Drinking in the energy of the warm mass of humanity seething around the mall,[15] savouring the Brownian Motion of the soup of emotive feelings each was giving off, I relaxed and swam amongst them a ripple or two beneath the surface. Mother and brother, father and cousin scurried here and there, seeking the gift that would 'do the trick'. However, my feeding was disturbed by the excoriating screech of my mobile and I answered it. It was the local fire brigade, asking me to come back to my home to survey the damaged caused by a fire that had broken out.

15. Crowley, A., p.409,'The Mass of the Phoenix' in *Magick*, ed. Symonds J., Grant K., Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1987

The peristyle was blackened and twisted when I got there, the cause of the fire being a mystery to all concerned. A fireball of medium proportions seems to have appeared out of nowhere in the large 'walk-in' wardrobe that I had converted for use as a peristyle. The doors were closed, as is my wont when leaving the place. The fire, which had eaten its way through the door, had no seat; the maximum heat appears to have occurred at a height of about four feet off the floor.

Having punched its way through the doors, a tongue of flame reached the altar desk placed in front of them. It destroyed the icon of the Madonna and child which I was using as a cross-cultural filter signifying Typhon and Mako, whilst leaving the flowers and the *Stèlè of Revealing* untouched. Similarly, the icon of the Gnostic *Christos* was charred to a blackened silhouette, whilst the silk top hat of Baron Cimitiere[16] lying next to it (used in the rites of the Poteau-Mitan[17]) remained so cool that even a feather in the hat band remains soft to the touch.[18]

16. Grant K., p195, *Nightside of Eden*, Muller, London, 1977

17. Metraux, A., p.80, *Voodoo*, Sphere Books, London, 1974

18. Grant (1975) ibid. chapter 2. 'The Afro-Tantric Tarot of the Kalas'

Once re-building was underway, I was consoled by the fact that that no-one was hurt. After all, from an alchemical perspective, the appearance of the Black Dragon represents the onset of key transformations[19] in the alchemy of regeneration. In this spirit, a few final leaves follow, rescued from the ashes . . .

19. Grant K., p.143, 'Beyond the Mauve Zone', Starfire Publishing Ltd., London, 1999

Non-Being

The current of Non-Being runs like a clear cool stream through a turbulent lake. It flows through the cultures of the world, whispering its

truth that "Every man and every woman is a star".[20] Seek the still depths and feel the coolness flow over you; swim out into space and delve the deeper well; or follow the current to its destination in the Great Sea. The choice is yours.

20. *AL*. I. 3. p.82 ibid.

A Personal Observation

Clearly we are dealing with on the one hand immense elemental forces; and on the other, superhuman intelligence, capable of transmitting works such as *Liber AL* and the other Holy Books of Thelema across the titanic gulfs of space and time, and of reaching into the most intimate places in our lives. It is my contention that unless we begin to acknowledge the influence of these forces in our personal culture and in the systems of development we foster along the way, then the current will sideline our efforts once and for all. The Spirit of Thelema must find a creative voice in every aspect of the arts and sciences, fashion, dance and contemporary music. This is no easy task, and we must seek viable, sustainable and *communicable* ways to do this. The energy available to be unleashed (as my own unfortunate foray into the theory and methodology of *contragnoses* indicates) is enormous – so let's work together, and use it or lose it!

INSTRUMENT OF SUCCESSION

An Apology

The previous issue of *Starfire* (Volume Two, Number Two, 1998) reproduced a document which was supposedly written by Aleister Crowley, naming Kenneth Grant as his successor. This was published by me in good faith at the time, since I believed it to be genuine. To my intense regret, it has subsequently been established that the document was a fake. The perpetrator was Robert Taylor (now Agasucci), at the time both a member of the Order and a director of Starfire Publishing Ltd.

The publication of the document in *Starfire* lent it extra credence, and I wish to extend my sincere apologies to Kenneth Grant and anyone else whose reputations were damaged by this affair.

Michael Staley

Bael by Kyle Fite

THELEMA
BEYOND CROWLEY

A Selection Of Papers
From The London Conference
10th April 2004

PREFACE

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law

Although *The Book of the Law* emanated from regions that are beyond space and time, its transmission materialised in cultures which mark anniversaries. April 2004 being the 100th anniversary of its reception in Cairo in 1904, therefore, Starfire Publishing marked the occasion with a one-day Conference in central London on Saturday 10th April at the Conway Hall. There were talks from a wide variety of speakers, and we are able to reproduce several of them here.

We chose the title 'Thelema Beyond Crowley' not to minimise Crowley's rôle in earthing *Liber AL*, but to highlight the fact that Thelema is not something created by Crowley as many seem to imagine. Crowley saw his work in a more historic context, and would have been aware that there are echoes in *The Book of the Law* of various doctrines, philosophies and mystical insights. Take for instance:

> *In the sphere I am everywhere the centre, as she, the circumference, is nowhere found.*

There have been many similar formulations of this insight, for instance:

> *God is an infinite sphere, the centre of which is everywhere, the circumference nowhere.* (Hermes Trismegistus)
>
> *God is a circle whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.* (St. Augustine)
>
> *It is an infinite sphere, the centre of which is everywhere, the circumference nowhere.* (Pascal)
>
> *. . . the germ is everywhere, even as the circle whose circumference is nowhere and whose centre is everywhere.* (Blavatsky)

Crowley was aware of an historical context to his work. He was aware that he was developing the work of adepts coming before before him, and that in turn his work would be developed by others after him. At times he saw himself as continuing the work of Blavatsky, for example. Again, in the course of a Commentary written soon after the Amalantrah Working, Crowly remarked: "Aiwaz is not as I had supposed a mere formula, like many angelic names, but is the true most ancient name of the God of the Yezidi, and thus returns to the highest Antiquity. Our work is therefore historically authentic, the rediscovery of the Sumerian Tradition".

Though he embraced the rôle of Prophet which *The Book of the Law* appeared to confer upon him, Crowley would have been aware that the development of Thelema in the decades and centuries after his death was not something which he should or indeed *could* shape. The following quote is therefore interesting: "I hope that the above remarks have destroyed the *à priori* denials of the possibility of the existence of discarnate intellignces. Nay, more, I trust that I have established a strong probability that they are everywhere. The way is therefore clear for me to come forward and assert that I have positively opened up communication with one such Intelligence; or, rather, that I have been selected by Him to receive the first message from a new order of beings".

It is clear from this that, far from the reception of *The Book of the Law* being a unique event, Crowley anticipated there being more such communications in the future. There have of course been several 'received texts' since the Cairo Working, for instance *Liber 49* received in 1946 by Jack Parsons, and *The Wisdom of S'lba* and *Liber OKBISh* received in the course of New Isis Lodge workings in the 1950s. Doubtless there are more to come.

This is not to minimise Crowley's importance to the development of Thelema. On the contrary, viewing his work in an historical context gives it more meaning. Just as Crowley developed his own body of work from the work of others, synthesised through his own mystical and magical experience, so Crowley's work has been and will continue to be developed.

In the meantime, let's savour some of the papers presented at the Conference.

Love is the law, love under will

LOOKING FORWARD!

Kenneth Grant

LOOKING FORWARD!

The present occasion may be understood as the celebration of a very strange writing. It is strange not only by reason of its content but – as you will know – by the occult nature of its reception by Aleister Crowley via a mysterious Pythoness who possessed briefly, and for the purpose, Crowley's first wife, Rose.

It is the reception of the text which we know as "the threefold book of Law" that the present gathering is set on re-membering. The freedoms and ecstasies offered by Nuit and Her Son, Hadit, in chapters one and two, now begin to merge with the Mysteries of "a god of War and of Vengeance" – Ra-Hoor-Khuit – and it is the latter Mysteries which we now confront in the final phases of the Kali Yuga – the 'Black Age' of Goddess Kali, the Night-Dark Mother of Time; of Time which is coming to an end, as also is the universe *as we know it*, or, as *The Book of the Law* has it: "The Manifestation of Nuit is at an end". However, its reverberations continue to echo and re-echo as the approach of a new dawn – the Satya or Golden Yuga – swings into place again after 26,000 years – this being the temporal span of veritable *manvantaric* proportions. This very process causes our jubilance and our celebration today of Crowley's receipt of *The Book of the Law* on April 8th, 9th and 10th, in the year 1904 e.v.

The Book contains, for those able to interpret the symbols, the formulae pertaining to the Satya Yuga which, as some say, is already dawning, secretly, subtly, in the hearts of those who can read the Signs. Some have calculated and confirmed a date in precise terms, and have demonstrated by intricate calculations from celestial observations, that the Initiates of three major civilizations of antiquity – the Kamite, the Vedic, and the Mayan – have computed the date of the transmogrification to fall due

within a very brief period of terrestrial time. As close, in fact, as 2012 e.v. This is not to say that there will be an ending of planet Earth, of Time, and of Space; but that with the entry of the Winter Sun into the Womb of Isis (Milky Way) on 21st December 2012 e.v., the Great Circle of Time will be completed and a new spiritual influx – a New Isis – will infuse the planet. The accompanying birth-pangs will, however, not be lacking. Those caught in the thick of the birth-pangs, yet who know the Sign of Protection, will survive them consciously, together with the corresponding throes of death that trigger the full initiation of every man and every woman and child responsive to the Events.

The Book of the Law constitutes, in effect, the Log of a Time Traveller; and as its symbols and signs yield the information encoded within them, so will each individual affect *consciously* a mutation to a higher, a vastly more expansive mode of trans-human Awareness as he/she attains the summit, and beyond, of the mystical Tree of LIFE.

Kenneth Grant

London 2004.

THE LETTER KILLETH, BUT THE SPIRIT GIVETH LIFE

Michael Staley

THE LETTER KILLETH, BUT THE SPIRIT GIVETH LIFE

My wife had a dream some time ago in the course of which she found herself conversing with Theodor Reuss. Talking of *The Book of the Law* he said "You cannot liberate this text". Unfortunately the dream ended before he was able to enlarge on the sentiment, but it may well have referred to a perceived ossification of the Book, due at least in part to the injunction therein to "change not so much as the style of a letter", and its subsequent veneration as a sacred text from which there can be no departure. I've chosen as a title for this talk the biblical phrase "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" because it conveys at once the vitality at the heart of *The Book of the Law*, as well as suggesting how that vitality is baulked.

A received text or transmission such as *The Book of the Law* is something which originates from beyond or outside the receiver of that transmission. The source is often figured as praeter-human Intelligence. There have been many such transmissions throughout history. The 'Ten Commandments', for instance, were communicated to Moses. The Enochian angelic system was transmitted to Dee and Kelly. Coming to more recent times, in 1916/1917 the psychologist C.G. Jung received a text which he later called *VII Sermones ad Mortuos* ('Seven Sermons to the Dead'); interestingly, there are echoes in this of *The Book of the Law*. For instance:

> It is that nothingness which is everywhere whole and continuous.
>
> ... figuratively, the pleroma is the smallest point in us and the boundless firmament about us.

The transmission may not come through all at once, but may be

apprehended in parts over a period of time, and pieced together like a jigsaw puzzle. Again, it may gestate for a while in the personal subconscious, emerging in a more elaborate or developed form. Examples of this latter type are *The Wisdom of S'lba* and *Liber OKBISh (The Book of the Spider)* which were received over a period of time during the Workings of Kenneth Grant's *New Isis Lodge*. The transmission need not take the form of words, but may be expressed in terms of other artistry – music, drawing, painting, sculpture, etc. The recipient may not even be aware of an informing current, but may simply consider it inspiration. Often the bare bones of something will be received, and subsequently enfleshed by the recipient. The automatic drawings by Austin Spare came about from the artist allowing the pencil to move swiftly across the paper; where a shape seemed to be emerging, it was accentuated and developed by the artist.

There is a long tradition of revelation down the ages, whereby the awareness of the individual becomes convulsed with something which seems to upsurge from outside himself or herself. Nor is this limited to prophets, seers and sages; such inspiration occurs frequently. To become conscious of it, to allow it to fertilize and enrich our awareness, and deepen our understanding, is initiation. What happened in Cairo in 1904 was not unique, therefore, but part of a tradition of divine inspiration.

Transmissions are not simply a matter of establishing some sort of radio contact with a discarnate entity and transcribing what it has to say. A transmission can be via any of the senses. Often it will be intuited or subtly apprehended; something registers in the imagination. There is an intrusion, the impress of which is articulated across the senses. Although *The Book of the Law* was transmitted over three consecutive days, for one hour each day, it could have been gestating in Deep Mind, fertilising Crowley's imagination, for longer than that.

To understand how transmissions can upsurge in the awareness of the recipient, first let us consider the tapestry from which we are woven. We are not each of us islands of consciousness, doomed to be self-contained and eternally separate. In one of his early books, Kenneth Grant quoted the physicist Niels Bohr as saying that Consciousness is experienced in the singular, not in the plural. That is, there is a continuum of consciousness in which we subsist and of which we are a fluorescence. There have always been traditions which reflect this fact: for instance Eastern traditions such as the *Prajnaparamita* school of Buddhism, or the *Advaita Vedanta* of Hinduism. Closer to our own time and culture, we have the Collective Unconscious of Carl Jung. Consciousness might be considered a vast ocean, with currents and eddies, waves and vortices.

Imagination is not mere whim or fancy, or something not rooted in fact,

though this is the flavour that the word has accumulated in modern times. Rather, imagination is the space in which things occur. It is cosmic, and it is those areas around the individual, of which he or she is more immediately aware, that we regard as "our" imagination. The reality is, though, that it is not "ours", but a common or cosmic area, the local reaches of which are more immediately apparent to us. We are adrift in imagination; forms created in the imagination can take on a shape perceptible to others. There are disciplines of the occult which are concerned with the creation of thought-forms. An important element of group ritual magic is the creation of common images which all members of the group can consolidate, and upon which they can draw. Imagination is the fulcrum of all this because it is the image-making faculty. As anyone who has undertaken such work knows, the image soon takes on a life of its own; the vessel is endowed with vitality, form imbued with force.

When an upsurge into the imagination occurs, a lot of material from the personal subconscious of the recipient is caught in the wake of the upsurge, and inevitably thrown up with it. The transmission always bears the impress of the mind through which it has been received and articulated, to a greater or lesser extent. This intrusion into the imagination, and subsequent enfleshing, takes many forms. It is an inspirational flow into the more personal areas of imagination, often becoming garbed in apparel drawn from the personal subconscious. We see this in Lovecraft's work for instance. Much of the inspiration was occurring through dream, and expressed through imagery drawn from the extensive reading and day-dreaming of Lovecraft's childhood. Much as light is refracted and transformed by its passage through a prism or a piece of coloured glass, or as the setting sun through atmospheric matter produces a pageant of glorious and stirring colours, so the suffusion of a Current will be coloured by the personal areas of imagination. The wind, for instance, only becomes manifest as it stirs the leaves of the tree through which it moves, the perfumes which it agitates, the skin against which it brushes, the shapes into which it swirls the desert sand.

There is therefore, inevitably, a lot of Crowley in *The Book of the Law*. There is a fierce, Old Testament tone to much of the second and third chapters, for instance. It is probably no accident that these sound so similar to the Old Testament prophets which would have been so well-known to Crowley given his fundamentalist Christian upbringing. Elsewhere there are some fine passages of great beauty, and some nuggets of profound insight. Some might conclude from this that Aiwass was a subconscious part of Crowley; it seems more likely to me that Crowley was a facet of Aiwass. He caught and expressed something outside himself, something from the depths of consciousness: what has been termed as Deep Mind and of which human consciousness is an out-cropping.

Crowley's account of how *The Book of the Law* was received seems at first sight to suggest that it was almost an act of dictation, whereby the praeterhuman entity Aiwass was in the room and Crowley was simply writing down what Aiwass was proclaiming. In fact a consideration of Crowley's account of the circumstances surrounding the reception makes it plain that the matter was more complex than that. There are, for instance, some passages which were retrospectively revised by his wife Rose, through whom the initial link with the transmitting Intelligence was forged. To judge from the circumstances related in *The Equinox of the Gods,* Rose's rôle in revising passages of the text perplexed Crowley himself, since by his account she was not in the room at the time. There are other passages in the text where there is clearly an interaction going on between Aiwass and Crowley, again indicating that this was not a simple matter of dictation.

The injunction to "change not so much as the style of a letter" can be seen in a different light if we consider the origin of the transmission. Unless English is the first language of the praeter-human realms from whence the transmission originated, then its rendition into English for the benefit of Crowley was already a translation. Furthermore, given that the realms from which the transmission came is beyond our limitations of Time and Space, then it had to be expressed in a form comprehensible to more earth-bound minds.

Crowley wrote several Comments over the years, most of which were discursive analyses. In 1925 he was inspired to write the final of these, the much briefer and terser *The Tunis Comment*. It is clear from this that Crowley had finally become disillusioned with intellectual analysis and debate of *The Book of the Law*, perhaps triggered by the endless speculations of Norman Mudd. The few lines of this Comment are almost epigrams, and are worth reproducing in full:

> The study of this Book is forbidden. It is wise to destroy this copy after the first reading.
> Whosoever disregards this does so at his own risk and peril. These are most dire.
> Those who discuss the contents of this Book are to be shunned by all, as centres of pestilence.
> All questions of the Law are to be decided only by appeal to my writings, each for himself.
> There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.

Because *The Tunis Comment* was the last Comment on *The Book of the Law* which Crowley was inspired to write, many feel that it is somehow the last word, a series of injunctions concerning the book which need to be obeyed. This clearly isn't the case. Take for instance the phrase "The

study of this book is forbidden". In fact, Crowley was forever urging the study of *The Book of the Law*, both before and after *The Tunis Comment*. To take just one example amongst many, from *The Book of Thoth* (1944), page 116:

> . . . There are many other details with regard to the Lord of the Aeon which should be studied in the *Book of the Law*.
>
> It is also important to study very thoroughly, and meditate upon, this Book, in order to appreciate the spiritual, moral, and material events which have marked the catastrophic transition from the Aeon of Osiris . . .

It is unlikely then that, appearance to the contrary, study and discussion of the Book is forbidden by *The Tunis Comment*, and in any case the Comment ends with reminding us that "There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt". We must look for a deeper meaning.

The Tunis Comment is essentially aimed at the impact of the Book on the initiate. The fact is that the Book is addressed to the Hadit-particle within us all, and the essential understanding of *The Book of the Law* lies at this level. The mystery here, of course, is that the Hadit-particle is not unique to each of us, but is a refraction of the same Hadit-particle as a multitude of echoes: "I am the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star". We have to plunge into *The Book of the Law* and reach our own unique understanding. As Crowley says with regard to *The Book of the Heart Girt with the Serpent*, it needs to be absorbed at a deep level, to be sealed up into the blood. This is why Crowley uses the phrase "each for his own" in the context of understanding the Book; it is only at this deeper level that true understanding arises. Until we reach this level, our understanding is intellectual – which is still real, but relatively superficial.

The core of the Book is Thelema, which as I'm sure we all know is a Greek word meaning 'will'. This term 'will' has a multitude of dimensions to it, but at root we are talking about Cosmic Will rather than the whim or desire of an individual. The term 'True Will' is sometimes used to denote this deeper Will. It was Crowley's contention that if we were each following our True Wills then conflict would not occur, just as stars follow their orbit without bumping into each other. This gives us an idea of a number of Wills which are complementary, interlocking according to some divine, perfect pattern, conflict only arising when we deviate from such perfection. It is clear then that we are talking about Will in the sense of the Tao. There is no individual True Will as such, but rather an individualised expression of the Cosmic Will or the Tao. *The Book of the Law* is not the first time that such an idea has been articulated, of course, and it won't be the last.

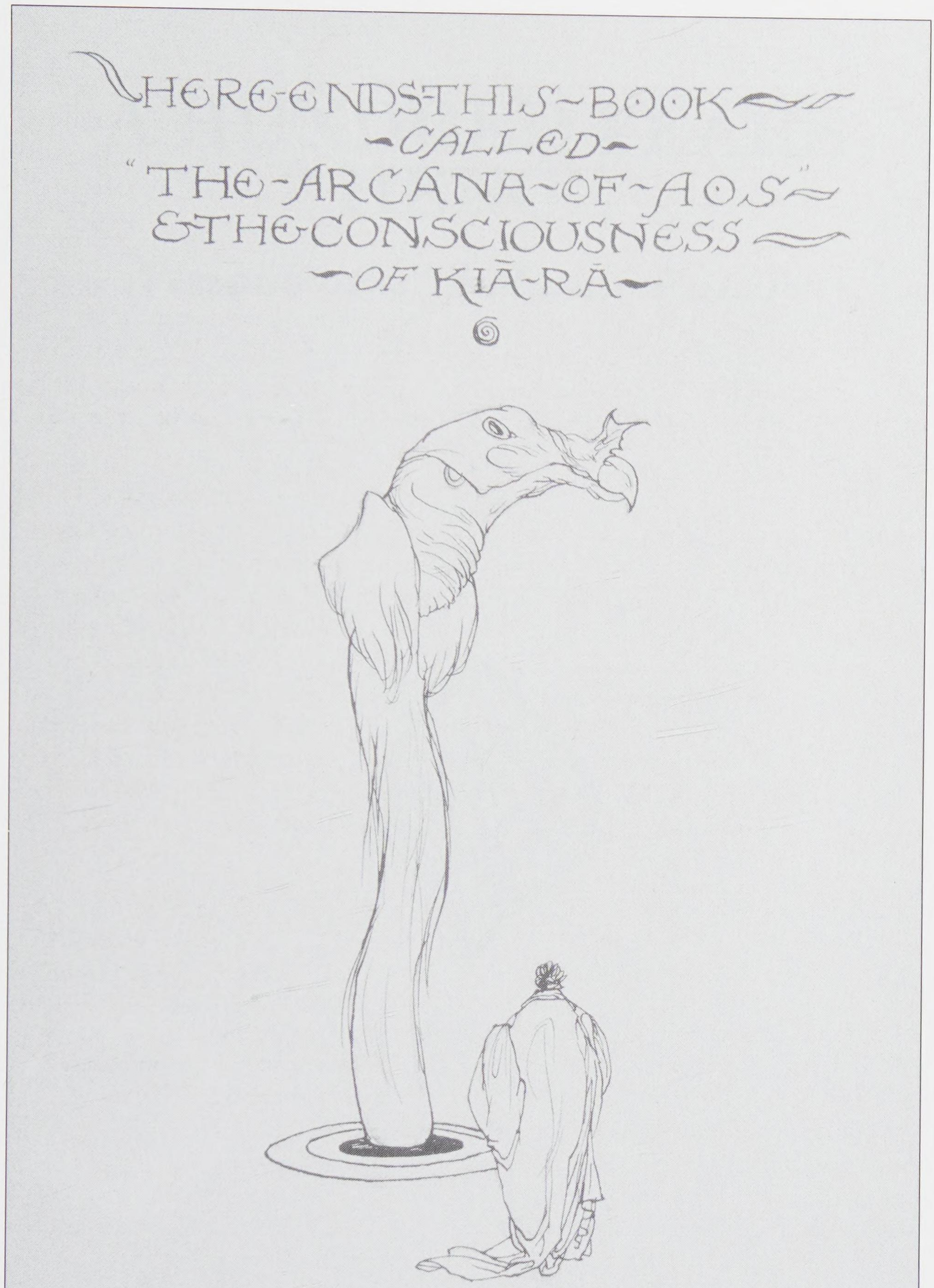
Kenneth Grant has defined Thelema as "elasticity conceived as a lightning-swift adaptation to each and every phenomenon". This is probably the most striking and succinct definition of the spontaneity of Thelema that I have come across. Thelema is the spontaneity of nature. It is surely ironic that *The Book of the Law*, with such spontaneity at its core, has yet become so ossified. Or that many of those today who style themselves Thelemites are so unchanging, so doctrinaire. This is hardly "lightning-swift adaptation". The magical current is spontaneous, flowing where it will. Again, we read in *The Book of the Law*: "The word of sin is restriction". This epithet occurs in the context of sexual mores, but has a meaning which goes far deeper, obviously bearing on the "lightning-swift adaptation" of Thelema. It refers to the dynamism which burns at the heart of Thelema, a dynamism which flashes: which is going, not being.

Closely allied to this spontaneity is silence, and in the first chapter of *The Book of the Law* Aiwass describes himself as "the minister of Hoor-paar-kraat". In his first Comment, called the Old Comment and published along with the Book in Volume I Number 7 of *The Equinox*, Crowley describes Hoor-paar-kraat as "the God of Silence; for his word is the Speech of the Silence". Years later, in the Comment written largely at Cefalu, he remarked: "He is almost the 'Unconscious' of Freud, unknown, unaccountable, the silent Spirit, blowing 'whither it listeth, but thou canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth' ". It is this "Speech of the Silence", this "silent Spirit", which is at the heart of *The Book of the Law*, and which is both more profound and more universal than the more apocalyptic and violent sentiments of the third chapter which tend to obscure and divert attention from the cosmic scope of the Book.

It is this profound, quintessential heart of *The Book of the Law*, the dynamic and cosmic radiance of Thelema, spontaneous and free-flowing, which is of most interest to me. Yes, there are complex and fascinating ciphers and cryptograms in the Book, and a multitude of threads that scintillate and throb. By concentrating on the more superficial aspects of the Book, by regarding the Book as a Holy Scripture to be spoken of in awed, reverent tones, and not to be deviated from, this essence is somehow ossified, cast in aspic.

Verily, the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

[Note: this is an edited version of the paper given.]



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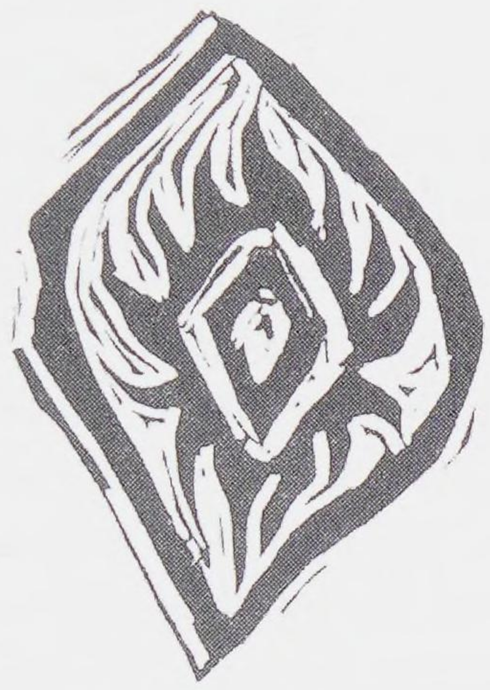
A HUNDRED YEARS HENCE

Visions of a Thelemic Future



Martin Starr

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Visions of a Thelemic Future

Good day and welcome to the 'Thelema Beyond Crowley' conference, held in celebration of the centenary of *The Book of the Law.* I would like to thank Michael Staley and Starfire Publishing for the opportunity of addressing you today. I am by avocation an historian of Thelema, which I have studied as a significant part of the history of Western Esotericism. Researching Crowley led me to pursue a wide variety of spiritual movements that flourished in the West in the last century, including Theosophy, Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry. Nevertheless, my first love remained Crowley and all his works, whose books I first encountered in my 'teens. The seemingly unending process of decoding his life and works remains for me a central task, some three decades later. So it would be fair to state that Crowley is now part of my personal history, to the extent that I have spent the better part of my adult life following out the trail which he blazed. To say that studying Crowley leads one to strange places and stranger people is indeed an understatement. I've been urged by some of my friends to write my own 'Quest for Crowley' after the famous book on Baron Corvo and I may do it yet – in addition to studying the documentary trail of the Thele-mites, I have sought to speak to everyone who had first-hand knowledge of Crowley and of the contemporary thelemic movement. Most of the latter were quite ruggèd spiritual pioneers; my biography of Wilfred Talbot Smith, *The Unknown God,* also served the additional purpose of documenting the lives of many of his co-workers in Thelema whose efforts have either been forgotten, or remembered only as the stuff of legend. On the whole it has been a pleasure to follow out the serpentine trail of Crowley's occult engagements, which has served me well as a sort of a conceptual ground map to the esoteric Underworld of the 20th Century.

It is the primary task of the historian to examine the past, not to predict the future, and I will try not to overreach my brief. However, I made a point of asking every Thelemite who was a contemporary of Crowley what they thought the future of the movement might be. It is a highly relevant question; in studying Thelema, one must accept the fact that the claims of *The Book of the Law* rest entirely on it being accepted as a prophecy. If you can call to mind the text of that short book, think how many times the future tense is employed. It was clearly read as a prophetic book, and its promulgator openly claimed the title of Prophet. Without question, Thelema is a revelation of a future yet to be born. What sort of a world that manifestation of the divine has been understood to foretell is the subject of my talk today.

I would like to examine some of the historical trends in the understanding of what that prophecy might mean. What Thelema is today is a function of what it was in practice and how prior interpreters conceptualised it; we cannot escape the continuum of time. Some would claim that Thelema itself is a timeless wisdom tradition; yet we know that so much of what present day Thelemites believe is in fact a function of their understanding of the last hundred years of Thelema's history, theology and eschatology – from the Crowleyan theories of the succession of Aeons and the rôles of the Magi, to their comprehension of the nature of spiritual authority and tradition. A study of the interpreters of Thelema will show that they were largely unsuccessful in their attempts to reify their plans for a thelemic movement in the here-and-now, and their views of the future often failed to manifest in the manner specified. If the prophecy itself did not fail, often enough both their implementation and their understanding of it did. The hierophants, along with the few and the faithful, have dealt in a variety of ways with the cognitive dissonance created by the gap between what they tried to implement, what they believed was destined, and what ultimately they experienced. I will review for you in brief some of the claims made for the revelation of Thelema – and for its chief revelator – by J. F. C. Fuller, Aleister Crowley, Karl Germer and Marcelo Motta, and consider how these varied individuals projected their vision of a new age influenced by the current of Thelema. Where did they think humanity was headed? What was the road by which mankind might actualise the Aeon of Horus? How was mankind supposed to achieve the freedom promised in *The Book of the Law*? These are all large topics, and I hope you will be content with an overview that I think will answer some questions on the state of the thelemic movement today. As the future is the heir to the past, so we must turn our eyes to those in the last hundred years who have trodden this uncertain ground before us. With the benefit of hindsight, I will dare to offer in conclusion a few of my own suggestions about what problems still face us and what might be done to move Thelema ahead.

As we all know, the last page has yet to be written on the Thelemites.

Crowley's rôle as an inspired visionary has its own history. By a curious twist of fate, Crowley had sailed on the same boat as Annie Besant, the tireless radical turned Theosophist, when he returned from Egypt in 1904 after receiving *The Book of the Law*. It would have been an ideal opportunity to make his claim for contact with the Masters. Displaying an atypical reticence, Crowley breathed not a word of the new revelation to Dr. Besant, who in time he came to denounce as the implacable enemy of all that he held holy and righteous in the world. Acceptance of Crowley's position as the 'World Teacher' – understood as an equivalent to his own claims as the Magus of the Aeon of Horus – became his focus increasingly after 1915, in response to the rise of Krishnamurti, whom the Theosophists revered as the "Star in the East." The stage would be set for a battle, in Crowley's terms, between the Black and White Schools of Magic that would last more than two decades.

However, before there was a Star to be worshipped in the East, there was a parallel light in the West. Crowley was considered the fulfilment of prophecy by one who at the time knew nothing of *The Book of the Law*: J. F. C. Fuller, the winner of the £100 essay contest on Crowley's collected works. Fuller was a diehard rationalist when he encountered Crowley's writings; but in his philosophy of transcendentalism, Fuller found the answer to his questions. Faint praise was not Fuller's style, and he saw in Crowley the materialisation of the prophecies of Paracelsus of the advent of the "artist Elias," a being of wonder who would reveal many things. His philosophy Fuller termed "Crowleyanity," and he celebrated Crowley's coming in his book, *The Star in the West* (1907) as an event on a par with the birth of Jesus:

> *And as the doctrine taught by Jesus Christ became known as Christianity, so let this theurgy, as expounded by this marvellous being, be known as Crowleyanity: or in other words, according to the mind of the reader; – Pyrrhonic-Zoroastrianism, Pyrrhonic-Mysticism, Sceptical Transcendentalism, Sceptical-Theurgy, Sceptical-Energy, Scientific-Illuminism, or what you will; for in short it is the conscious communion with God on the part of an Atheist, a transcending of reason by scepticism of the instrument, and the limitation of scepticism by direct consciousness of the Absolute.*

Crowleyanity, thus understood, was the replacement for Christianity, for which both Crowley and Fuller had expressed exhaustively their disdain. Dead religion, dead philosophy, dead science: all were to be replaced by the unifying vision of Crowleyanity, which confronted and won the battle against a Cerberus-like team of Berkeley, Hume and Kant. The results of the practices of Sceptical Mysticism as advocated by

Crowley would create a New Jerusalem of enlightened beings. The restrictions of Christianity on mind and heart would be a thing of the past, replaced by a militant form of philosophical and spiritual self-actualisation or "theurgy" that would confer its own moral authority upon the individual. The call to Crowleyanity was even seen as having importance by the anarcho-communist Guy Alfred Aldred (1886–1963), a man who ran repeatedly for Parliament on the intriguing platform that if elected he would not serve! Aldred published in 1908 under the imprint of his Bakunin Press a cheap edition of *The Star in the West* with his "critical introduction to the friends of freedom"; in it he praised Crowley as a fearless opponent of the "creed of the Galilean serpent." Aldred was one with Crowley in his hatred of Christianity and in the belief that it was destined to be effaced from the world.

In response to this torrent of praise, Crowley occasionally evinced some small amount of reserve. In his farcical playlet, 'Ali Sloper; or the Forty Liars' in *Konx Om Pax* (1907), the response to the remark about the pleasures of an old-fashioned Christmas is that "two thousand years hence we shall all be saying the same about Bowleymas Day in the sunset of Bowleyanity." The Crowley character responds: "Respect my modesty – Pyrrho-Zoroastrianism, if you please." It would seem that in 1907, at least, the "new Christ" had sufficient ambivalence about his readiness for public worship; yet the following year he labelled himself "The Saviour of the Earth" in his privately published verse drama, *The World's Tragedy*. However he had no hesitation in extending scepticism to the idea of Crowleyanity itself, and he dared to stare down a future he could imagine in the poem 'The Convert (a hundred years hence).' It was first published in *The Winged Beetle* (1910) and from it I have derived the title of today's talk:

There met one eve in a sylvan glade
A horrible Man and a beautiful maid.
"Where are you going, so meek and holy?"
"I'm going to temple to worship Crowley."
"Crowley is God, then? How did you know?"
"Why, it's Captain Fuller that told us so."
"And how do you know that Fuller was right?"
"I'm afraid you're a wicked man; Good-night."
While this sort of thing is styled success
I shall not count failure bitterness.

'Crowleyanity' was its own faith, with Crowley's *Collected Works* as its scripture. Concerned about the potential negative results, Crowley had

carefully kept Fuller from the yet-unpublished text of *The Book of the Law* – at once fearing that the latter would dismiss him as a "hopeless crank", but secretly hoping that Fuller would justify his own doubts about the troublesome revelation and its notions of a spiritual hierarchy. He also thought it was essential for a magical document to remain secret for it to have power; he thought to rid himself of these problems by publishing it. The ploy failed; according to Crowley, Fuller accepted *The Book of the Law* as "the utterance of a Master." It is unclear to what extent Fuller understood or embraced Thelema, for their very productive collaboration was soon cut short by a series of events that made the latter no longer respect Crowley as a man of good character. Crowleyanity had lost its premier proponent. He left Crowley and all his works behind, eventually embracing – to his great disgrace – the future world envisioned by Hitler and the Fascists in their stead. At the close of his life Fuller described Aiwass as "Crowley's subconscious mind and the dictation [of *The Book of the Law*] automatic writing," a view first shared and later dismissed by Crowley.

So much for Fuller and 'Crowleyanity'. With the passage of time and the loss of context for the term, 'Crowleyite' has now acquired a pejorative meaning, connoting one who espouses an unquestioned belief in Crowley's divinity, in distinction to the enlightened point-of-view of the 'Thelemite' who presumably knows better. I would put it to you that this is a false dichotomy. The central question of Crowley's position of spiritual pre-eminence never actually leaves the thelemic discussion, no matter how it is framed. It took time for Crowley himself to accept *The Book of the Law* and what he saw therein as the implications of his position as "the Beast," an honorific first lovingly bestowed upon him by his Fundamentalist mother. Crowley's own doubts about his place in the spiritual hierarchy took time to resolve; but when he did so, there was neither truce nor quarter from his dominant position as the Logos of the New Aeon.

Prophets often go through life unheeded and without honour in their own land. *The Book of the Law,* even when first published in *The Equinox* in March 1912, did not create a movement on its own. But around the time of its first public issue, Crowley found a way to lay claim to the spiritual leadership of the world in the form of a magical vehicle to spread the Law. A material basis for his *de facto* religion of Thelema (despite disclaimers) was about to come his way.

Another curious encounter gave a positive impetus to Crowley's vision of a thelemic future. By what he later claimed was a "kink in time," in 1912 Crowley met up with another esoteric visionary, the German occult Mason Theodor Reuss, autocratic head of his co-masonic society, the *Ordo Templi Orientis*. Out of the failure of his prior attempts to establish

various forms of fringe Masonry in Germany, Reuss had formed this new Order, which would admit men and women to Freemasonry on an equal basis as a preparation for the sexual mysteries which he believed were the real secrets of Masonry and Rosicrucianism. Given charge of the British section of the Order by Reuss, Crowley transmuted the mission statement of the O.T.O. (closely allied with the aims of the Theosophical Society) into a charter for a feudalistic reconstruction of society, designed to implement his understanding of Thelema. It was a scheme that did not fail by promising too little, for to join the O.T.O. was an Emersonian hitching of one's wagon to a star.

The underlying premise of Crowley's utopian plan for the O.T.O., as outlined in the *Blue Equinox,* is the creation of a new form of government. All the existing forms were deemed insufficiently flexible to solve the problems that faced society. This new system had to be imposed upon the world – a marked departure from the dominant notion in the modern world that governmental power should arise from a people, and that its purpose should be to enable the greatest number of people to attain the greatest degree of happiness possible. It was instead to be a government of the elite for the benefit of the elite, where those outside the Order would possess no rights of any kind. Education, economics and sex were the central problems of life. The overriding aim of the O.T.O. was to teach its initiates how to accomplish their wills through methods that Crowley intimated were both effective and secret. Through participation in the mysteries of the O.T.O., he claimed that the members would be joined together in an understanding that would end all questions of sex and religion. On a more material level, the typical distractions of life had to be removed for the good of the whole. All property beyond one's immediate necessities was to be held in common by the Order. The officials of the Order would judge any disputes between members.

To give some context to these ideas, at the same time that Crowley was documenting his proposed governmental structures for the O.T.O., he was also recovering memories of his past incarnations. His previous stay on earth had been in the body of Eliphas Lèvi, who was a disciple in his youth to the visionary utopian socialist Charles Fourier (1772–1837). A comparison of Fourier's notion of the *phalanstere* – a self-contained form of communal living – with Crowley's ideas of an O.T.O. Profess House is an intriguing one; and Fourier's advocacy of sexual liberation is on a par with Crowley's in terms of its equality of respect for all forms of sexual expression. Fourier, no less than Crowley, found the society of his day false and repressive, with its victims being largely unaware of the degree of their moral imprisonment. Crowley attempted to put his theories into practice with his 'Abbey of Thelema' in Cefalù, Sicily in the period 1920-23; he referred to his task as building an 'ark of refuge' to save what

was worth preserving from the Aeon of Osiris, and from these remains to form the archetype of a new society. The Abbey lasted three short years, but it was the only real test to which he put his theories of government. The plan of the O.T.O. was his hope to save civilisation, but like many of Crowley's grandiose dreams, it went unrealised in his life.

Although the model government of the O.T.O. and the demonstration laboratory of the Abbey of Thelema may have failed to meet their promise, all the while the battle for the soul of man was raging in the world, as the forces of the Old Aeon, now dark and poisonous to human progress, worked to hold their sway. Crowley claimed that he wrote the following prophetic passage in 1911:

> *There is a Magical Operation of maximum importance: the Initiation of a New Aeon. When it becomes necessary to utter a Word, the whole Planet must be bathed in blood. Before man is ready to accept the Law of Thelema, the Great War must be fought. This Bloody Sacrifice is the critical point of the World-Ceremony of the Proclamation of Horus, the Crowned and Conquering Child, as Lord of the Aeon.*
>
> *The whole matter is prophesied in The Book of the Law itself; let the student take note, and enter the ranks of the Hosts of the Sun.*

World War I, in retrospect, was just a foretaste of the magical battle that was World War II. *The Book of the Law* was the motive force behind the clash of nations. Crowley claimed that the four publications of it in the 1930s led each time to deepening conflict, resulting in all-out war with Germany, a demonstration of the power of the "living Magick of the New Aeon of Horus." All the forces of the Old Aeon could muster were the English 'Days of National Prayer', each one of which resulted in disaster for the Allied forces. Crowley, who claimed to be the originator of the 'V Sign', was at the magical centre of it all, and he was evoking the martial energy of Horus through a series of talismanic publications. The errata sheet included in his anti-Nazi poetry collection, *Thumbs Up!* mentions a fourth Day of National Prayer, which the Crowley poems 'Anthem' and the 'Invocation by the V sign of Apophis and Typhon' were meant to counteract. My copy is inscribed: "I was not strong enough to save the game single-handed. Russia began to collapse shortly after that Day of Prayer." The God of War was on the side of the Allies, but He didn't answer the prayers of the Christians. William Joyce's suggestion that Crowley say a Black Mass for Victory proved unnecessary; Hitler fell and peace was restored to Europe.

To get to the freedom of the Aeon of Horus, blood had to flow and Christianity had to fall. World War II brought another fulfilment of prophecy: the "war-engine" mentioned in chapter three of *The Book of the Law* was discovered. It was the Atomic Bomb. The threat of a global

nuclear apocalypse weighed heavily on the mind of Crowley's named successor, Karl J. Germer. A form of what I might call "thelemic premillennialism" began to dominate Germer's thinking after Crowley's death in 1947. He believed that *The Book of the Law* prophesied an "Armageddon," to be preceded by an inquisition. In contrast, Christian premillennialism is based on a literal interpretation of the *Book of Revelation*; the millennium would be preceded by a "Great Tribulation", involving the destruction of the existing world and the rule of the Anti-Christ, which would be followed by the second coming of Christ. The early 19th Century minister William Irving promulgated this doctrine, also called catastrophic millennialism, as well as the Catholic Apostolic Church, whose headquarters in Gordon Square are just a short distance from Conway Hall. Irving's teachings profoundly influenced John Nelson Darby, founder of the Plymouth Brethren in which faith Crowley was raised. Darby's "dispensational premillennialism," which divided the history of the world into a series of eras or dispensations, each with its lessons for humanity to learn, is remarkably parallel to Crowley's later theory of a series of Aeons. As one might expect, Germer's vision of the future was not quite that of Irving and Darby. In a notable twist on *The Book of Revelation*, the thelemic Messianic Deliverer would be Ra-Hoor-Khuit and the Beast 666 would lead His armies. It was Germer's destiny as the "Rich Man from the West" to be crucified for Thelema. To survive his imprisonment as a political prisoner under the Nazis in 1935, he had recited the Holy Books of Thelema from his ample memory, from front to start and back again. He saw his fate predicted in one of them, *Liber Liberi,* 'The Book of the Free Man':

> *And the fish shall be sacrificed to Thee and the strong man crucified for Me, and Thou and I will kiss, and atone for the wrong of the Beginning; yea, for the wrong of the beginning.*

Germer, a veteran of combat in World War I (on the German side) and a victim of Nazi malice prior to World War II, had truly suffered for his belief in Crowley. His escape to the United States in 1942 offered him no relief. The Nazis were merely replaced in his mind by the FBI of J. Edgar Hoover, who investigated him owing to his friendship with Crowley and the statements of witnesses who claimed Germer was an advocate of Nazi propaganda, of which nothing could be less true.

Germer's belief that he was being persecuted led him to issue a joint statement with his wife, a classic case of *folie à deux,* detailing the tapping of their telephone, house and car, whereby their every word was being monitored by "an organisation that commands the most tremendous power, has the most modern secret and occult facilities at their command, and draws on hundreds of agents to make this surveillance sadistically effective." The organisation, they speculated, was the FBI, but the motive

force for their harassment came from the Roman Catholic Church, the focus of evil in the West. Their paranoid pseudo-community of real and imaginary persons united in a conspiracy against them grew until "the plot" encompassed virtually everyone they knew. All this was an attempt by the Black Lodge to stop Thelema in its tracks.

As the end was certain, struggling against it seemed pointless. A favourite saying of Germer was: "Man proposes; God disposes." There were increasing signs that the destruction of the world was imminent. There was no future unless mankind somehow averted the tragedy facing it, and the chances of this were unlikely. Germer found 'scientific' support for his eschatology in the theories of Adam D. Barber, a lawyer and self-taught "gyroscope technician." His book, *The Coming Disaster worse than the H-Bomb* (1955) predicted that in the next fifty years the axis of the earth would shift forty-five degrees, causing sudden massive flooding. Barber's solution was simple: have lifeboats or "floating saucers" moored to poles at every street corner. The resulting chaos would lead to a peaceful one-world government led by the United Nations, who would reapportion the remaining dry land. I think it is now safe to say that Barber's gyroscopic prognostications have proven as false as Germer's premillennialism.

Germer's Brazilian disciple, Marcelo Motta, was also impressed by Barber's predictions; but his vision of a thelemic future, like Crowley's, centred on plans for the O.T.O. In an unpublished paper, 'The Development of a Secret Society in America in the years 1957–2000 E.V.', he posited that the "secret body" predicted in *The Book of the Law* already existed in the form of the A.·. A.·. , which was functioning according to plan. The O.T.O. was moribund, but it was the destined temporal instrument through which Thelema would spread. Cause for revolution was all around them. Motta saw the USA as an increasingly dictatorial country, with subordination of the individual to society becoming the rule, and materialism the sole mark of success. Americans were becoming soulless diseased robots of commercialism. The government was openly the agent of tyranny. The times called for a radical secret society that would act as a leaven for the forces of freedom. He developed a plan for action.

All existing members of the A.·. A.·. were to sell what they had and move to a designated location where they would pool their personal and financial assets to rebuild the O.T.O. The object was to create a magnetic centre of attraction through the practice of the rituals and the fulfilment of the constitutional schemes of Crowley for a pyramid-like occult hierarchy. The secret aim of the Order was to overthrow the Aeon of Osiris by any means necessary, including political revolution and murder. With the combined efforts of the few and the secret, these extremist aims might be achieved in a few decades. He wrote:

> *The O.T.O. may, in twenty years, be the only hope of an oppressed, bewildered country. As our power grows, we may come out in the open. May our power grow! May our treasure grow! May our members grow in number as in spirit! Eventually, peacefully or otherwise, the revolution shall have been made, society shall be transmuted, the yeast that we represent shall have acted, and the millennium shall have been established for the Aeon of Horus.*

Needless to say, none of these plans actually came to pass. Germer died in 1962 without leaving a clear heir. Motta, after more than a decade of self-doubt about his position, created the *Society Ordo Templi Orientis* in the 1970s to realise some of his futurist plans. It had a brief but noisome existence and fell into abeyance prior to his death in 1987. In his final book he cursed the United States and predicted its despoliation, after his repeated losses in the American courts when he asserted his claims to ownership of the Crowley copyrights and Headship of the O.T.O. His punishment of America could be averted, of course, if his legal defeats were reversed. They were not.

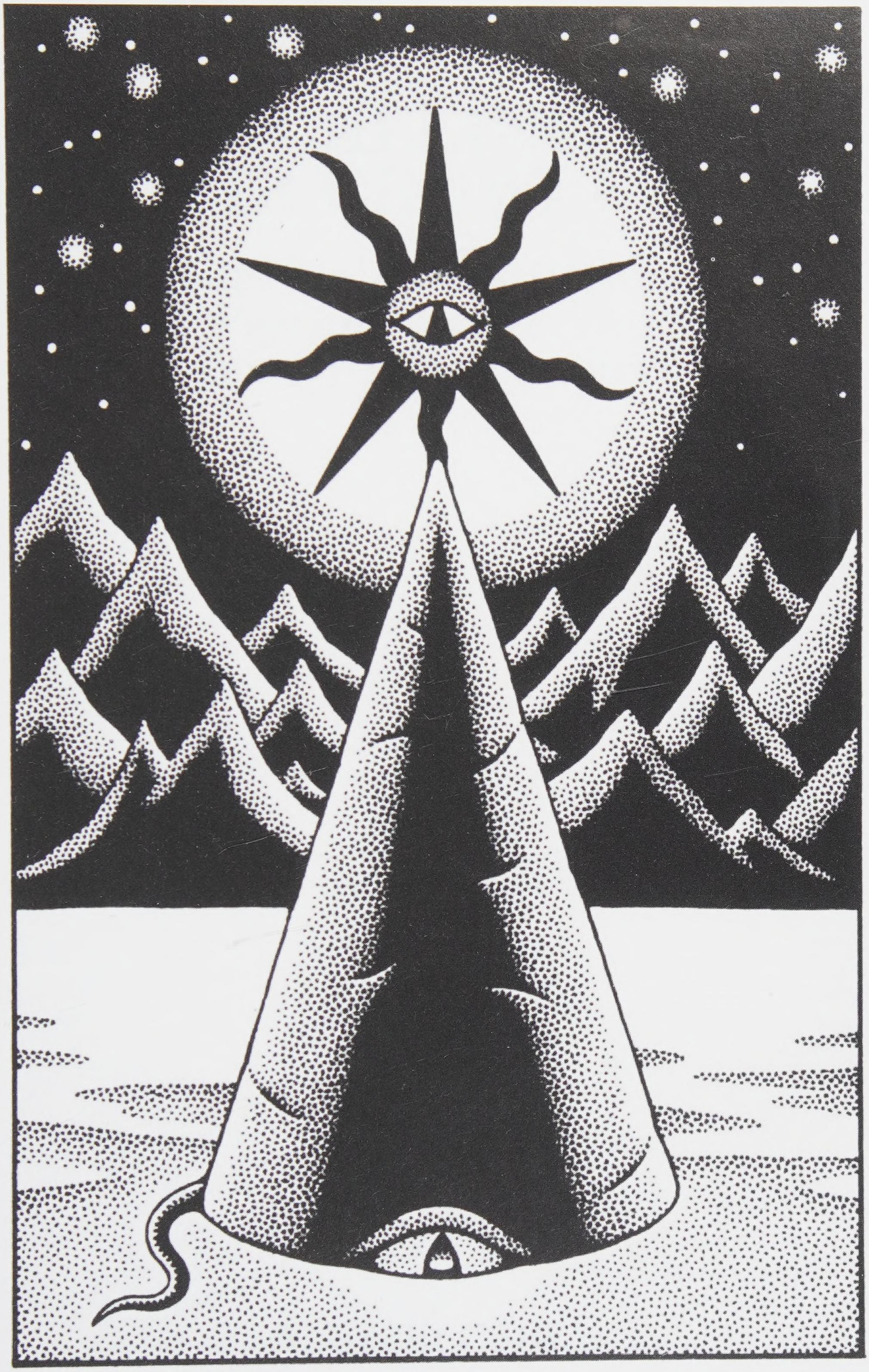
Thus I bring to a close my portfolio of views of a thelemic future. Not surprisingly, given the themes of *The Book of the Law,* most of these are apocalyptic, predicated on the Old Aeon ending by force and fire and a New Aeon arising triumphant from the ashes. Without question, in the last one hundred years we have seen no end of war and destruction and social chaos. The Doomsday Clock of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* is now at nine minutes to midnight. We haven't seen any widespread acceptance of the Law of Thelema as such. We may take some comfort in the fact that the quest for freedom is alive, despite threats from totalitarianism and religious fundamentalism of all stripes.

The number of self-identified Thelemites remains small, despite the vast amount of Crowleyana in print. One might get a different view by estimating the total number of web pages devoted to Thelema and Crowley. I have jokingly suggested that there are on average 1.5 websites for every Thelemite alive today. Crowleyanity as a philosophy has been forgotten, while the cult of Crowley – what the former disciple Gerald Yorke called the "Crowley Myth" – continues to grow. Millenarian thinking still finds thelemic advocates, with a few urging others to arm themselves against governments they consider to be tyrannical, which is a certain recipe for disaster. Lack of a sense of communal purpose mitigates against Thelemites acting in concert, even among members of the same collective.

I would put it to you that one positive step towards building a global thelemic community would be to work individually and in groups, to move Thelema beyond the limitations of Crowley's contribution. Genius

though he was, we need to cultivate intelligence in the present, not merely worship the gifts of those long passed from sight. The last thing which the world needs is another cult of personality, and I assert that Crowley's charisma on its own simply won't carry Thelema forward. We need to encourage more voices to be heard in the context of Thelema – right, wrong or indifferent. Surely we have all had enough of *Crowley, Crowley et Crowley de plus*. For the health of the movement if not your own, learn to think for yourself. Read the books, do the practices and keep your own counsel. Time will sort out who was right and who was wrong. Truth is not fragile: it is mighty above all things and doesn't require protection. In his book, *The Scented Garden of Abdullah the Satirist of Shiraz,* Crowley suggests an apt solution to the problem that squarely faces Thelema:

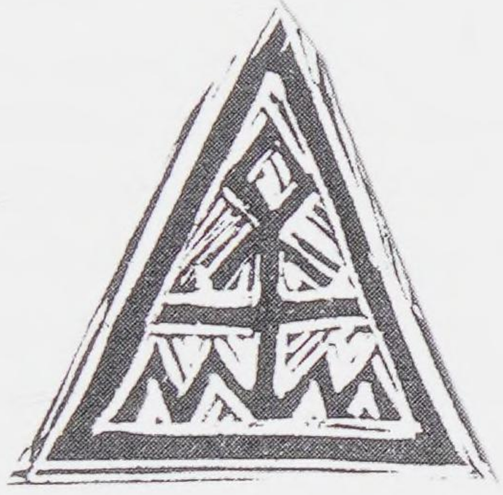
Forget, an if thou wilt, the scribe!
The lovely script to heart be laid!



Antarktos by Peter Smith

CALLING MR CROWLEY

Is Aleister Crowley Still Accessible To Psychic Contact In The Twenty-First Century?



Andrew Collins

CALLING MR CROWLEY

Is Aleister Crowley Still Accessible To Psychic Contact In The Twenty-First Century?

Following a chequered career, during which he excelled himself as a mountaineer, poet, author, philosopher, Freemason, great magus, chess master and drug fiend, Aleister Crowley retired to Hastings in West Sussex and spent his final two years in a boarding house on the outskirts of this popular seaside town. His death on 1st December 1947 was caused by myocardial degeneration and chronic bronchitis exacerbated by his heroin addiction, his withered body being cremated in Brighton as parts of the Gnostic Mass were read aloud. Thereafter his ashes were removed to the United States, and Crowley became just a memory, his fascinating though often vexed life being immortalised in biographical accounts, and in the continued adherence by followers of his magical system, expounded in the name of Thelema. Begrudgingly, he has been accepted by history as an important character of the past, and in a recent BBC poll (screened in 2002) he was, quite bafflingly, voted the 73rd most popular Briton of all time. Indeed, he was placed higher on the list than such esteemed individuals as Sir Bob Geldof, Robert the Bruce, J. R. R. Tolkien, John Lydon, entrepreneur Richard Branson, various English kings and, er, Robbie Williams.

Although thousands of individuals today see Crowley as a hero, and/or expound his magical disciplines, few occultists have taken time to ponder on what might have become of his soul, or spirit. Did it enter a realm deemed 'paradise', perhaps enriched by his own motivations and necessities of life? Did it reach heaven, where it now shares an afterlife with the greatest names of history? Or is it basking in hell, where many in the world in which Crowley lived would have liked to see him go? It is an interesting philosophical debate, and one which might well lead us to review another possibility altogether. Did some part of Crowley's memory,

or consciousness, enter an unseen world, co-existing with this one, where his spirit, or soul, remains able to communicate with those of a strong psychic disposition?

It was a subject that I had never contemplated when in the opening months of 1979 I started reading *The Great Beast*, John Symond's often maligned biography of Crowley, the first book I had ever picked up on the man's life and magical contributions to the world. In retrospect, this personal and very private initiation into what might be described as the Great Work was to have a profound effect on the rest of my life, although in a manner that no-one could have foreseen.

By this time, I had already become familiar with the idea of psychics obtaining knowledge and information from alleged otherworldly sources, having worked with certain UFO abductees who claimed telepathic empathy with the intelligence they saw as responsible for their own encounters. Such people usually possessed a whole background of paranormal experiences, and shared a great deal of psychological and physiological traits in common with each other. Through placing them in a hypnotic state, they not only produced vivid accounts of a so-called 'on-board' experience, but were also able to allow the Intelligence to manifest through their vocal cords in the form of direct verbal communication. The authenticity of such communications is questionable, and their sources even more so. However, many hours working with these individuals showed that the core of the information they gained could be construed as fairly accurate, especially when relating to the real world.

Helen Laurens

Such was the situation when in January 1979, I received a call via a third party from a woman who lived in South London. Her name was Helen Laurens,[1] and she wanted to report a UFO sighting she had supposedly experienced at the beginning of the year. To me it was of low priority, a light in the sky, so I dispatched her a standard report form, which she dutifully completed and returned.

1. Name slightly masked to protect her identity.

I thought no more of the matter until two months later when I heard from the woman again. She claimed to have experienced another UFO sighting, this one on the doorstep of her second-storey flat. Apparently, she had gone to put out an empty milk bottle one evening, and on looking up she saw a bright blue light in the night sky. She simply stared at it; and on returning to the warm comfort of the lounge, where her husband watched TV, she was amazed to find that 20 minutes had elapsed, even though the sighting had seemed over in seconds.

I suspected a classic 'missing time' scenario, and so went to interview her at her home. All went well, and having discussed the possibility of hypnosis she agreed for me to conduct an initial session to see what might happen. Perhaps inevitably, it resulted in her recalling an on-board experience, where some part of her, either astral or otherwise, was taken aboard an extra-terrestrial vessel, and introduced to its rather human-looking occupants, apparently led by a robed figure with a strange feathered headdress who answered to the name 'Osiris'.

This was to be the first of several visits to see Helen, during which time we conducted further light hypnosis sessions, this time to explore new dreams and waking visions whereby she saw herself as a witch living in the French Pyrenees during the mid sixteenth century. What intrigued me was her belief that I too had shared this past-life with her as a fellow witch, a statement she made even though neither of us had any prior interest in the subject. Indeed, her book collection consisted of a few romantic novels and a cookery book. Apparently, on the night that she was to have become 'High Priestess' of her coven, she was set upon by a mob and burned at the stake, depriving her of a rôle in life which was seen as rightfully hers.

Around this same time, Helen started to receive psychically inspired information which would appear in her head out of nowhere, most of it being useful for anyone wishing to learn not only about French and Spanish witchcraft of the sixteenth century, but also the rudiments of the western mystery tradition. Names, dates and places would pour through into her conscious mind almost daily. These she would dutifully record in notepads provided by me. From my limited knowledge of the subject, coupled with the fact that I had seen this occur before with other psychics, I concluded that Helen was somehow tapping into what I referred to in an article written at the time as the 'occult pool of knowledge'.[2]

2. See Collins, 'The Occult Pool of Knowledge', *Strange Phenomena*, Vol.1 No.2, Summer 1979.

Additionally, Helen found herself in communication with what she saw as a spirit guide, a woman of eastern origin with blue eyes and a green glow around her who gave her name as 'Elvena'. She would appear daily, instructing Helen on how she and I could recreate our lost past. It involved performing a magical working in which Helen would finally take her rôle as High Priestess. Pages of psychic instructions were offered, including a brew for a witch's flying ointment; yet we both realised that this working could only be conducted by someone already a witch, which I was not. Thus we concluded that as she was a witch by right of her past life (the old 'once a witch, always a witch' motto), she could first initiate me and then I would initiate her as High Priestess!

Crowley Appears

7th July 1979 was the date given for when the working should take place. My own initiation as a witch went as planned on Saturday, 9th June, and afterwards Helen said she could clairvoyantly hear – above the silence of the hotel room converted for the occasion – a heated argument going on between two individuals, whom I quickly realised were Samuel Liddell Mathers and Aleister Crowley. They were bickering over who had control of the *Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn* following Crowley's attempt to seize the London headquarters of the Second Order in 1900. Whether or not the dialogue was supposed to be historical, or some continuation of the dispute on the astral planes, was answered when the two entities attempted to involve Helen and I in conversation. She, of course, had no knowledge of the subject, and I very little.

Thereafter Helen started to glimpse other scenes from Crowley's life. They involved his youth, his Golden Dawn affiliations, his time as a laird at Boleskine on Loch Ness, his women (particularly Leila Waddell and Leah Hirzig) and, most interestingly, his writing of *Liber AL* in a Cairo apartment in April 1904. Indeed, she seemed to view this monumental event from the perspective of a person standing just beyond Crowley's left shoulder, the position that Aiwass retained during the three one-hourly sessions of dictation Crowley undertook daily to assemble the work's three chapters. Exactly why this should have been has perplexed me to this day.

All of these detailed visions simply came into her mind, sometimes in my presence and at other times on her own. Its goes without saying that she knew nothing of what she was seeing, and I was not prepared to say anything to her, other than simply to confirm the veracity of the vision. I recognised the different episodes from Crowley's life purely through having read *The Great Beast* shortly beforehand. What is more, there was much information coming from her concerning Crowley's life and magical system which was not known to me, discounting the possibility that the bulk of the received information was being unconsciously influenced or induced by myself.

On the Saturday following the vision of Crowley writing down *Liber AL*, she was initiated as High Priestess in another room of the same hotel. As I was reciting a variation of the lengthy working received clairaudiently by Helen, she experienced strange visions of figures and forms standing beyond the circle of protection, one of which she clearly identified as Crowley. Thereafter he began appearing to her on a more or less daily basis, initially to introduce his life and works through clairvoyance and automatic writing. However, very quickly he started talking about us recreating his 'magical order' – an event that was to

climax, he said, on 1st November 1979 with a complex magical operation at his Abbey of Thelema in Cefalu, Sicily.

The Inner Book of the Law

Of equal interest was the fact that Crowley began speaking about revealing an 'Inner Book of the Law', which was to be delivered to Helen backwards, paragraph by paragraph, in presumably 72 verses, each one representing a year of his life, starting with his death and working back to his moment of birth.

This literary enterprise began on 23rd July 1979, when during a question and answer session with the Crowley entity, Helen, alone at home, heard and wrote down the following lines:

> The day is 1st December 1947. We will work back 72 years. I am in a first floor room. From my bed all I can see is ivy leaves, bearing against the window in the winter air. I do not wish to die, but now I know better. I wish you to come back with me – write everything down. You will need this in the future. I am high with this substance. You do not need it. Do you understand how important this is?
>
> On this very day you are being told by me the Inner Book of the Law, in a way you will understand it. It will take many hours, many days to complete. You must not show or repeat any of this, until it is complete. You must show [name deleted[3]] this first paragraph, and you must keep quiet. Do you understand?

What followed was the last verse of the 'Inner Book of the Law', representing Crowley's final year on earth:

> I set my hand to the passage of time,
> Time unknown, time to find the infinite.
> The eye is the wheel, the depth of age and time.
> Know not this time and age,
> For suffering is now lost, beauty is within.
> The whole of the law is now understood.
> I come to you from a greater height than ever before.
> Withdraw into time,
> For this goes on regardless,
> Never stopping, never thinking,
> Ever breathing inner light, outer mind, self control.
> The subconscious is within, time renounced unto me.
> Between the stars I drift with ecstasy,
> Potent with self renown,
> For the Inner Book of the Law has now been shown.

3. The name deleted was a person whom the Crowley entity wanted Helen to find. He was alleged to be his son, although not enough information was provided by Helen regarding the outcome of this request to comment further at this time.

> The infinite and most holy Aleister Crowley [name written as standard signature].[4]

4. I have tidied up Helen's poor spelling, and set it in metric form, otherwise it is word perfect.

This was the only part of the 'Inner Book of the Law' that I ever saw, for the whole thing was completed in private and was to have been presented to me during the aforementioned magical operation on 1st November 1979. Whether or not these lines are in any way representative of Crowley's philosophies in the afterlife is impossible to determine.

Psychic Warnings

Since I had now moved from my family home in Essex to the Midlands town of Wolverhampton, in order to work with my friend and colleague Graham Phillips on the ill-fated news-stand magazine *Strange Phenomena,* I saw Helen only briefly from then on, leaving her to spend her days writing the Inner Book of the Law. Much new psychic material came from the Crowley entity, while at the same time Helen suddenly came into a windfall of money, which she immediately pledged to invest in the magazine (we needed it). Then something peculiar started to happen. A number of psychics – some known to me, others not – started to speak of a woman who was leading me astray through 'evil' influences that surrounded her. This furore climaxed on Sunday, 26th August at the First International UFO Congress, organised by BUFORA (the British UFO Research Association) and held at Marble Arch in London. A woman named Marion Sunderland – the mother of a young UFO contactee named Gaynor – came up to me, after I had met her only very briefly earlier that day, and said that although she didn't normally "do this type of thing", she could see around me the "agitated hands" of a woman. I told her to continue, but felt I knew what was coming. She asked whether there was a woman associated with me who wanted to put money into the magazine, immediately identifying her as Helen. Marion seemed shocked that her words made sense, and warned against having anything more to do with her. Having earlier agreed to cease my connections with Helen should one more psychic warn me against her, I immediately phoned Helen to tell her the bad news. She was obviously not amused, and slammed the phone down.

Nothing more was heard from her until 18th September, when I received a letter saying that she had been led by Crowley to find a "life casket", tubular in appearance. Inside it, she said, were documents pertaining to his life, including a letter in his hand along with the "deeds" to the Abbey of Thelema. According to her, the entity had told her to go to a beauty spot "near Stonehenge" where she was led to a large stone, underneath which was the aforementioned "life casket". If I was up for it, it would be given to me, along with the Crowley documents and the

now-completed 'Inner Book of the Law', on completion of the magical working in Sicily on 1st November, now just six weeks away.

Although tempted by this tantalising offer, further persuasion from Marion Sunderland convinced me otherwise. Unbeknown to me, Marion had contacted a mutual friend soon after the letter arrived. She felt strongly that Helen had been in touch with me again, even though Marion knew nothing of what had already transpired between us. Yet on speaking with Marion by telephone she correctly picked up psychically that Helen wanted me to visit a small building located on a hill, situated somewhere "abroad". She saw it surrounded by what she perceived as "black energies" and pleaded with me not to go, suggesting that if I did then everything I had been working towards in my life would fall to pieces. I felt I had no option but to accept her word, and steer away from Helen.

The Green Stone Affair

The newfound friendship with Marion Sunderland, her husband Fred and their five children (all of whom had experienced UFO encounters and/or psychic experiences) led quickly to a sequence of unexplainable incidents which spurred Graham Phillips and I to embark on a quest to discover a mythical green jewel called 'MEONIA' ('I AM ONE'), which psychic information suggested had once been owned by Mary Queen of Scots and the Gunpowder Plotters. It resulted shortly afterwards in the nocturnal retrieval of a short steel sword of nineteenth-century manufacture, bearing Mary Queen of Scots' personal monogram and the inscription 'Meonia fore Marye' along its blade. Graham also discovered a small green cabochon stone, today referred to as the Green Stone, which rested inside an ornate brass casket thought to be of seventeenth-century origin.[5] The publishing of this story in the early 1980s within books written separately by both Graham and I led to the modern revival of psychic questing, something which might not have occurred had I remained under Helen's influence (perhaps the real reason why I had to break free of her, and not because she, or the influences surrounding her, were 'evil').

Other than the occasional letter or telephone call from Helen over the next few years, I had no further contact with her until 1988 when, a little more open-minded regarding the reasons why I had been warned off her the first time, I invited her to join me in attempting to uncover hard evidence of nefarious ritual activities in England; the results of which were published subsequently in one of my books.[6] My involvement with her in 1979 was also written up and published in a booklet entitled *Helen and the Beast*.[7] According to Helen, she did go out to Cefalu in Sicily for

5. See Collins, *The Sword and the Stone*; Collins, *The Seventh Sword*, and Phillips and Keatman, *The Green Stone*.

6. See Collins, *The Second Coming*.

7. See Collins, *Helen and the Beast*.

1st November 1979. Nothing occurred, although she apparently met a man, a practising occultist she said, with whom she became acquainted on returning to England. More disturbingly, she claimed that she had eventually destroyed both the 'Inner Book of the Law', along with the "life casket" and its fascinating contents. Through this tragedy we shall now never know whether the 'Inner Book of the Law' was intended to throw new light on the teachings of Thelema and the prophesised new Aeon of Maat.

Thelemic Resurrection

In the years that followed, I worked with other talented psychics, and once in a while an entity bearing the likeness and mannerisms of Aleister Crowley would attempt to intrude into their dreams and waking visions. Whenever this occurred, I would simply tell it to "fuck off", words I felt to be an effective means of banishment. This attitude persisted until 2001, when what was clearly a Crowley-based influence reared its head once more. Yet on this occasion it eventually received a more favourable reception.

On Saturday, 4th February my partner (now my wife) Sue, my friend Richard Ward, and I were conducting a classic Enochian style invocation, involving the *Sigillum Emeth* and some avid crystal gazing, in a Tudor room at Dr John Dee's family seat of Nant-y-Groes, near Llandrindod Wells in mid-Wales. With candles burning and the room darkened, Richard was unexpectedly drawn to a Janus wand which I had brought along for the session. It was carved by me when working magically with Helen Laurens back in 1979, and was the only item from this period I still used. Richard said that a presence was attempting to manifest through it into the room. On asking for the entity to identify itself, it responded with the Thelemic salutation, "Do what thou wilt shalt be the whole of the Law". At first, I simply removed the wand from our sphere of influence. Yet much later the entity returned and once again gave the Thelemic salutation. On asking for an identity, it answered through Richard with the words: "To Mega Therion", supposing that it was Crowley himself. Shortly afterwards, Richard, now in a trance state, began suffering breathing problems, prompting me to ask the intruding entity one final question: "why do you need to come here now?"

"You have brought me here," was the immediate response, following which the session ceased abruptly. A further attempt to communicate with the entity later that same night proved unsuccessful.

Andahadna on the Tower of Maat by Allen Holub

Seeing Mr Crowley

Nothing more occurred to suggest Crowley's presence until September that same year, when Sue unexpectedly began experiencing nocturnal visitations from a presence identifying itself as Crowley. It came as a bedroom visitor, and occasionally made statements related to incidents from 1979 known only to me. For instance, it said: "He should not have burned that robe, you know," a reference most surely to the fact that after I broke off contact with Helen I burnt my ritual robe, the only one I had owned. On another occasion, Sue dreamt she was on stage performing a public ceremony with Crowley and others. I felt I recognised it as a scene from one of Crowley's public performances of the Rites of Eleusis, staged during 1910 at London's Caxton Hall.

Perhaps inevitably, these nocturnal experiences prompted Sue to become interested in Crowley's life, leading her to begin reading *The Great Beast,* the same copy on which I had gorged back in 1979. It bred in her an almost burning desire for knowledge on Crowley, which on one occasion led her, in my absence, to search in vain for the Janus wand so that she might conduct some kind of spontaneous working. On another, she bizarrely asked me to give her the Serpent's Kiss. I refused, of course!

Enter Lam

Then during the evening of Sunday, 21st October 2001, Crowley appeared to Sue as she lay down. Unexpectedly, his features shifted, firstly into me, secondly into a demon (who remains unidentified) with large boils or bumps all over his face, and thirdly into a strange alien face, not dissimilar to the classic Whitley Strieber-style 'Gray'. Both Richard and I concluded that in the third face Sue had witnessed a form of Lam, leading us to review this presumed extra-terrestrial's rôle in Crowley's life as given by Kenneth Grant in his books.[8]

8. See, for instance, Grant, *Cults of the Shadow*, pp. 109, 192-3.

Previously, psychic information received by Richard and I had implied that, as part of our on-going questing activities in the west of England, we should visit Bredon Hill in Worcestershire. Here on 1st November we were to conduct a series of attunements at seven sites, each one reflecting one of the planetary influences. Since I felt we should conduct the Venus attunement at a place called Nafford's Lock, a mere few hundred metres away from the Swan's Neck – the bend on the River Avon, close to the village of Eckington, Worcestershire, where the Green Stone was discovered twenty-two years beforehand – the introduction of Lam into our affairs was most fortuitous. In Typhonian tradition, he is associated with symbols belonging to the promised Aeon of Maat, such as the swan, Hamsa, whose hiss becomes the only sound heard above the silence of

the inner mind during workings with this entity.[9] Moreover, the so-called Tower of Maat recorded by Grant's contact Soror Andahadna during her own Maatian workings,[10] and afterwards drawn by artist Allen Holub,[11] corresponds with a physical tower featured in the Green Stone story. Standing on Dunstall Common, close to Eckington, it was seen psychically by a young Gaynor Sunderland, who after its discovery dreamt that she saw a swan fly down from its battlements with the jewel contained in a pouch around its neck. This provided our greatest clue concerning the final whereabouts of the Green Stone, which from its colour alone exudes the influence of Venus. Allen Holub's picture of the Tower of Maat, printed in Grant's *Outside the Circles of Time,* published in 1980, one year after the Green Stone affair, is shown with a swan-serpent hybrid wrapped around it.

9. See, for instance, Grant, *Outside the Circles of Time*, p. 145.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid., pl. 2.

Only years later did we realise that the Green Stone's hiding place on the Swan's Neck corresponded exactly to where in 1600 a new star appeared in the neck of the heavenly swan, the constellation Cygnus, an event deemed by the proto-Rosicrucians of the era as a portent of the coming age of enlightenment. Bredon Hill was a place well-known to Sue. She lived in the nearby town of Evesham for eight years before leaving there to join me in Essex, and during her time in the area she found that Bredon takes it name from Bridget, or Bride, the ancient British fire goddess, one of whose forms is the swan.[12] Moreover, Sue discovered that during the rainy season, the banks of the River Avon around the Swan's Neck flood, enabling anyone standing on Bredon Hill to see the impression of a swan emerging from the water in full flight, a natural spectacle which cannot have gone unnoticed in ancient times. Since we also considered the much-talked-about Aeon of Maat, and its symbolism, to be associated with Venus, the three of us agreed that for the Venus attunement we would see ourselves entering the magical realm signifying the Aeon of Maat via Lam's head, using the mantra *Ipsos Lam*.

12. See, for instance, Cope, *The Modern Antiquarian*, p. 38, 41 regarding Bridgit as the 'Swan Goddess', and p. 38, 43, for the etymology of Bredon as Bree's, or Bride's, Hill.

Thursday, 1st November 2001 turned out to be the last day of an Indian summer, and in secluded woodland on the summit of Bredon Hill Sue took on the symbolic role of Babalon, 156, while Richard became Baphomet, 729, a necessary chemistry for the future success of the venture. The climax of the working, conducted within a day or so of the discovery of the Green Stone 22 years beforehand, was the Venus attunement which took place in the darkness at Naffords Lock. Very little resulted on a psychic level, despite the meditation featuring the Lam attunement. We went home and forgot about the quest, but the true results of what we had triggered out in the real world would soon become apparent.

Twenty-First Century Grail

On Thursday, 21 November 2001, just three weeks after the Bredon Hill visit, and exactly one calendar month after Sue's assumed Crowley/Lam vision, Richard experienced the first of two powerful dreams. Within this he came face to face with a curious life-sized horned figure in stone, which he quickly recognised as the example to be found in St Clement's Caves, Hastings. As he watched, the alcove behind this strange carving melted away and a spirit form emerged, dressed in red with leather armour. Somehow, Richard knew it was Bartzabel, the angel of Mars. Raising his sword, the spirit exclaimed: "Behold, Baphomet, the Baptiser of Wisdom." Not understanding what this meant, only that the angel was referring to the carved statue, Richard asked why he was being shown this, to which he was told: "Perdurabo's spirit has called you."

Bartzabel is associated with the number 325, an auspicious co-incidence since that day was the 325th day of the year. More significantly, on 9th May 1910 Crowley (who took the magical name 'Frater Perdurabo' on entering the Golden Dawn) had conducted a ritual to invoke Bartzabel in the company of his lover Leila Waddell and his friend, the poet Victor Neuberg, at the Dorset home of Commander G. M. Marston RN. So successful was this magical act that Marston had recommended that Crowley perform the whole thing commercially on stage. It resulted later that year in public performances of the *Rites of Eleusis* – invocations of the seven planets – on consecutive Wednesday evenings at London's Caxton Hall, the very event which Sue had dreamt about only two months beforehand.

Hastings Caves, so close to the boarding house where Crowley spent his final years, was used in medieval times as a religious chantry, while the strange horned figure can be seen in the deepest and coldest part of the caves, known as The Chapel. Whether it has any connection with Baphomet or the Knights Templar is debatable, since its true age or purpose is not known. This aside, the horned statue again became the scene of a dream for Richard on Friday 30th November. Yet instead of Bartzabel, he saw Crowley as a sexagenarian, who appeared suddenly with the words: "You want to know why you have been brought here? I'll tell you why. It is the legend of the Holy Grail, my own Cup of Babalon. Take the Baptism of Wisdom, and learn the truth." With this scene came an overwhelming feeling of the presence, here in the distant past, of Knights Templar, as well as a passionate concern for a holy relic linked directly with the Grail which Crowley wanted us to find.

In the dream, Crowley held in one hand the seven-sided Star of Babalon, and as Richard awoke the title of an unread Crowley work was in his mind – *Liber CLVI* ('Book 156'). Also known as *Liber Cheth vel*

Vallum Abiegni, with the somewhat revealing sub-title of 'The Ritual of the Holy Graal', it commences with an address to Babalon, before she is allowed to answer in her own words. The text itself alludes to "the secret of the Holy Graal, that is the sacred vessel of our Lady the Scarlet Woman, Babalon", before going on to describe a symbolic mass in which a devotee's blood is offered to her in a "golden cup", in order "that thou attain to the Sacrament of the Graal in the Chapel of Abominations."[13]

13. Crowley, 'Liber CLVI', in Crowley, The Holy Books of Thelema, Equinox Vol. 3 No. 9, pp. 101-3.

These initial dreams catalysed an extraordinary sequence of events in which the Crowley entity led us on a quest to discover a seven-fold configuration of ancient sites overlaying south-east England, known to us as the 'Star of Babalon'. We also began the search for a Grail cup, which he liked to refer to as the 'Cup of Babalon'. It climaxed with us not only becoming custodians of a suitable Grail, associated with the chalice of Mary Magdalene, but also in the dramatic retrieval of a ritualistic key inscribed with symbols found close to an ancient holy well at Binsey in Oxfordshire. It is an unbelievable story revealed quite fully in *Twenty-First Century Grail* (Virgin Books, 2004).

One and the Same Crowley?

Although at times cantankerous, awkward and lecherous, the Crowley that appeared frequently to Richard and Sue in dreams, meditations and waking visions was always strong and ready to help. Strangely, he bore some relationship to the entity of this name who found contact with Helen Laurens back in 1979. Occasionally, the Crowley of the 2000s cryptically alluded to incidents that only I knew happened back in 1979. Moreover, Kenneth Grant, who read the manuscript of *Twenty-First Century Grail,* which he described as "a highly potent confection and a profoundly compelling study [of the Grail mythos]"[14], states that the description of Crowley's appearances as given in the text come over "convincingly enough".[15] However, he points out that during communications with himself, seemingly when the *New Isis Lodge* was operational, the spirit of Crowley would always mark his entrance and exit with the correct Thelemic salutations, either literally or numerically, which was not the case in our experiences. However, in further correspondence with him, I pointed out that these salutations *were* offered on occasions, and that the workings which the book presents are often truncated or abbreviated for reasons of space.

14. Personal letter from Kenneth Grant to the author dated 19th April 2004.

15. Ibid.

The whole experience of working with Crowley has expanded dramatically my understanding of Thelema. I have no doubt that through his magical activities on earth, some part of Crowley continues to exist on the astral plane, and that under certain circumstances it is available to mental sympathy. Even though these entities are in part constructs of

the unconscious minds of the psychics involved, elements of the deceased individual remain accessible to the human mind.

Egyptian Pilgrimage

By way of a postscript, Sue and I travelled to Cairo for the centenary of the channeling of *Liber AL*. At precisely midday on 8th April 2004, as the call to prayer went out from every mosque, the two of us sat in an open-air café on 26th July Street, where Crowley's apartment was located back in 1904. It took me exactly 20 minutes to read aloud the first chapter of *Liber AL*, the final lines being said over the sound of the final call to prayer that lunchtime. It was a very moving experience, and just for a second Sue became aware of a presence by her shoulder; yet whether it was Crowley or not, we shall not speculate. What I do know is that we can be thankful that, for a short while at least, Richard, Sue and I were granted the presence of a most distinguished spirit guide, whose own pioneering work in the field of trafficking with non-human entities has paved the way for the work still continuing today.

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THE EVOLUTION OF MAAT MAGICK

From Cornfields to Cyberspace

Margaret Ingalls

THE EVOLUTION OF MAAT MAGICK

From Cornfields To Cyberspace

Maat is the principle, or *neter*, of truth, justice, balance and honesty, personified as a young woman wearing a feather tucked into her head-band. She is sometimes depicted as a feather occupying a balance-pan of the scale in the judgement hall of Osiris, a scale used for the weighing of the heart of deceased. She is the daughter of Ra, and the wife of Tehuti.

Maat Magick is a Thelemic system of self-initiation, founded on the principles of Aleister Crowley's writings. There are differences in the details of the systems, though: adaptations to the technological breakthroughs, political changes, scientific discoveries and further visionary experiences of the past century.

One major difference lies in the concept of Aeons. The godforms for whom Aeons are named reflect, in their natures, the general imagery, or formulae, of the prevalent society of their times. Crowley saw the Aeons in sequence; I see them in parallel. The Aeon of Maat is not a replacement for the Aeon of Horus, but operates in concurrence with it. Likewise, the Aeons of Isis and Osiris are still in practice and in belief in various locations around the world.

I use the Aeon of Bes as the Nameless/ancestral Aeon, extending backward in the timestream. The Aeon of Harpocrat is the Wordless/descendants' Aeon, extending forward into the future. You can order Aeons in the number and formation that best suit your needs, to the extent of your understanding of them. I began by thinking that Horus and Maat comprised 'the double current', but accumulating experiences showed me that Maat Magick is a Panaeonic Magick.

Thus a concept evolved within an evolving system.

Maat Magick was created from the empty spaces around the works of Aleister Crowley on the shelves of an occult shop called 'The Dawn of Light'. In the early 1970s, there were a few books by Israel Regardie, Dion Fortune, Frater Achad and Kenneth Grant, but none of the range of works that I'd expected to find.

Crowley had written, I thought, that Magickians were supposed to discover their own systems of Magick, not to depend on his writings alone for their Initiations. The discovery of one's own Magick, and the successful practice of it, seemed to me to warrant publication of it, if for no other reason than to share information with one's colleagues. Where were the books?

Imagine a world without the Internet and its foremost search-engine prophet, Google. Except for the small band of like-minded seekers to be encountered at the occult shop, I could only presume that there were seekers in other places around the world. At the time, all I could do as a beginner in the High Art was to open myself to the service of whatever idea or entity that was searching for a means of expression.

After a series of events and improbabilities, I had a vision, complete with voice-overs, that was written as *Liber Pennae Praenumbra*, the Book of the Foreshadowing of the Feather. Since incoming information is framed in the vocabulary of the receiver, and since I was immersed in Crowley's writings at the time, Liber PP's language resembles his in style – which I call King James biblical. I've since updated it as a longish poem named "Feathersong". Liber PP appears in each of two books: *Maat Magick: a Guide to Self-Initiation*, and *The Way of Mystery: Magick, Mysticism & Self-Transcendence*. Feathersong is only in *The Way of Mystery*.

Another factor in the early development of Maat Magick was an entity called N'Aton. N'Aton appears as an androgynous human, with golden skin, hair and eyes, and his right side is always in shadow. The shadow contains different things on different occasions: a crowd of human faces, a star-filled night sky, symbols, aliens, and so on.

Who or what is N'Aton? Before I attempt a definition, I ask you to suspend disbelief in the relative realities this definition requires.

- N'Aton is the shadowy uninvited participant that manifested during a group time-travel Working. Only three of about thirty ritualists saw or felt the presence of this guest, as far as I know. We (Louis Martinie', Herb Zigler, and I) decided to keep silent about it in order to avoid influencing others. No one else from the group has come forward so far with any such report.

• N'Aton is the tour guide who showed me the multiverse and its probability-worlds, where our Mainstream Reality traces a glowing trail of manifestation that we call 'history' among linked choice nodes. I met interesting life-forms in environments deadly to humans, and saw the paths leading to various futures for our species and our planet.

• N'Aton is the persona of the emerging *Homo veritas*, which differs from *Homo sapiens* in that people have a double consciousness: that of their individuality and that of the whole species. It can be viewed as Jung's 'Racial Unconscious' becoming 'Racial Consciousness'. Through a field effect of empathy and telepathy, I can literally feel your pain, you can feel mine, and we both can link with large numbers of others who know how to teach us effective pain management. We filter the input of this 'telempathic' sense in much the same way as our familiar physical senses edit the teeming world for our consideration. Total immersion in the species consciousness is relatively rare, but the global network of human consciousness is available at all times.

• N'Aton sleeps in most of us; but is waking up, stretching and yawning, in some of us. N'Aton is us, and our children, and our new incarnations, and also those ancestors of ours who lived in wisdom, and helped our species survive and change. I was informed, in the course of cosmic tours, that a simple majority of humans, when awakened to our species-consciousness, will pull the rest along with us.

• N'Aton isn't a godform in the classical sense of the word, although he/she/we might be regarded as such by mages in the devotional stage of Initiation. N'Aton is a metaperson, and is our genus' representative among other living beings.

In 1976, Louis Martinie' and his small group named *Bate Cabal* published the first issue of 'Cincinnati Journal of Ceremonial Magick' which contained *Liber Pennae Praenumbra.* Subsequent issues carried more writings on Maat Magick, which generated a number of letters to the magazine. The most memorable letter was from a group of young Thelemic Magickians and fellow members of the Typhonian Order from New York City, the Grove of the Star and the Snake. They wrote to say that the material they'd read was useful in their own practices, and that they wanted to visit me for a weekend.

They drove out to the Maat-Pangrove Abbey of Thelema, a farmhouse and barn on ten acres of land in Brown County, Ohio, where I lived with my children, my brother and his lady, and a floating roster of visitors. Two days and a night of intense rituals saw the birth of the *Horus-Maat*

Lodge, whose charter we signed November 25, 1978. The first day of ritual was dedicated to Horus, a sunny day in the cornfields; the second day was misty and cloudy, and we invoked Maat in the woods at the back of the property. The night was rainy for a rite of rebirth. Four of the founding members remain active in the *Horus-Maat Lodge*: Fra. Aion, Fra. Shade, Fra. Nemus, and I.

The *Horus-Maat Lodge* continued to grow through private correspondence, a newsletter called 'The Hermetic Expedient', and periodicals like Mandragore, Aeon, and the CJCM. The generous support of Kenneth Grant, particularly in his books *Nightside of Eden* and *Outside the Circles of Time*, introduced the idea of Maat Magick to his global readership. More importantly to me, Mr. Grant's interest and generosity encouraged me to persevere in Magick despite rough patches in the course of Initiations.

In 1980, 1981 and 1982, the Abbey hosted the Warrior Lord Workings, gatherings of about 30-40 Magickians, to read the three chapters of *Liber AL* in a ritual setting, hold lectures and workshops, display artworks, and engage in long, esoteric discussions.

In 1983, while riding home from work, I heard a silent but sonorous voice telling me "The thrones must be filled". This statement was repeated several times. Some channeled materials arrive with sound and sights, some arrive as unlearned knowledge. Following the voice came the understanding that filling the thrones meant filling the catena of Initiation, which in turn meant there should manifest at least one person for every Sephira. These Throne-holders should work toward, and attain, the understanding and wisdom of their particular Sephira; each should then emanate the essence of his or her Sephira/Throne to the world. This would hasten human spiritual/psychic evolution in preparation for the double consciousness to come.

Da'ath was to be included. There was given a group rite to send out a call for Throne-holders. The project is called the Elevenstar Working. The ritual was first performed at Winterstar in 1984. The Winterstar Symposium is held every February by the 'Association for Consciousness Exploration', or ACE, based in Cleveland Ohio.

The Elevenstar rite was also performed in Seattle, Washington, as part of a celebration of the Harmonic Convergence in 1985. *Maat Magick* was published in 1985, and I received a number of letters commenting on its usefulness to the practice of various types and traditions of Magick.

During this time, I was corresponding with a number of people living in Great Britain and on the Continent, who came to form the European Maat Network. In 1990, my husband Mike and I had the pleasure of

flying to England to meet with various colleagues, to visit Stonehenge, Avebury, Oxford (where I'd been invited to lecture), Brighton and other locations, and to hold a mighty ritual at Silbury Hill on Lammas, the first of August.

The following decade was filled with lecture-workshops at the ACE Winterstar Symposia in spring and at Starwood gatherings in summer. Book signings were usually accompanied by lecture-workshops, and these were held in Columbus and Cincinnati Ohio, Seattle WA, Portland OR, New Orleans, LA, New Paltz NY, and in other cities in the US. During this time I was working on *The Way of Mystery*, and on art for the Maat Tarot (still in slow progress).

In July of 1999, Fra. Aion put the early documents of the Lodge online; the response was such that we currently have 116[1] members worldwide. We communicate on an email list, which has but one rule: no flaming.

We've adapted the Elevenstar rite for internet use as follows:

Every new moon, participants meet astrally at Moonbase Temple, situated in the center of the visible face of our satellite, while acting in our individual temples physically. We discuss and agree upon a word of power, an image and a sigil a few days in advance, then employ these in rites of individual devising. We send our Magical Records of the ritual to the *Horus-Maat Lodge* list during the following few days.

During the first five years the Elevenstar Working served as a means of self-initiation for the membership. This year, we're making astral contact with successive age groups of the human race. Thus far we've covered the pre-born to age 1, 1 to 7 years, 7 to 14; our next new moon, that of April 2004, will focus on the 14 to 21 year group.

If you're interested in viewing the Horus Maat Lodge website, go to *http://www.horusmaatl.com*.

The latest venture, brought to manifestation by Frater Aion, is the Silver Star online magazine. Its URL is *http://www.horusmaatl.com/silverstar*.

In the time remaining to me in this presentation, I would like to read for you an updated version of *Liber Pennae Praenumbra*. It's in contemporary English; I've named it 'Feathersong'.

Feathersong

1. These words rise from eternity:

2. Lady of air, upon which sails the sun god's boat, the same mouth speaks and drinks. Lady of spiritual balance, the same mouth creates and devours.

3. All means of our linking with the world through perception, nourishment, and love, can be symbolized in and by the mouth. Your cosmos is so beautiful!

4. All lovers lost in each other salute you, light beyond human sight, whose nature can change the inner self. As the sense of self diminishes, the flow of cosmic energy through one increases. Tell us, the children of the future, what you desire. Tell us of your love.

5. Speaks the balance of motion:

6. I fly to you, you who do your will. Blessed are you who love under will and who give all of yourself to the universe. As Isis gathered the pieces of Osiris' body, so you pursue your history. By understanding the past, you conceive the vision of what mankind should be. You work to bring this vision to actuality.

7. The future you seek to manifest will sustain and pleasure you, when men and women war no more. Working to transcend your present state brings joy; those working together to transcend will be more successful than many working individually.

8. The institutions of control belong to the past; the twentieth century has seen the rise of individual freedom and responsibility. The future belongs to the innocent and the open-minded, to those who live gladly in the flow of things.

9. The scribe, as self-appointed critic and representative for humanity, speaks:

10. What are these words? An Aeon is supposed to last two thousand years. The era of spiritual and political submission just ended in this century with its birth of the spirit of individual sovereignty. This spirit has just begun its work.

11. The Lady is amused, but kind.

12. The spirit of the new age, like a hunting hawk, still flies in the sun, enlightening and encouraging those who watch and love him. But – how does this hawk fly? By the air (and I am

Lady of the air) and by the feathers of his wings (and the feather is my special symbol).

13. Time is as stable as it ever was, and history within it, implacable as Saturn/Set, the Lord of time and necessity. The hero-hawk will fly for as long as his work remains the death of restriction and servility.

14. Again, the scribe:

15. Am I mistaken, then to think your Aeon is to follow his? Are you not Maat?

16. Again, the Lady is amused.

17. At times you see me as truth personified; at other times I can be seen as maiden, mother, and crone, or as the veils of nothing, limitlessness and limitless light. Do not confuse yourself in my varied appearances; truth rules.

18. I cannot be caged. Who can bar my way or stop my advent when time and space are my own servants?

19. In fact, scribe, you need me to speak. The same mouth that breathes my air gives voice to doubts. Know me in silence – I come to further enlighten the doers of will.

The Word of Flight

20. Your balance is maintained by forward motion; never tell yourself that you've arrived.

21. When you abandoned old ways of control, their institutions were already dying. In your questings for the truth you've found a resonance in symbols of the birds.

22. Crowned in silence on a starry sea,
serenely glides the Swan, forever free.

Balanced on one foot where sea meets shore,
the Heron ponders wisdom evermore.

The great eyes of the Owl can understand
the ways of hunting in a night-dark land.
The Raven's call for mercy must be heard
in honor of the ebon battle-bird.

With strength of trumpets in his greeting cry,
the Cockerel hails light in eastern sky.

Soaring in the sunrise, beauty-bright,
the Hawk enraptures all who see his flight.

In victory the Peacock spreads his fan,
a thousand eyes of love he shows to man.

Swift as thought and splendid as a flower,
the Hummingbird's a flying jewel of power.

The dreamers heed the haunting call of Loon,
founded in the dusk of mist and moon.

Beneath her wings the Eagle's kingdom flows,
as to her mystic lover Lion she goes.

Alchemic union changes her to Swan –
with realm and crown conjoined she travels on.

The Ibis on the verge of starless deeps
unveils the secret knowledge that he keeps.

23. From them you learned to fly, my noble souls, as you fly now within the sea of stars. Beware of danger, though, from traitors and from those who envy you, who would abort your flight.

24. Contemplate your heart and judge yourself. If you are honest, your heart weighs no more than does my feather-form. It will not pull you down the starless deeps. Alchemic gold is light, but inert lead of unjust deeds will bind you to the ground. Search deeply for your inner nature.

25. If anything would hinder you, it is your doing; let action do itself. See this teaching now within the Temple.

26. So saying, the balance of motion assumed the appearance of the great Black Flame, the light beyond sight, growing from the feather-shaft and billowing out into the Void. The doers of will watched silently, and listened to her words form in their hearts.

27. Look well! This lens of stars, this galaxy, is the one named Andromeda. Through it, I, the balance of motion, the Magickal Current, flow to the Sirius system, then to your Sun, then to your individual selves.

28. The work of transformation lasts a lifetime. In cosmic love and innate will do everything. Through compassion understand your primal self. From the center of your self embrace the universe.

29. Do this, then go farther. Lose all that is not you, that separates your essence from the ineffable. If anything or anyone would capture you, leave the part they grasp, like empty clothing, and go, a naked soul.

30. Now you gather in our sacred space, as guides of the spiritually hungry, as doers of will, as defenders of truth, as changers of manifestations. The flow of things, the Tao, the truth, is found in transformations.

31. The Ibis-headed Thoth, cosmic scribe and Lord of science, gives the basic keys of world and spirit. Chthonos underlies matter-energy; learn its essence, control its power. Ychronos is true eternity, in which lies time and the dimensions beyond it.

32. These two keys are one, the essence of the physical world. They are the keys of transmutation and of the power of the elements.

33. The assembly received the keys, taking them to heart. The Black Flame danced and dwindled, becoming a quill-pen. There being nothing on which to write, one of the assembly laid his body's skin upon the altar as a living parchment. (In visions are great wonders, as in dreams.)

34. The Lady wrote on it a word, but did not show it to them. In patience the gathering did wait, knowing that in time they'd have the word.

35. Again the quill-pen grew, taking on the form of the Yonilingam. From this sign of male and female unity arose the image of Baphomet, who spoke:

36. You know the secrets of sexual Alchemy. You've lived and loved as universe and self, as Nature's lord and Lady of willed love. You also know my nature, the androgyne, hermaphroditic archetype.

37. Two main genders has the human race; the man and woman generate the child. I am the older of the children, containing beast and human, male and female. My younger brother, human Horus, charismatic warrior, enlightens now the world.

38. True Alchemy, in changing substances through love, changes also the Alchemists. If you would work this way, learn from my sister-opposite.

The Showing of the Image

39. From the Yonilingam rose a cloud of sparkling violet, from which came a soft vibration.

40. Striped in amber and burnt umber,

eyes of jewels, rainbow wings,
as you hover, so we wonder,
loving honey, fearing stings.

41. The Lady's voice rings from the violet cloud:

42. This is a symbol of your future's Work. Take note of how the Bee suggests a way of living suited to large human numbers.

43. In what ways does the Bee's nature teach us?

44. The worker bee is neither male nor female, even though it's female in its form. For all its life its joy is in the hive; it labors for the benefit of all.

45. Flower to flower does it fly, nectar drinker, pollen captor, then to hive. Within its body, it changes nectar's nature.

46. The nectar is now honey, circulating to and from each mouth. In the taste of message molecules, each bee knows the state and health of all. By the same mouth that gathered up the nectar, is the honey spent. In process and in circulation then, does food become an information chain.

47. The hive's alive, a being in itself, immortal as a bee sees it, and home. Queen and larva, nurse and guard, honey-bringer, builder of the comb, old one fanning wings in doorway wait the fatal bridal flight of drone. In the will of the hive is the will of the bee fulfilled. The task of each age is where the bee finds joy.

48. The image fades. The black flame-feather dances, growing wings, becoming the dark vulture.

49. But be aware, you who do your will, a man is not a bee. Humans can profit from Nature's examples, but never take a metaphor too far. Watch me for another image.

50. A vision rose – the Tower of Silence where the Parsees lay their dead. The fire and the earth, too sacred for a corpse, bade them offer such to air and bird.

51. The vulture lit upon the Tower and ate the flesh from corpses, to the bone. The wind howled, desolate, fluttering the corpse-cloth about the ivory bones.

52. Into the eyes of each of the assembly the blood-stained vulture stared. They each returned her gaze in peaceful silence. None of them feared death; each had embraced it. The vulture spread her wings, took to the wind, and soared up from the Tower.

The Giving of the Word

53. Eternal, infinite, a veil enclosed them.

54. Time began again as the veil parted;
infinity became a woman's form.
More beautiful she was than mortal woman;
her light of amethyst and pearl shone warm.
Her gown was made of fine Egyptian linen,
about her waist were wings of silver-gold.
Her headdress, midnight blue with stars of diamond,
a circlet and her single plume did hold.
In one hand was the Ankh, the crux ansata,
the sandal-strap of gods who live to Go.
The other held a wand of woven serpents,
the healing-rod of Thoth from long ago.

55. She moved among the gathered seekers, embraced and kissed each one. She sat with them and spoke as though with equals.

56. Listen to me, mages; hear me, sages. Nothing will be hidden from your sight. All patterns of rites and words of power will be yours. Heed the counsel of your elders on the path.

57. You've done well in your learning. You understand the Tree of Life and its Qaballah; you comprehend the Tetragrammaton. You know willed love and how to use its power. You have become the secret Self, and Cosmos, and Horus, warrior of will. As Harpocrat, you kept yourself in silence. You've loved Pan and you've been Pan; you've loved and been the Lady Babalon.

58. You've raised and used the darker powers of Set-Shaitan-Saturn-Shiva, to link with Horus in the work of will. You've seen yourself as separate from the cosmos so in your union with it you find joy. Experiments in mind and body point the way for creativity.

59. There's more to learn, my noble souls, even as you know, and will, and dare, and keep in silence.

60. In death is life, as Nature's cycles show us. Deliberated death of self's illusion takes you out of time; continue this. The self of ego, this illusion of identity, must die each time it forms. Be vigilant, since this illusion generates itself.

61. Keep a constant watch – the Abyss is crossed by minutes, every day.

62. If you would dance the Mask, then mask the Dance. Your art must excel in making selves to fit your audience, be it human, Other, or you, yourself. Your natural self's unreal, the Masks are even less. Maintain a dancing balance in their making, lest they convince you they contain your essence. A tool, devised by will, makes a bad master.

63. In Alchemy are partners equal, the lunar Eagle and the solar Lion. By the same mouth roaring on the mountain is this equity acknowledged.

64. When you choose, invoke the Bee to join its golden sacrament of hive to Lion's red of male and Eagle's white of female. Nectar is the seed, the temple-hive's the womb, the nectar is the Lion's and the Eagle acts as Bee.

65. Within her heart and self this gathered nectar fountains up and pools. Then Lion rises, summoning new bliss. And from the third and inmost temple-chamber flows the charged nectar, golden mead, to join the Eagle's tears and Lion's blood.

66. Dissolve in the selflessness of psychic death and then reform as will and work requires, in rebirth more than resurrection. This is the sacrament by which the Cosmos dissolves and reforms by will. And know, upon the plane of earth, that three or more is zero, as well as other truths.

67. The assembled ones then stirred, and from their ranks a nameless one stepped forward.

68. We know you, Lady, unspoken though your name has been thus far. But say now—what was written on the manskin? What is this word you give?

69. She smiled, and drew from her robe a parchment scroll shaped as a star (for every man and every woman is a star). Unrolling it, she turned it roundabout, so all might see.

70. IPSOS

71. What is the word, O Lady – how may it be used?

72. In silent wisdom, noble soul. Let the deed shine forth and let the word be hidden; the deed is lamp enough to veil the face.

73. It's the word of the twenty-third path that leads beyond the Tree. Its number is given as fifty-six, the day of dread beauty to come when everything changes. It is the unspoken abode, where I whisper its dance of the Mask. Tehuti keeps watch with his Ape, recording without opinion. I am the vulture also, sharing the prey of the hawk.

74. It is the Chalice of Air and Wand of Water, the Sword of Earth and Pantacle of fire. In it are contradictions reconciled. It is the hourglass and the tail-biting serpent, Oroboros, mighty in time and in eternity. It is the Ganges becoming ocean, the Way of the Eternal Child, which is the Tao of Lao Tze.

75. It names my source – and yours. It is the origin of this sending, which flows through Andromeda and Sirius. What race of gods speak to mankind, my willed ones? The word of them is both the Name and Fact.

76. It is for your mantram and incantation. To speak it is to bring certain change. Take care in using it. If its truth be widely known at this time, it could drive the sleepers to madness and despair.

77. Only the awakened can understand it fully and use it wisely. This is all I speak for now. The Book of the Preshadowing of the Feather is complete. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. Love is the law, love under will.

Given through All.

Written by Nema.

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