

ASHÉ!

JOURNAL OF EXPERIMENTAL SPIRITUALITY

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Fay ce que voudras

Do What Thou Wilt Shall Be The Whole of the Law.

What's Inside...

What's Inside...	1
from the editor...	3
Contributors	7
The Poet	10
Aleister Crowley Nativity	11
Lon Milo DuQuette	25
The Magickal Writing of Lon Milo DuQuette	30
The Book of the Law, Anniversary Edition	32
There Is No God Where I Am: Liber AL, The Self and Emptiness	33
Looking Into the Word: Some Observations	39
Buddhist Influence on Aleister Crowley	61
Ecumenical Thelema	71
Sir Francis Dashwood	79
A Satyre Against Mankind	81
The Mating Of The Midnight Mare	88
St. Serge & St. Bacchus: When Marriage Between Gays Was a Rite	93
Tarot Reviews	96
☐☐☐ IO Pan IO Pan	101
Book Reviews	102



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CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Ron Adams
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EDITORIAL OFFICES

P.O. Box 363, Hulls Cove, ME 04609
E-MAIL editor@ashejournal.com



from the editor...

The licensing of marriage is the last uncomfortable intersection of law and religion left in our increasingly secular society. Marriage is, on the one hand, a religious ceremony—one of the three great rights common to all denominations of the priestly classes—and, on the other, a contractual union with appendant civil oversight and regulation.

Within the milieu of religion, marriage bestows a cultural recognition and support of the solemn promise of two people to live together in mutual love and respect. As an ideal, it is the moment when one's small community of faith, friends and family join together in celebration of a life shared.



As a civil contract, marriage is codified in over 1,000 federal 'automatic' benefits and countless more in the state and private sectors. With licensing certificate in hand, the couple becomes a unit, which is everywhere predefined in the laws that govern everything from inheritance to privacy protection and access.

This uncomfortable intersection, leads to an uncomfortable, and highly inappropriate, collusion between lawmakers and religious leaders. The religious estate of our republic, sees marriage as a purely religious issue—the civil license merely being a recognition of non-secular solemnization—ignoring the numbers of people who obtain a civil marriage, only, without interface with clergy. The secular leaders view marriage as much more than the act of licensing clerks, recognizing that it creates a legal class with more privileges and responsibilities than any other in our society.

When debating civil unions, the Vermont legislature admitted to being confused as on one day a religious leader would advise them against the proposed bill, while on the next another religious leader would speak in favor of the bill. It was obvious from the legislators' comments, their collective confusion arose out of their inability to glean a consensus of religious understanding from the various positions presented before them by the line of religious authorities.

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In a recent *Newsweek* editorial, Anna Quindlen posed the question, “In a secular nation, why should church leaders be required to acknowledge civil marriage—or, for that matter, be attended to when they pass judgment on what they will not acknowledge?”

The real crux of the ‘gay marriage’ question is not a religious debate. It is, rather, a wrestling for the retention of one of the last areas of religious control of secular life. Ultimately the question of marriage legislation is a secular one, positioned squarely in the domain of law and codified social custom. The solemnizing of unions is a religious question, while the licensing of a special coupled class of society is not.

Recently a colleague asked why gay men and lesbians would want to fight for marriage anyway. On the surface, it does seem a lot of energy to claim an anachronism. It is, however, one of the last great vestiges of exclusion directed at a colonized people.

“A constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages is a form of gay bashing.”

—Coretta Scott King

One cannot help but feel something akin to the Berlin wall being torn down, as each new town is added to the list of gay marriage havens... On the other side the last stalwarts desperately trying to hold on to a history and golden age that never existed.

The opponents of gay marriage argue that the concept erodes the foundations of the very concept of marriage itself. They paint an image of marriage that claims to look

backward into time immemorial at a continuity of glorious union—pristine, perfect and biblically sanctioned.

The truth, of course, is that modern marriage has not historic antecedents. The history upon which they choose to premise their arguments, does not exist. In the 21st century, marriage is about love and commitment—a construction that would have been unthinkable scandalous in proper society just 100 years ago. For the centuries prior, marriage has been a contract of property and inheritance with little or not relation to the practice today.

Just a little over thirty years ago, interracial marriage was illegal in much of the United States. When it was legalized nationally, the country was less divided over the issue than it is today over the question of gay marriage. Unlike current polling, an *overwhelming majority* of the country opposed interracial marriage. A Gallop poll conducted in 1968 showed that fully 72% of the country opposed interracial marriage with 48% openly expressing the opinion that it should be criminalized.

For me as an observer of this debate, the important facet in the current events and court rulings is a subtle, but vitally important, shift in the rubric of power in the debate of



gay rights (so called). I have long been ambivalent about the notion of demanding rights, as I see a large, unintended, side-affect being the ironic, and often self-defeating, empowering of others to bestow rights. This has allowed the far-right to control the debate for the last 20 years, by casting the demand for equality under the law as a fight for ‘special rights’ and asking the loaded (rhetorical) question of how far should the ‘expansion’ of ‘rights’ go.

It may seem like a subtle shift, but asking someone to give you what you already have, only gives them the power to withhold it.

With the Supreme Court’s overturning their own *Bowers v. Hardwick* (1984) ruling in *Lawrence & Garner v. Texas* (2003), the debate transformed overnight to a question of existing rights, rather than an attempt at articulating new rights or extending novel protections. Justice Scalia, in his dissenting opinion, correctly observed that the court’s overturning of *Bowers* called into question the “validation of laws based on moral choices” including, in his list of examples, same-sex marriage. For once, I actually agree with a Scalia opinion, though he and I are at complete odds as to whether this change bodes well or ill for society. Without question or exception, in a modern, secular society, laws should never be based on “moral choices.”

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court was the first to correctly extend *Lawrence v. Texas*, ruling that exclusively inter-sexual marriage laws are unconstitutional (*Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*, 2003). In their decision, the court acknowledged that “many people hold deep-seated religious, moral, and ethical convictions that marriage should be limited to the union of one man and one woman, and that homosexual conduct is immoral. Many hold equally strong religious, moral, and ethical convictions that same-sex couples are entitled to be married, and that homosexual persons should be treated no differently than their heterosexual neighbors.” The court ruled that “the State may not interfere with these convictions, or with the decision of any religion to refuse to perform religious marriages of same-sex couples.” The held “these matters of belief and conviction” to be “properly outside the reach of judicial review or government interference.”

In the court’s response to the Massachusetts Senate, went further, giving reality to Scalia’s fears, stating “neither may the government, under the guise of protecting ‘traditional’ values, even if they be the traditional values of the majority, enshrine in law an invidious discrimination that our Constitution [...] forbids.” The court saw clearly

*“You cannot have
selective sin as a legal
argument.”*

—Rev. Al Sharpton

PS

that the existing state marriage law created a class relegated “to a different status.” In rejecting the Senate’s proposed compromise legislation outlawing same-sex marriage while, with the same stroke of the pen, creating ‘civil unions’—same as marriage in everything but name—the Massachusetts SJC could deduce no rationality in creating a segregated group. In their response, they observed, “The history of our nation has demonstrated that separate is seldom, if ever, equal.”

Love light laughter, *Sven*

"A unique mind and
equally complex personality."
-Baba Raul Canizares

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Contributors

Ron Adams (Contributing Editor) is known on the internet as Sunwolf, and his Magickal Name is Sabaechit. He is a member of Greater Thelema group and Nanda Zonule. His passion is teaching. A writer and a magician, artist, Ron's goal is to get certified as a Alchemical Hypnotherapist. Ron is currently at work on a book *Thelema Without Dogma* and Thelema Dreamspell <http://www.angelfire.com/zin2/majik/thelemadreamspell.html>

Alamantra is the Creative Mind of bobby shiflett or bobby shiflett is a creation of Alamantra. Free thinker, Writer, Musician, Songwriter, Artist and Chaos Wizard residing in the Magic City; he is a contributing member of Greater Thelema, and a lifetime member of Alchemical Workers Guild 31586 and the Antiquities of the Illuminati. He is currently performing with the band Alamantra.

Ansya Atkins is a journalist, photographer and hypnotherapist. She has also raised champion collies and horses. She currently lives Seattle, Washington where she is a freelance writer.

Bozana Antic was born in Belgrade with her Sun in Taurus and Ascendant in Scorpio. Her great-great-grandfather was a famous Croatian writer who authored many books on the occult sciences, including translations of works by Charles Webster Leadbeater. Another influence was her uncle, a Croatian actor, occultist and Yoga practitioner. Although he passed in WWII, Bozana identifies him as a significant Spirit Guide. Her affiliations in Belgrade have included the Belgrade OTO and the Serbian School of Astrology, where she has taught. From 2000 to 2001, she was president of the Association of Serbian Astrologers. She has also been an active member of ISAR. Currently, she is astrology columnist for a popular German magazine.

Jim Duffy is a writer and historian.

Jeff Gelfer was born in Southampton, England and studied Theology at Bristol University. He travelled extensively and spent several years as a researcher with The British and Foreign Bible Society. His work has appeared in *Conscious Living*, *BootsnAll*, *Exquisite Corpse* and *Spirituality & Health*. Joseph currently lives in Otago, New Zealand with his wife and son.



T. Emery Heath is a wandering occult historian.

Erik Lerner (Associate Editor) combines outstanding credentials in the areas of writing, spiritual ministry, divination, and art. He has served for the past five years as a priest of the Yoruba arch-divinity Obatala. He teaches tarot divination, Yoruba religion, and other spiritual topics. He is the author of two books *AIDS Crisis in America* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC Clio, 1998) and with Baba Raul Canizares, *Babalu Aye Santeria and the Lord of Pestilence* (Plainview, NY: Original Publications, 2000). His article “Santeria’s Healing Path” appeared to wide acclaim in the Winter 1998 Issue of *Shaman’s Drum* magazine. Currently, he is illustrating a book by Nigerian writer Ibukun Olatunji and writing a book on combining the Thoth Tarot with Astrology and Kaballah with co-author Bozana Antic. Mr. Lerner’s website is <http://www.voiceofthoth.com>.

Brad Twyman is a student at University of Louisville pursuing a Bachelors in Fine Arts. He is twenty years old and paint figurative works, allegories, portraits, etc. and lives in Louisville Ky.

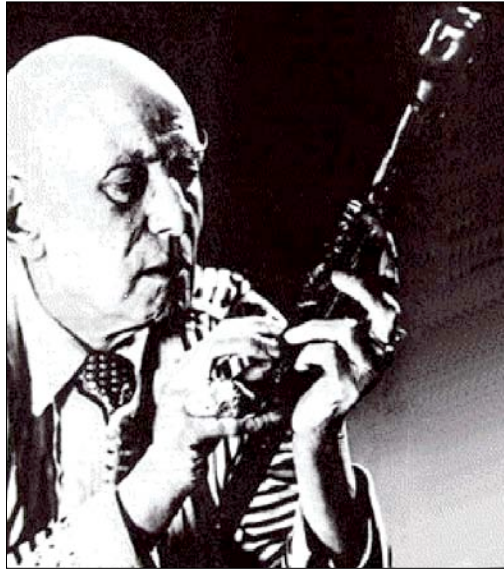
John Wilmot (1647-1680) Earl of Rochester, better known as Lord Wilmot was a poet and debaucher who possessed “no sense of religious restraint” and was prone to intemperance. Samuel Johnson in his *Lives of the English Poets* commented that “in this state he played many frolicks, which it is not for his honour that we should remember, and which are not now distinctly known. He often pursued low amours in mean disguises, and always acted with great exactness and dexterity the characters which he assumed.”

Vlad Kiosk is an independent occult scholar.



LIBER AL VEL LEGIS
THE BOOK OF THE LAW
1904-2004





The Poet

Aleister Crowley

BURY me in an nameless grave!
I came from God the world to save.
I brought them wisdom from above:
Worship, and liberty, and love.
They slew me for I did disparage
Therefore Religion, Law, and Marriage.
So be my grave without a name
That earth may swallow up my shame!

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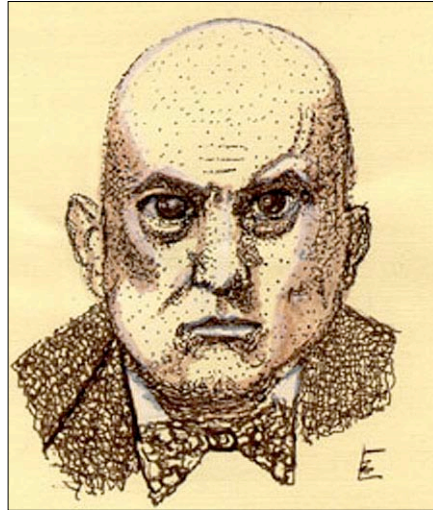


Aleister Crowley Nativity

Eric K. Lerner & Bozana Antic

“I am the Beast, I am the Word of New Aeon. My soul is scattering in flamed torrents that with howl dispersing Darkness, in firey jets which hissing lick all it touches. I am the Hell of Holy Guru.” Crowley

In the night between 11 and 12 PM, October 12, 1875, with Leo rising on the Eastern horizon, Aliester Crowley was born. He grew into a man of indelible steel who changed face of Western hermetic tradition. His Magic career started under the auspices of the Occult Order “Golden Dawn.” With extraordinary speed and zeal he passed through the ranks of



this Order. Due to a conflict with autocratic leader of “Golden Dawn” MacGregor Matters, he left. He felt Mathers strove to uproot every new initiative and expression of individual members’ wills. Crowley retired far from people and studied operations of the sacred magic of Abramelin the mage. During extensive world travel, he was initiated in the secret oriental sciences of Tantra, I Ching, Raja Yoga.

Between April 8 and 10, 1904 he received messages from the not of this world intelligence AIWASS. From those communications arose Book of Law and Word of the New Aeon. Crowley assumed the difficult task to be Prophet of Thelema, man’s Free Will, and to fight against stunted values and binding morals. Later, in the North Africa deserts, Crowley faced Chronozon, inhabitant of an Enochian Aethyr and demon of destruction, death and madness. In identifying with him, Crowley gave up his consciousness to madness and the hopelessness of Hell. Chronozon oversees the last examination of Adept of Inner Path by exposing him to temptation. When the Adept defeats the demon, he is transformed in Brilliant Angel of Light that destroys human Ego.

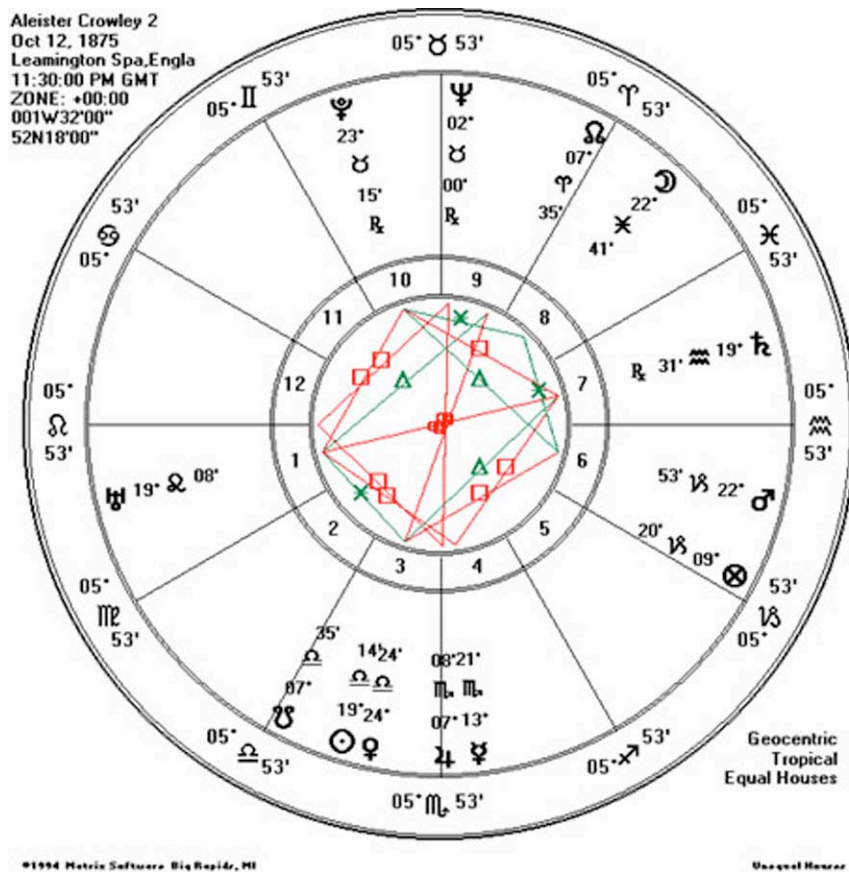
In April 1920, Crowley established Abbey Thelema in a small town Cefalu located on Sicily. Members of this commune worked rituals that enhanced Free Will for three years. In that time Aliester attained the highest level of enlightenment, becoming Ipsisimus, a man whose consciousness is on the highest level which can be attained. After



expulsion by the Fascist government from Italy, Crowley wandered through the world to propagandize Thelema.

His final major achievements are *The Book of Thoth* and *Thoth Tarot*, on which he collaborated for five years with the brilliant artist Lady Frieda Harris. The Book of Law and Thoth Tarot are spiritual testaments to humankind, and his great gift to Man of knowledge and instruction in how he can release Free Will and return divine essence.

Aliester Crowley died on December 1, 1947, leaving behind himself two magic organizations - OTO and A∴A∴, which continue to spread his doctrine and Thelema.



The purpose of the following essay is to explain Crowley’s path toward enlightenment through a special technique of linking his natal horoscope with the Tree of Life. Qabalah, Astrology and Tarot are three inseparable systems. Understanding them as a whole helps us to explain the life and spiritual path of every individual. Sephiroth on the Tree of Life



are attributed to planets. In astrology aspects link planets. Every aspect between planets is reflected by paths between two Sephirah. The Paths correlate to Major Arcana in Tarot. In this technique, a Path is closed or opened for individual in his spiritual journey. Closed paths are indicated by challenged aspect between planets, which are: square, quincunx, sesquiquadrate and opposition. A Path is opened if planets in the horoscope are in conjunction or have easy aspects: sextile and trine.

Aliester Crowley was born in October 12, 1875 in Leamington Spa in England, 11:30 PM, with Sun in Libra and Leo Ascendant. The positions of planets and His Sun is in Libra in conjunction with Venus also in Libra as her home. If we look at the Tree of Life, we can see that this conjunction refers on the Path XXIV (Nun) - Death. Death joins the Sephiroth Netzach (Venus) and Tiphareth (Sun). On a simplistic level this, for Crowley was an opened Path, which enabled him to face his Ego, deep instincts and sexuality. Death symbolizes metaphorical death and the release of old Ego in ecstasy. It written in the Book of Law: "Think not, o king, upon that lie: That Thou Must Die: verily thou shalt not die, but live. Now let it be understood: If the body of the King dissolve, he shall remain in pure ecstasy forever."

Crowley is known for his passionate nature, which bordered on debauchery. Liberated from fears and prejudices, on this Path Crowley perceived dark secrets of the driving instinctive energies that exist hidden in every individual. Crowley operated with sex-magick. This was one way for complete understanding and uncovering the meaning of sexual power as the most important driving force linked with love: "The word of Sin is Restriction. O man! refuse not thy wife, if she will! O lover, if thou wilt, depart! There is no bond that can the divided but love: all else is curse. Accursed! Accursed be it to the aeons! Hell!"

However, Path of Death is confronted by challenges in Crowley's natal chart which were reflected in his life and work. Venus is quincunx to Pluto, ruler of Scorpio, the astrological signifier for Death. If Crowley did not have a favorable aspect between the Sun and Venus, such a condition would indirectly close the path. That rises distinct problems for Crowley in his pathwork here.

First, at the time Crowley wrote the Book of Thoth, Scorpio was popularly assigned to Mars. Later astrological science would recognize Pluto as its rightful ruler. Crowley may have had premonition of this, because he was troubled by the Scorpio's attribution to Death. He wrote in the Book of Thoth, "The card must then be considered as of greater importance and catholicity than would be expected from the plain Zodiacal attribution. It is even a compendium of universal energy in its most secret form." The fact that these two sentences presage later understanding about the energy of Pluto is



unmistakable. The fact the Crowley perceives incongruity in the occult science concerning this trump indicates issues that may stem from personal imbalance in this area.

To continue in analyzing Crowley's difficulty, it is useful to examine how the influence of Pluto on his Venus may have been realized. The challenge most obviously manifests on the level of Netzach (Venus.) Crowley had lifelong difficulty dealing with women. Many accuse him of misogyny. However, "misogyny" in this case may be psychological double-speak for exploration the dark aspect of the eternal feminine. (Crowley hated whitewash simplifications and trite judgments.) His difficulties with Venus are obviously expressed in *The Complete Astrological Writings* in which he refers to "the essential falsity and worthlessness of the unredeemed and vampire Venus." Obviously, he did have some issues, and the influence of Pluto on Venus informed his work and life.

Crowley did not realize true spiritual rebirth through erotic relations with women. (We will examine later how he attained that through platonic relationship with Lady Frieda Harris when he transcended the Abyss on the level of Path XIV, Daleth, the Empress.) Instead, he was absorbed by a morbid preoccupation with both pleasure and revulsion of the flesh through coitus with the body of woman. "Death" has long been a metaphor for sexual intercourse. Crowley was not able to fully humanize his sexual partners nor recognize his own humanity through them. Therefore he failed to recognize the potential for spiritual regeneration which is part of the glory of the sexual act, and also fulfillment of the potential of the Death Arcana. The fact that such exploration for him lead to vituperation suggests that even though he was able to travel the road between Tiphareth and Netzach, he did not achieve true satisfaction in Netzach. So the Path of Death was at least in part not fully rewarding for him. He more adequately comes to terms with the demon-face of woman in his exploration of the indirectly opened Path XXVI, (Ayin), The Devil represented by a trine between the Sun and Saturn. The Path unites knowledge, power of intellectual abilities (Hod) with higher awareness and the center of personality (Tiphareth). On this Path Crowley integrated spiritual components into base physical expression. By own strong will, he overcame temptation to conform in the spiritual realm. He released himself from a karmic burden created by his childhood experiences. He was challenged by deep rooted and restrictive Christian dogma in its most extreme form. Crowley's parents were members of a fundamentalist Christian sect, and they literally followed Bible as their only guide. In his own biography, Crowley wrote that his intensive sexual life was a revolt against all that limited and retarded the superiority of Man's Will. He glorified Dionysus, Greek god of vine and ecstasy, and



Pan, Greek deity of nature, whose name in Greek means “All”, and in Sanskrit “Exalted Uniting”. Dionysus personifies divine incarnation manifested through humanity. Significantly, he is twice born. The myth of his genesis fits Crowley. Zeus in the form of a snake impregnated his mother, a mortal named Semele. When Semele viewed Zeus in all his glory, she was incinerated because she was unable to face the reality of divine fire. Zeus took the horned child from her womb and placed him in his thigh until Dionysus could emerge as a child-god.

Crowley needed to immolate the influence of his own mother to emerge as a mystic, the Beast. On the Path of the Devil Crowley liberated himself from Christian dogma, no longer to concern himself with people’s narrow-mindedness. His pursuit of sexual extremes liberated him from his mother’s influence. Like Dionysus’ mother, she could not face the true face of divine fire, which was embodied by Crowley’s mystic vision. His vilification of her confirms his departure from the stale Christian principles she embodied. By demonizing her, paradoxically Crowley became his own godly beast. He understood and celebrated the extremes of human nature. This was not evil in itself, and it does not represent Crowley embracing evil. Rather, he shines the light of truth on the full spectrum of existence. Crowley writes of this path: “ The formula of this card is then the complete appreciation of all existing things. He rejoices in the rugged and the barren no less than in the smooth and the fertile. All things equally exalt him. He represents the finding of ecstasy in every phenomenon, however naturally repugnant; he transcends all limitations; he is Pan; he is all”

The paths of Death and The Devil are complimented by the indirectly closed Path XXV (Samekh) for Crowley. It is represented by the Trump for Art. It is on the middle pillar on the Tree of Life. Its indirect closure appears in Crowley’s natal chart as the Sun (Tiphareth) Sesquiquadrate to Jupiter. Jupiter is the ruler of Sagittarius and the astrological affiliation of the Art Trump. The challenge Crowley faced to realize Art, spiritual experience through vision of balance with the Machinery of Universe and harmonic interaction between consciousness and subconscious is described at length in his book Vision and Voice. The Paths Death, Devil and Art join Netzach, Hod and Yesod with Tiphareth and they are keys for attaining integrity through insight. Crowley attained on the Path of Death mastery over instinctive and emotional nature and released his own essence through death and transformation of own Self. On the Path of the Devil, he consciously recognized own wholeness. The path Art challenged him to realize a vision of alchemical Gold or God or man’s essence. To walk that path was a far greater challenge for Crowley than the other two. (It is interesting to note that one can see in the



Devil Card – as well as many others - Crowley’s legendary hatred and thus conquest of his Mother. Crowley is not so candid about his father. Yet one begins to get a peak at the father-son struggle through his polemics in the Vision and The Voice.) In the 5th Aethyr of The Vision and The Voice, Crowley writes of the arrow central to The Art Trump. His difficulty in mastering it is evident.

“ And now there cometh a strange thought; this Arrow is the source of all motion; it is infinite motion, yet it moveth not, so that there is no motion. And therefore there is no matter. This Arrow is the glance of the Eye of Shiva. But because it moveth not, the universe is not destroyed. The universe is put forth and swallowed up in the quivering of the plumes of Maat, that are the plumes of the Arrow: but those plumes quiver not.

And a voice comes: That which is above is not like that which is below.

And another voice answers it: That which is below is not like that which is above.

And a third voice answers these two: What is above and what is below? For there is the division that divideth not and the multiplication that multiplieth not. And the One is the Many. Behold, this Mystery is beyond understanding, for the winged globe is the crown, and the shaft is the wisdom, and the barb is the understanding. And the Arrow is one, and thou are lost in the Mystery, who art but as a babe that is carried in the womb of its mother, that art not yet ready for the light.

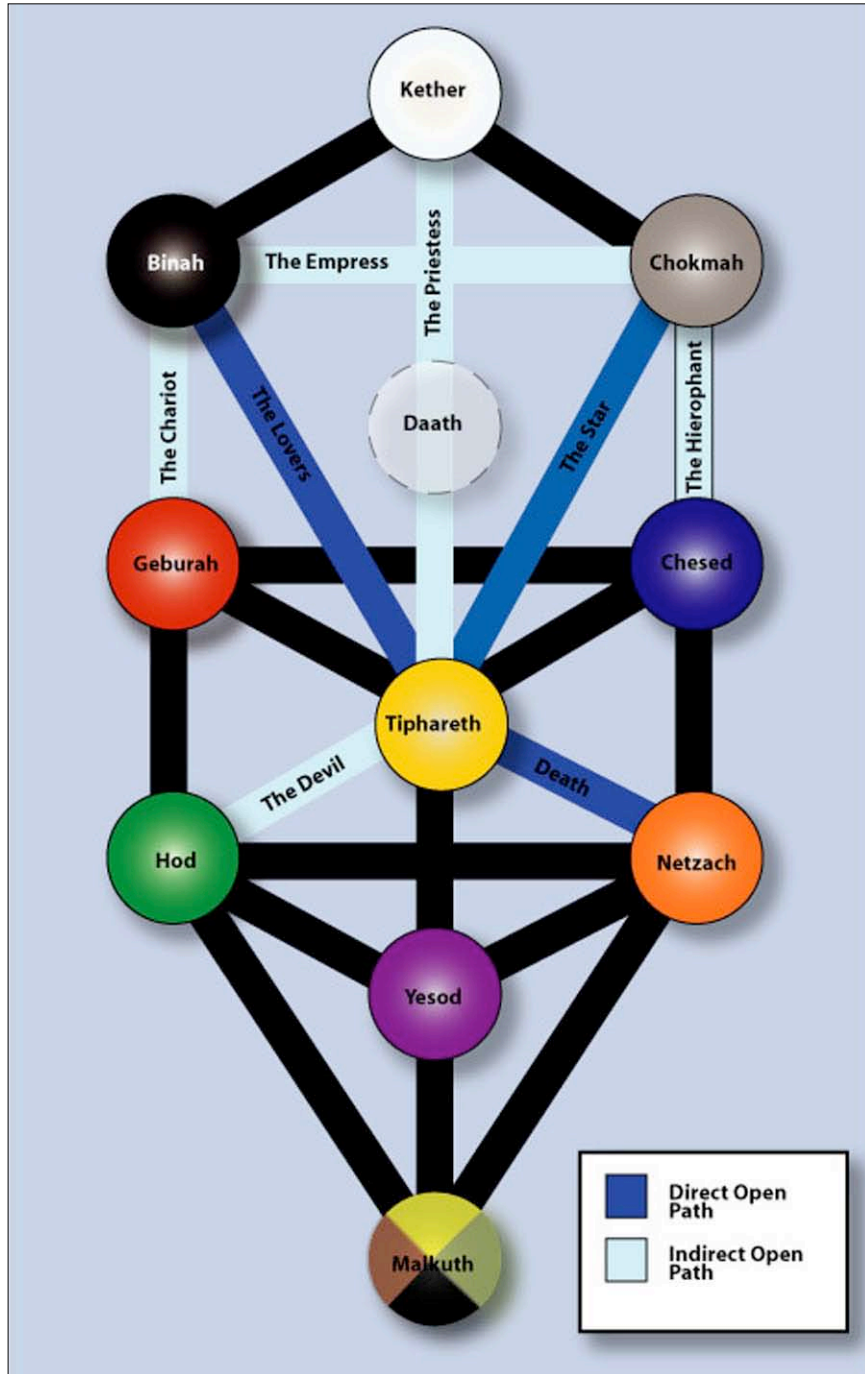
And the vision overcometh me. My sense is stunned; my sight is blasted; my hearing is dulled..

And the voice cometh: Thou didst seek the remedy of sorrow; therefore all sorrow is thy portion. This is that which is written: “God hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all.”

From Tiphareth’s level Crowley had his Sun (Tiphareth) square Mars (Geburah), which marks the directly closed Path XIX (Lamed) Adjustment. The square stopped emanation from Geburah to Tiphareth, which means that he faced many challenges in reaching Geburah through Adjustment. Venus square Mars also indirectly closes the path of Adjustment, again blocking energy from Geburah to Tiphareth. This Path demands hard work to establish inner balance. However, this path needs to be examined differently than other closed paths because of the fortunate placement of the planets involved in Crowley’s natal chart.

Crowley’s natal Mars is exalted in Capricorn. The strong energy of Mars in this position focuses on attainment of high aims (Capricorn.) This position represents great persistence in all efforts and strenuous work that leads to results. (Let us remember that the astrological characteristic of Three of Discs is Mars in Capricorn. This Minor Arcana lays the foundation for creating all in nature by uniting alchemical Sulfur, Mercury and Salt, which are represented on card with three circles or wheels as a pyramid’s base,





The Open and Indirectly Open Paths
for Crowley on the Tree of Life

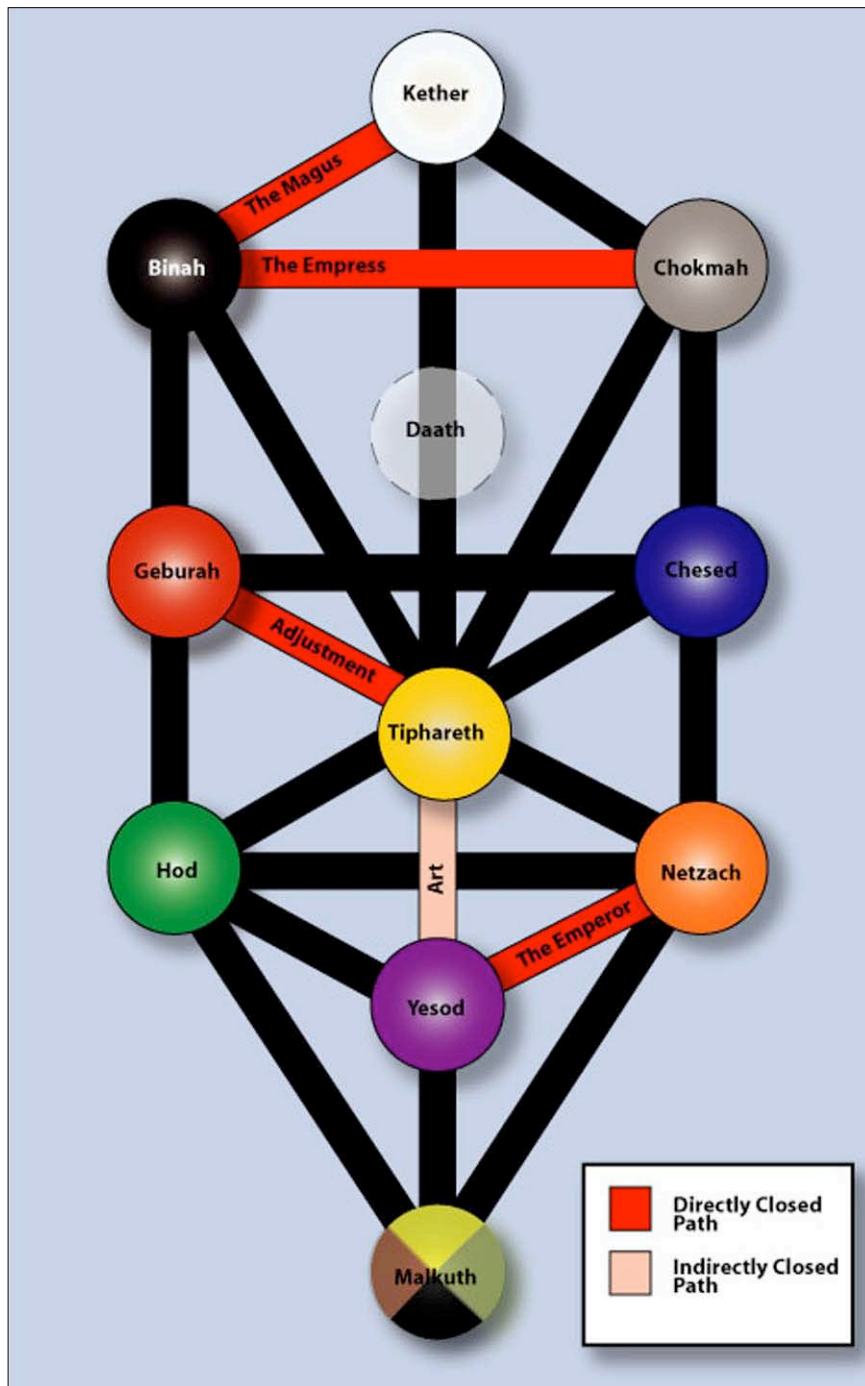


symbol of human striving to the summit of heavens knowledge). Crowley's Mars is in sixth astrological house, which refers to everyday work that may serve others. Crowley's ambition (Capricorn) and focused energy (Mars in Capricorn) drew him to hard and devoted work, attainment of which would serve others (sixth house). The Mars/Sun Square was a challenge to him to work on establishing balance both in his inner and in outer worlds. His Sun in the third house under Libra, cardinal and airy, strives to unite opposites (Libra-balance.) This leads to expansive of insights about communications (third house and air-communication) and revealing them in public (Libra-publicity). Crowley's epithet about Adjustment was that of "fulfilled woman." That refers to the Egyptian goddess Maat, goddess of justice and cosmic law, who weighs on her scale souls of mortals against an ostrich feather to define their karma. It also make a reference to the completion of a critical leg of the Fool's Journey through the Major Arcana. The letter Lamed refers to an Ox goad. The letter of the Fool's Path is Aleph, which means Ox. The dynamic between these Hebrew letters suggests that the undifferentiated energy of the fool is harnessed by Adjustment. Hence a notion of "fulfillment": feral energy of the naïve male is herein controlled by the authority of the knowing woman. Potential is realized. His insight, said so simply but holding such deep meaning, tells about Crowley's peek awareness for the necessity for balance on a spiritual level as well as on a worldly one.

Crowley's Mars trine with Pluto bares on his desire to straighten worldly injustice. It accentuates his leadership ability to demonstrate extraordinary force of personality with great self-confidence. It is illustrated by his great ambition and obsession to work without any break. This led him to the attainment of success through excessive effort. This trine and the position of Mars in Capricorn was helpful in overcoming the squares: Sun/Mars; Venus/Mars (which closed the path of Adjustment). In his mortal life, he faced many ups and downs and obstacles due to his desires, and rashness. Such challenges are emblematic of the squares.

However, the Sun's conjunction with Venus indirectly opened the path of Adjustment. Venus as attributed to Adjustment shows that Crowley had potential characteristics of this Major Arcana. The archetypal types of experience therein represented were intimate to him due to his well positioned natal Venus. (The Path itself being closed challenged him throughout his life). Crowley's Sun/Venus conjunction in Libra is beneficial, because the Sun and Venus agree, especially when Venus is in her own home. This conjunction softens the square between the Sun and Mars, and thus helped Crowley face the gauntlet of Adjustment. The conjunction of the Sun and Venus





The Closed and Indirectly Closed Paths
for Crowley on the Tree of Life



means in his chart that he had very strong natural instinct for balance, and great need for uniting with another side (either with own shadow or a partner). This helped him to forge ahead on this path, even though Mars' squares with the Sun and Venus made the passage difficult. His strong sex-drive drove him from lover to lover. His lustfulness may be perceived as part of his struggle for balance. Ironically, his prowess as a lothario suggests that he did understand how to make a woman feel "fulfilled."

The next Path Crowley had to navigate was the indirectly open Path XVIII (Cheth), The Chariot. Crowley had Mars (Geburah) sextile his Moon. An attribute of the Chariot is the sign Cancer, whose ruler is the Moon. This path demands interior preparation without disruption of outer influences to move forward in life's mission (a reference to the search for the Holy Graal). Crowley's successful passage is revealed by his desert journey, isolating him from people and society, to face his angels and demons. In The Book of Thoth he says of the Charioteer: "Visor of a helmet is lowered, for no man may look upon his face and live." That statement refers to Crowley's meeting with the demon of chaos Choronzon? The Sephirah Binah on this path emanates divine energy and protection of the Great Mother. Crowley led by her blessing in form of topflight, mystical knowledge, combined with a warrior's bravery in search for the divine spring of life, reached the level of Binah on the Chariot's path.

From that level in front of him was the great challenge of overcoming the Path between Binah and Kether, Path XII (Beth), The Magus. The Magus is messenger of God's Word. He conveys magical secrets and knowledge to the humankind. For Crowley, this Path was closed, represented by Saturn (Binah) square Pluto (Kether). In his natal chart, Pluto is positioned in tenth house - the highest life aims and attainments in this mortal realm. Saturn is under Aquarius in the Seventh house, known for familiar enemies and publicity. His approach toward attaining the most hidden mysteries and human essence (Pluto) was perceived as black magic (Saturn-Pluto) by his enemies. His effort to explain to people new cosmic tendencies and cycles (Aquarius) was challenged by traditional attitudes (Saturn). It seems that Crowley didn't succeed in his life to overcome obstacles imposed by society to illuminate whole truth. His last testament (Pluto) to his followers lead his work being recognized posthumously. His books (Hermes, Mercury, and Thoth are lords of books and knowledge, represented by the Magus) are bequeathed to coming generations, to be their lodestar toward knowledge and the release of Free Will. In his own spiritual growth, Crowley attained ultimate enlightenment (he became Ipsissimus) and overcame the closed Path of The Magus toward Kether. The planet attributed to the Magus that refers to this closed Path, is Mercury. Crowley's Mercury is in Scorpio and unaspected*. It's known that Crowley was merciless in expressing his attitudes and critiques of others and the entire social system. His words were keen,



poisonous and injurious as a scorpion's bite. He had encyclopedic mind, and talent to remember and abridge huge amounts of knowledge. Unaspected Mercury tells about great oscillations in expression. Sometimes he spoke and wrote in incomprehensible ways, and other times his vision and insights were expressed in the most refined and direct way. His etiquette made him the most controversial person of the Twentieth century in the occult world. His tendencies toward extremism in his expression to and communication with world are a direct extension of Mercury's influence.

In his horoscope, the Moon appears in Pisces in eighth house. That tells about Crowley's unlimited intuition (Moon in Pisces) which he used in his occult work (eighth house). The Moon rules his twelfth house, and in this way is under the double influence of Pisces. It tells about his capability to penetrate the most distant and hidden parts of the human psyche, and to understand those areas keenly in his own research (again eighth house). Correspondences between the Moon and Pisces, as well as the eighth and twelfth houses show in his great receptivity to influences from higher levels, the readiness of his soul to sacrifice for high aims, and willingness to fight for principles. He pushed the outermost boundaries of his capabilities. His Moon forms a quincunx with Uranus in the first house, and Venus and the Sun in the third house. In that way, it forms the karmic configuration of Yod or "God's finger". His revolutionary attempts to reform society as a whole have foundation in Uranus in the first house and sextile with conjunction Sun/Venus in the third house. This sextile bares on his eccentricity, magnetic attractiveness, and impulsive appetite for sensations and feelings. Essentially, it reveals a zealous love for life. Uranus, the Sun and Venus find outlets for their energies through the Moon as the apex of Yod in the eighth house. His life mission was to raise collective awareness (Uranus) and to point out the need for attaining of universal balance (Sun and Venus in Libra, the sign of balance and harmony). His devotion to this aim of universal benefit for humankind is reflected by his Moon in Pisces, which also gives him a way to reach his goals through the practice of magic.

The next Path on the Tree of Life for Crowley is XXVIII (Tzaddi), the Emperor, which joins Yesod (Moon) and Netzach (Venus). The Moon quincunx Venus closes the Path. Both Moon and Venus are symbols for woman and feminine nature. It seems ironic that a path between such planets would activate this most virile atu. However, we know from our Yoruba ancestors that no king can be crowned without women. The Emperor expresses the masculine principle, which can only be realized if there is an opposite feminine polarity. The Emperor expresses the masculine principle and is linked to alchemical Sulfur. Crowley longed whole his life for his Scarlet Woman, alchemical Mercury, with whom he could attain the Great Work. While young (Aries, astrological attribute of the Emperor, is a sign of youth) Crowley saw prostitutes and promiscuous



women as his Babalon or Scarlet Woman. By overcoming this Path, and rising above basic instincts, Crowley finally able to find his Scarlet Woman in Lady Frieda Harris, with whom he was in an exclusively spiritual relationship. Their relationship was foretold by the square between Venus in Libra (woman artist) and Mars in Capricorn in sixth house, which fortells of a successful partnership with a woman late in his life. Mars in his sixth house shows hard and long-lasting work, which leads to the results. (Three of Discs, Mars in Capricorn, finally shows results in their great work—the Thoth Tarot). Interestingly, although both the Emperor and Adjustment were closed paths for Crowley, it seems that the Emperor’s path caused him more trouble. One relates to fatherhood, the loss of his first daughter and numerous bastard children. Another challenge was realizing his desire to be a leader. Of course, an Emperor is one who rules his realm. Crowley attempted to do this through his leadership of OTO and A∴ A∴ to spread his doctrine. The fact that neither of these organizations enjoyed huge success or impact during his lifetime was perhaps karmatically justified by the closure of the Emperor’s path. Crowley had the vision to lead, but lacked the shrewder skills and discipline in the human realm that would enable him to effectively wield authority.

Adjustment and the Emperor are further linked by planetary placements in Crowley’s nativity. Mars, planetary ruler of Aries, The Emperor, is in Capricorn, and his Venus and Sun in Libra, Adjustment.

His complete understanding their essence is revealed his decision to replace their position on the Tree of Life. Regarding the correlations between Tarot and the Tree of life, Crowley assigned Adjustment to Lamed and Lust to Theth. This inverted their sequential order in the Hebrew alphabet. He did the same with attributing The Emperor to Tzaddi and the Star to Heh.

Crowley had three opened Paths connected to Tiphareth. These are: Path XVII (Zain) Lovers, shown in his chart in a trine between Sun (Tiphareth) and Saturn (Binah); the indirectly open Path XIII (Gimel) The Priestess, his Moon (the Priestess’ astrological sign) sextile Pluto (Kether); and the Path XV (Heh), the Star, Sun (Tiphareth) sextile Uranus (Chockmah).

The Lovers comments on the dichotomy of public opinions about Crowley: approval and adoration from his supporters versus cruel attacks and slanders, which tried to deny his doctrine, from his enemies. Openness of this path enabled Crowley to establish balance and to go his chosen way. Keen critics could not to stop him. On a spiritual level, this shows that he made the right choice, because his further progress toward the divine triad on the Tree of Life was enabled. The Lovers represents initiation, and Crowley proceeded with great alacrity to high rank in The Golden Dawn. He achieved even higher levels of self-initiation. The Lovers, began a process of



enlightenment which was fulfilled through Crowley's trial with the Path of Art. As Crowley observed, "the two cards are so complimentary that they cannot be studied alone." It is interesting to note in this regard that the earliest stages of striving to achieve the Great Work were much easier for Crowley than the later.

The indirectly open Path of the Priestess talks about the perilous journey across the abyss. Crowley achieved knowledge, which remains hidden for most mortals, through the shadow Sephirah Daath. He passed over the abyss when he met his Holy Guardian Angel AIWASS and attained mystical union with Divine to write The Book of the Law.

The Path of the Star XV (Heh) represents man's highest aims, inspirational artistic gifts or spiritual inspiration, and those qualities enable helping others. His sextile Uranus with Sun shows his originality, consciousness of and concentration upon an aim, a far-seeing mind, love of freedom, the tendency to strive for reforms, and leadership drive. He used these qualities as his creative power to establish his own magic doctrine for New Aeon, through self-sacrifice and courage in his experimentation that show quincunx Uranus/Moon in Pisces, in the eighth house. The Star also represents the culmination of the Vital Triad of the Three Goddesses in the Tarot, represented by the Priestess (Virgin), Empress (Wife), and Star (Mother.) As Mother, she represents the ultimate ability to deliver new forms to the world. The Star is said to provide a transition between two waters: one the cosmos' (represented esoterically as heavenly water) and the earth's. Crowley's purpose in creation was to enable humankind to realize divine potential in the human realm and thus create such a bridge. Also The Star is the critical atu of the Book of the Law. That Crowley understood the need to exchange its path placement with the Emperor's constitutes divine recognition of his ability as an adept to both receive and disseminate the gnosis of the New Aeon. It is writ in the Book of the Law: "All these old letters of my Book are aright; but [Tzaddi] is not the Star. This also is secret: my prophet shall reveal it to the wise." All three of the Goddess Paths of the Tarot play significant roles for Crowley. Perhaps he realized perfection in the open, which lay beyond the Abyss, Path XIV, Daleth, The Empress. The opposition of Saturn to Uranus, which joins Binah and Chokmah, closes it, while the trine of Venus to Saturn, indirectly opens it. To fully understand the ramifications of this path for Crowley it is useful to also examine one of the most awesome indirectly open paths for him, between Chockmah to Chesed, Path XVI, (Vau) The Hierophant.

The Hierophant is indirectly opened by the sextile of Crowley's natal Uranus (Chokmah) and Venus (ruler of the Hierophant's astrological sign Taurus). The Hierophant's task is to convey profound knowledge. It is useful to look at associations of Chesed and Taurus to see how Crowley became a hierophant for future generations of mystics. Chesed, Jupiter, represents the mercy of God, and Taurus embodies the



transcendental earth. Crowley's true recognition came posthumously. He died in penury. He was transformed by death. The Mercy of God, the recognition of his life's pursuit of truth, only came when his physical body decayed and became one with the substance of earth. The students and public who were to partake of the fruits of this wisdom did so mostly after he passed. Many of these found him through the Thoth Tarot.

That returns us to Crowley's journey on the Path the Empress. Its closure comes about through an opposition. However, opposition has a different character than other closed paths. In esoteric astrology, opposition reveals the end of karma. When he passed Abyss in receiving and writing *The Book of the Law*, he was still in search of his Scarlet Woman, an Empress who represents most sublime fertile woman and mother. Lady Frieda Harris was that woman. With her Crowley created a pearl of wisdom – the Thoth Tarot - his final major achievement. It was left as a tool to Mankind to attain genuine insights about self and Universe. The work that was achieved by the union of an elevated man and woman (whose creativity and vision each in their own ways can be thought to embody aspirations of the two great supernals – Chockmah and Binah.) It represents a mastery of that path, which lies beyond our reach.

Of course, he didn't live to see the publication of Thoth Tarot as working deck. His last Great Work remains a testament to his successful journey along the Empress Path. (Rumor has it he died in Harris' arms. Remember that Binah represents in part the principles of Compassion and Understanding.) It is his living legacy to wise men of the New Aeon, in a sense his most excellent child. After all, a child is the issue of two parents' union and the Empress' ultimate gift.

“Treat time and all conditions of Event as Servants of thy will, appointed to present the Universe to thee in the form of thy Plan. And: blessing and worship to the Prophet of the lovely Star.”

FOOTNOTES

*We count Mercury in Crowley's chart as unaspected, because orb of square Mercury/Uranus is 6 degree. In Crowley's horoscope, almost all aspects are exact (orbs within 1 degree). This is very important indication, because every aspect was experienced in full impact.



Lon Milo DuQuette

Interviewed by Sven Davisson

Ashé: Aleister Crowley is often misunderstood and has been much maligned from his own time continuing into the present. Would you give a little introduction to the man?

DuQuette: First of all, in the last five or six years several fine biographies of Crowley have been published. The best of these, in my opinion is: *Perdurabo: The Life of Aleister Crowley* by Richard Kaczynski (New Falcon Publications)

Aleister Crowley was born in 1875 in Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. His father was a wealthy brewer of Crowley Ales and (oddly enough) a lay preacher for the ultra-conservative Protestant sect, the Plymouth Brethren. Young Crowley was traumatized thoroughly by his upbringing and early on developed a dislike for the repressive and life-denying doctrines of that particular type of Christianity. He attended Cambridge University and studied to be a foreign diplomat. His interest in poetry and all things mystical, however, consumed him and he left the University before finishing his final examinations.

There is no question Crowley was a genius who passionately mastered any subject or skill which happened to consume him, including chess, poetry, and mountain climbing. (If I'm not mistaken, several of his world climbing records still hold). Once he was introduced to magick and the spiritual arts of western hermeticism he focused the full ray of his genius on these subjects and quickly mastered them.

He joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in 1898 and featured prominently in the events which ultimately led to its destruction.

In 1904, while honeymooning in Cairo, his new wife, Rose, fell into a trance and spoke to Crowley as if she were an emissary of the Gods of ancient Egypt who had a message for Crowley. The message concerned the ending of the magical Aeon of Osiris (and the spiritual formula embodied in the Christian concept of faith, self-sacrifice, and



hope for a life after death) and the birth of the new magical Aeon of Horus (and the spiritual formula which focuses upon the individual, and the true Will of each individual as the key to spiritual liberation).

The events which took place in Cairo in March and April of 1904 would eventually convince Crowley that he was the Prophet (or voice) of the New Aeon a role that would consume him and dominate his magical career until his death in 1947.

Ashé: I know that Crowley himself cultivated the negative sides of his reputation, but is it really fair to describe him as a Satanist or Black Magician?

DuQuette: I'm reminded of a conversation I had with my friend, Mad Bob, when I first ran across the name Aleister Crowley in a cheap occult dictionary. It said. "Aleister Crowley famous Scottish Satanist". Bob, who had read Crowley's autobiography, chided me for my fear of Crowley and told me something like..."Well, maybe he was a Satanist...but he was a good kind of Satanist and a true holy man. You're a fool if you don't learn more about him and his work."

From the very narrow, superstitious, and uninformed point of view of the fundamentalist Chrislemew (Christian, Moslem, and Jew) Mark Twain, Timothy Leary, Joseph Campbell, Paramahansa Yogananda, Gandhi, Thomas Paine, Deepak Chopra, and Aleister Crowley are all Satanists and Black magicians. In my opinion it is not fair to characterize any of these individuals, including Crowley, as either Satanists or Black Magicians.

That being said, I believe it is accurate to say that Crowley himself (because of his own understanding and interpretation of certain pre-Christian, Qabalistic, and Gnostic doctrines) at one time or another in his long and colorful life considered himself a 'Satanist'. And, as you mentioned in your question, he loved to scare people who were capable of being scared by superstitious nonsense.

Ashé: Almost as misunderstood as the man is his dual mottos. Please explain the meaning behind "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" and "Love is the law, love under will."

DuQuette: As these are quotes from Liber AL vel Legis (The Book of the Law) it is inappropriate for me or anyone else to presume to interpret any passage of the text for another individual.



Ashé: Why do some people feel this Thelemic philosophy and studying Crowley to be dangerous?

DuQuette: Because they haven't yet begun to understand it or him for what they truly are. Thelemic philosophy (if we can call it that) posits that each individual is responsible for his or her own life. This is an awesome responsibility, It's so much easier to surrender that responsibility to the family or the state or the church. For those not ready for such accountability even the thought of others living in such freedom is a terrifying nightmare.

Ashé: As is often the case, the myth at times threatens to eclipse the actual achievements. What do you see as Crowley's lasting influence on religion and spirituality?

DuQuette: The Aeon of Horus would have dawned without Aleister Crowley as its prophet. It's bigger than all of us. He, like the prophets of old, just gave voice to the winds of change. Not everyone listens the voice of the prophets, but no one can miss what they are talking about. Just look around. The whole world's changing and it is all revolving around a universal change in human consciousness. Individuals are now really seeing themselves as the center of their universe not families, not communities, not nations, or churches. The Law is for all, and this revolutionary leap of consciousness is happening even if people have never heard the words "Aleister Crowley" or "Thelema" or "Magick" or "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law."

I believe Crowley's greatest contribution is to the tiny segment of humanity who are able to take full advantage of the magical essence of this new formula and seize control of and accelerate the pace of their own spiritual evolution. Liber AL vel Legis is the jewel in the crown of Thelemic Holy Books that serve to guide and inspire all who would take the path of the Thelemic magician. But there are other Crowley works, including The Vision and the Voice, Liber Aleph, and the Thoth Tarot, that will, in my opinion, stand in the centuries to come as tools of lasting influence.

Ashé: In your view, what's his greatest legacy?

DuQuette: His immense body of writings that, thanks to the efforts of his legacy magical, Ordo Templi Orientis, will be preserved, published, and perpetuated in accurate and quality editions long after you and I have passed on.



Ashé: What was his role in bringing Asian religious concepts to the West, vis a vis that of his contemporaries and immediate predecessors such as Madame Blavatsky and the Theosophists?

DuQuette: It's impossible to weigh his influence. His work touched many influential people during his lifetime many people who were afraid to admit that they even knew the man, let alone confess they admired or were influenced by his work. His Eight Lectures on Yoga was certainly one of the first of its kind from a westerner.

Ashé: Often I hear people talking of Crowley as if he arose in a vacuum, and certainly he was a unique personage in his time, but no doubt there were influences to his philosophical and spiritual views. Would you describe what/who you perceive as some of these influences?

DuQuette: Crowley was about as well-rounded in his philosophical and spiritual education as a man could be in his day. It is clear that he was influenced by the Old and New Testament scriptures and drew on their style and images to format many of his own writings. It is also obvious that he was profoundly influenced by the classics of Hindu literature, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. His translations of the I Ching and Tao Teh King were impressive bits of doing at a time when you could count the English translations of both texts on one hand.

Influences on his poetry were numerous, but I would have to say that William Blake and Algernon Charles Swinburne influenced him the most.

Ashé: How did you first come across Crowley's work?

DuQuette: The Thoth Tarot was my introduction to Aleister Crowley. Then, *The Book of Thoth*. Once I crossed the abyss of fear and superstition generated by the rumors he was the "wickedest man in the world" I soon discovered that this guy was probably the greatest occult mind of the 20th century and not only that --- he wrote in English!

Granted, 99% of what I read went way over my head. Still it was clear to me that if I was really serious about magick and the western mystery tradition I was going to have to educate myself so that I could understand what this man was saying. After over thirty years of study, I can still say the more I learn the greater is my appreciation of the genius of Aleister Crowley.



Ashé: Speaking of the Book of Thoth, Crowley's classic work on the Tarot, last year you published your own book on Crowley's Thoth deck "Understanding Aleister Crowley's Thoth Tarot" (see review this issue). What led you to write this book?

DuQuette: I was blindsided 3 years ago in Chicago at a meeting between Don Weiser, Betty Lundsted (of Samuel Weiser) and Judith Hawkins-Tillirson, senior occult buyer of New Leaf Distributing. Judith called the meeting during the BookExpoAmerica to pitch Don and Betty the idea of me writing a book that explained what Crowley was talking about in The Book of Thoth, and to offer an commentary from the point of view of a Crowley expert on exactly what makes the Thoth Tarot the Thoth Tarot. I had no intentions of writing such a book and her pitch took me completely by surprised. I was too shocked to protest or support the idea. I just sat there with my mouth open. Don and Betty said something like, "Yes, that sounds like a good idea. Send us along what you've got and get it finished." That was that.

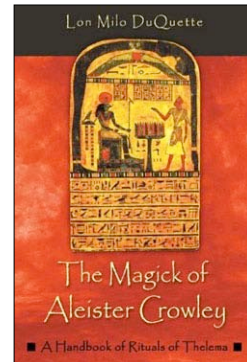
Ashé: Last year a revised edition of Magick of Thelema (Now titled...) was also published. Can you tell our readers anything of your current projects? What can we expect next from the gifted and prolific Mr. DuQuette?

DuQuette: I'm finishing up an off-beat book on oracles that is scheduled for 2005 release, and I'm working on both radio and television projects that are such a long shots that I don't even want to get my own hopes up. The same goes for a movie script about Crowley that I was hired to write and which I finished late last year.



The Magickal Writing of Lon Milo DuQuette

There is little doubt that Lon Milo DuQuette is one of the finest occult authors currently practicing their craft. DuQuette's writing is intelligent and avoids the dumbing-down that seems to be increasingly the rule for modern occult texts. On the other side of the publishing spectrum are texts that are so cryptic they are incomprehensible—whether due to elitism, myopia or ignorance of their subject. DuQuette avoids all these pitfalls and consistently produces works that are easily accessible to those new to his subject. At the same time his books contain a wealth of information that even experienced occultists will go back to again and again.



2003 saw the publishing of two of DuQuette's finest works of magickal theory: *Understanding Aleister Crowley's Thoth Tarot* and a revised edition of his immediate classic *The Magick of Thelema*, now retitled *The Magick of Aleister Crowley*. Both published by Weiser Books.

Magick is billed as a "handbook of rituals of Thelema." It is that and then some. DuQuette does much more than simply collect the extent rituals of Thelema that Crowley left behind scattered throughout his voluminous writings. DuQuette brings all these rituals into one place—a first in and of itself. In addition, he provides extensive commentary on their symbolism and meanings.

Being a high ranking member of the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO), he has unique access to the orders archives containing many of Crowley's original, hand annotated manuscripts. He brings what he has found in Crowley notes and variant versions to the reader using it to powerfully inform his commentary.

DuQuette goes one step further. He includes the 'traditional' rituals that form the antecedents to Crowley's own. These, drawn mostly from the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, provide a valuable comparison. The Golden Dawn rituals, along with DuQuette's commentary, show the similarities and, more importantly, the differences between Crowley's work and that of his predecessors. Crowley's life was a demarcation between the old and new ages and this is eloquently demonstrated by DuQuette's juxtaposition.

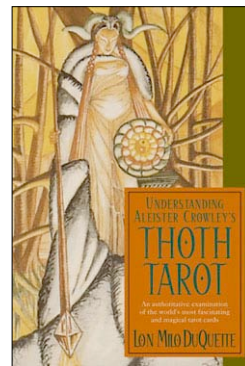


There is no question in my mind that anyone calling themselves a Thelemite should have a copy of this book in their library. Of course Thelema was not made to have rules, but there is no one who won't find something useful in this work.

Crowley, of course, himself wrote a commentary on his Thoth Tarot, *The Book of Thoth*. This book filled with an almost unfathomable depth of wisdom, does as much to obscure the tarot as it does to reveal it. Crowley's artistic collaboration with Frieda Harris, which resulted in the Thoth Tarot, is one of the great convergences in the history of occultism. Rarely is the full tarot completely redesigned, even modern artists concentrating their efforts on the major arcane at the expense of completeness.

Crowley and Harris not only set out to redesign the tarot, but to redefine it as well. The product of their efforts still remains singular to this day. The Thoth Tarot is second only to the Rider-Waite in use and popularity—the latter only maintaining its position through ubiquity.

It is then a fortunate occurrence that DuQuette's publisher talked the author into tackling the subject of the Thoth Tarot, almost the K-2 of occultism. The resulting book is the only comprehensive explication of the Crowley-Harris tarot available. DuQuette brings his normal intelligence and intelligibility to the subject culminating in a book that is both accessible and packed with insight.



In *Understanding Aleister Crowley's Thoth Tarot*, DuQuette provides an abundance of background material and foundational discussion. He follows these chapters, running some 81 pages, with a card-by-card commentary. The emphasis of the book is on teasing out the symbolism woven into the cards. He does provide a chapter covering Crowley's use of the cards as a divinatory tool. Throughout DuQuette adheres to his avowed goal of remaining "faithful to Crowley's delivery."

I would be remiss in not mentioning another of DuQuette's books his autobiography: *My Life With the Spirits: The Adventures of a Modern Magician*. This book rightly belongs on the required reading list of all Magick 101 classes. One may not avoid the same mistakes or learn the same lessons in the same way, but one can not over-exaggerate the power of reading how another wandered from point A to B. The magical life is not always an easy one and the lessons often not of the warm-fuzzy variety. When an elder (no reference to age intended) chooses to open themselves and talk frankly about their past, everyone should take advantage of the opportunity.



The Book of the Law, Anniversary Edition

Weiser Books in collaboration with the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO) has brought forth a deluxe hardcover edition of *Liber AL vel Legis* to commemorate the 100th anniversary of its inception. The book is a comfortable size, about 5" by 6", and the text is a generous size which will prove beneficial for ritual use.

In addition to the text of *The Book of the Law*, the edition features new scans of the original manuscript, with Crowley's own notes and annotations found in later drafts of the work, as well as color reproductions of the Stele of Revealing. The book also contains material from variant editions and a new introduction written by Hymenaeus Beta, head of the OTO, and a bibliographic listing of *editiones principes*.



The Young Aleister Crowley

This new volume of combines two earlier editions, now considered to be the definitive versions issued during Crowley's life. The typeset text of the book is drawn from the corrected second edition of the 1938 London edition. This was the last edition where production was actually overseen by Crowley. The introduction to the 1938 edition, included here as well, is one of Crowley's clearest introductory statements to his philosophy of Thelema.

The second edition incorporated in this new book is 1926 Tunis edition of the handwritten manuscript. In addition to the transcription, this volume retains "The Comment," which first appeared in the Tunis *Liber Legis*, Crowley's "Introductory Note" and the selected typeset quotations from the text. The images of the manuscript pages of *Liber Legis* were done in 1997 from the actual manuscript held by the OTO archives. The images are the clearest in any version of *Liber Legis*, excepting the same scans contained in the OTO's edition of *Liber ABA: Book Four*.

This book will likely stand as an important edition. One does wish that the book's cover material was a little richer, consistent with the ambitious goal of a creating an 100th anniversary edition. But then the price would have likely been considerably more, which would have been at odds with the egalitarian nature of the Law.

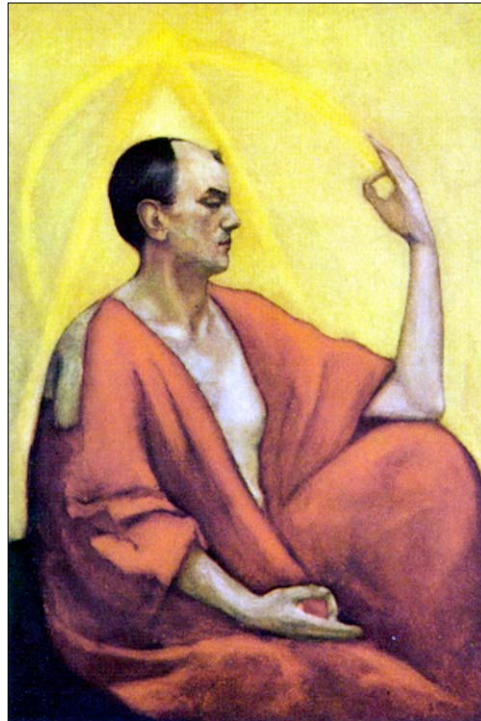


**There Is No God Where I Am:
Liber AL, The Self and Emptiness**

Sven Davisson

*I pay homage to the gurus, the divine friends,
Mahatma Guru Shri Paramahansa Shivaji and
Onirisha Bhagavan Babaji*

Whether East or West, the religious modus of the Old Aeon has been marked by a search for absolute interiority. This operative assumption has been that an essence of self exists within and that it is something to be sought out and cared for. This process is most marked in the doctrines of the Christian West, partaking as they do of the inheritance of their Greco-Roman forebears. The entire discursive and liturgical power of the church has been directed to this end. This is a phenomenology born of the Aeon of Osiris (c. 1-1904c.e.) and initially articulated in the writings of Soranus, Rufus of Ephesus, Plutarch, Seneca and other physicians and philosophers of the first two centuries. The early Christians borrowed heavily from this “insistence on the attention that should be brought to bear on oneself.” (Foucault 1988, pp. 39-41) Throughout the course of the Osirian Aeon, this self-analytic imperative evolved through the Catholic confessional and protestant witnessing of the declaration of sinful acts to the modern focus on the secular confessions of psychiatry and self-referential identity discourse. The West has limited itself to the knowledge of the subjective “I.”



Portrait by Leon Engers Kennedy, oil on canvas,
c. 1917-18 (National Portrait Gallery, London)

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The Eastern conceptions of the soul developed along somewhat similar lines, though the fragmentary nature of Eastern practice (lacking Pope or Patriarch) allowed for marked divergence as well. The focus on absolute interiority was not as disproportionately pronounced as it was in the West. The Hindus posited a self as a fragment that resided in the body along side a Supersoul, which was nothing less than the face of the Godhead. This fragment, being part of the divine, was not changeable. The Buddhist sought through meditation to dissolve the self—more appropriately the reification of self—by the full and experiential realization of emptiness. In contrast to the Hindu belief, the Buddhists held that the soul, or self, is constantly undergoing change and is, therefore, ultimately empty of inherent existence.

The new modus of the Aeon of Horus and Set is developing along lines distinctly contrary to those of the previous aeon. In *Liber AL vel Legis: the Book of the Law* (AL), Lord Aiwass teaches that the seeker is no longer to be concerned with the soul as object. In the New Aeon, the Path moves in the opposite direction. Expansion versus contraction. The point moves outward reaching toward the circumference, instead of the worldly projection turning inwards seeking the essence of self. It is the core that manifests the world, rather than the world seeking the core. Lord Aiwass introduces a cosmology based on the counter relation of two principles, Nuit and Hadit. Nuit is the iconographic expression of infinite expansion. Hieroglyphically she is the lady of the stars whose arched body forms the night sky. Hadit, on the other hand, is the dimensionless point, unextended, the stars within her body. AL II:2 Nuit is the circumference while Hadit is the center of the circle. AL II:3

Questions of subjectivity and self have arisen as the driving questions in the dialogue of modernism and postmodernism. Is everything relative to the subjectivity of the perceiver? Does subjectivity exist? If so, is subjectivity relative, empty or absolute? What is the relation between self and other? Does such a relation even exist and if so what are its constituent parts? This philosophical (and political) dialogue has been paralleled by the increasing personalization of the spiritual quest. As the Golgotha of institutionalized religion has slowly eroded, the rise of subjective relativist spiritual agendas has grown—either in small to medium groups, the so-called “New Religious Movements,” or on a completely personal individuated level. More often than not this has resembled the postmodernist artistic aesthetic, creating a heterogenous amalgam of appropriated imagery, icons and philosophical precepts. The trend has been to center these historical and/or cultural fragments around a drive for rooting out the root of one’s essence—whether termed Being, self or inner child.

In direct contrast to this flood of disparate self-searching philosophies are the words of Nuit, Hadit and Ra-Hoor-Khuit, spoken through their minister Lord Aiwass. In



this tripartite image, reflected in the three chapter division of *Liber AL*, is encoded a model for the correct view of exteriority, interiority and subjectivity. Building from the analogy of the sphere utilized in *Liber AL* II:3, Nuit, as the circumference, is the limit of personal expansion; Hadit is the central, originating point; and Ra-Hoor-Khuit is the synergy arisen from the correct, direct experiential (as opposed to inferential) apprehension of these two. Hadit is “everywhere the centre” and Nuit “the circumference, is nowhere found.” We are each the center of our own universe. (cf. the Khabs and the Khu of AL I:8) Ra-Hoor-Khuit is the projection of personality that the interrelation of Nuit and Hadit gives rise to. The ability to move forward, create and develop is the “reward of Ra-Hoor-Khuit.” AL III:1 This process is *not* a unification of the one into the all but rather a dynamic play of expansion and contraction which results in the agency of the individual. “There is division hither homeward; there is a word not known.” AL III:2 To functionally exist within the world means that the complete dissolution referred to in chapter one is not a place of permanent abiding—but may, rather, be more an attainment of an accessible realization or meditative nexus point.

In chapter two, Hadit states “I am alone and there is no god where I am.” AL II:23 At the center is only Hadit, the dimensionless point. “Unextended,” he is therefore empty of inherent existence as it would be defined by traditional phenomenology. Hadit describes himself as “alone” without reference to “god” or an essential element of self or spirit. If one were to say Hadit exists at all, it is not in a way that can be characterized as existing “as such” within the dimension that we are able to comprehend. Since Hadit is not perceivable and nothing else resides with him to be perceived, it follows that the quest for meaning at the core of self cannot result in realization. Hadit is the projective point from which we originate and not the end goal of our quest. Those who seek him, utilizing his image as focus, will discover nothing for he is, in actuality, “the worshipper.” AL II:8 Hadit is the originating point, the impetus to begin the spiritual quest and the strength to carry on against the dark night. It is he that goes. AL II:7 The flaw of modernist subjectivity is that it mistakes the doer for the object of interrogation. Modern humanism is blind to the irony of the seeker seeking oneself. Or in the words of the enlightened master Osho, “The worshipper is the worshipped.” (Rajneesh 1988, p. 23)

“You don’t have to worship anyone else. Your innermost being is the highest and the most precious, the most existential and conscious point. There is nothing higher than it. You need no worship, you can only meditate.” (Rajneesh 1988, p. 23)

It is not, necessarily, that the self does not exist. It is rather that one is incapable of perceiving the nature of the soul and it is thus an inappropriate focus of spiritual concern. The self cannot be known by the false ego or intellect. The intellect can only recognize the nature of the self, but this is still a veil. “The khabs is in the khu, not the



khu in the khabs.” AL I:8 Khu is the innermost veil that obscures the right perception of the khabs, inner light or flame. Of this Crowley writes, “It is the ‘veils’ that obstruct the relation between Nuit and Hadit.” He further admonishes us “not to worship the khu, to fall in love with our magical image. To do this—and we have all done it—is to forget our truth.”(Crowley 1986, p. 83) The self, khabs, is not the correct object of the path, since the seeker can never perceive it with any clarity. The khabs always remains obscured by the khu. The core, self, can only be correctly perceived in the “highest trances.”(Crowley 1986, p. 156)

The relation of Hadit and Nuit is also figured in terms of the dualism of the knower and the known—the one who has the ability to realize and the object of that realization. Hadit, symbolic of the seeker on the path, is in the position of reaching toward Nuit, the “limit” to be strived for. In verse II:4 Hadit, speaking of Nuit, says “Yet she shall be known & I never.” Hadit is the active principle, the “goer.” Crowley writes of this relation, “Hadit possesses the power to know, Nuit that of being known.”(Crowley 1986, p. 158) Exteriority (Nuit, the universe) and interiority (Hadit, the soul) is thus a mutually reciprocating relation where “the soul interprets the universe; and the universe veils the soul.”(Crowley 1986, p. 155)

Crowley uses the philosophy of *Liber AL* to postulate that singular perfect emanations, “stars,” self-limit in order to achieve Wisdom through lived experience. He uses the example of a carbon atom which goes through diverse connections, combining with oxygen to make CO₂ and then being subdivided back into pure carbon. In this analogy, the atomic element goes through processes but does not change in its ultimate constitution. The soul works in a similar fashion, undergoing change but carrying forward that change not in its ultimate constitutional make-up but in the form of memory and historicity. Crowley elaborates that Nuit is the “object of knowledge” while Hadit is “merely that part of Her which She formulates in order that she may be known.”(Crowley 1986) The perfect creates the myth of duality in order to gain Wisdom. “For I am divided for love’s sake, for the chance of union.” AL I:29

To borrow from the post-structuralist philosopher Michel Foucault, *Liber AL* proposes the development of what he termed an *askesis*, a productive ascetic discipline of creative expansion—ultimately resulting in a dissolution in the body of Nuit. “the pain of division is as nothing, and the joy of dissolution all.” AL I:30 Foucault describes *askesis* as “something else: it’s the work that one performs on oneself in order to transform oneself or make the *self* appear that happily one never attains.”(Foucault 1989, p. 206) This expansive notion of spirituality, the seeking to expand the very conception of self, as opposed to rooting out its ‘source’ echoes Crowley’s theories. “The development of the Adept is by expansion—out of Nuit—in all directions equally.”(Crowley 1986, p. 89)



Hadit is a force which strives to be something greater, ever reaching toward a goal which appropriately remains just out of reach. Again the focus is external and not internal. The notion of the self is relational and not essential. “It is therefore wrong to worship Hadit; one is to be Hadit, and worship [Nuit].”(Crowley 1986, p. 166) The path is to seek toward the Orisha, to be enveloped in something greater than one’s self. “Consciousness loses its sense of separateness by dissolution in [Nuit]”(Crowley 1986, p. 155)

It is up to us to create who we are—not to discover it. In an interview, Foucault stated it succinctly, “The relationships we have to have with ourselves are not ones of identity, rather they must be relationships of differentiation, of creation, of innovation.”(Foucault, et al. 1984) He further proposed that “to be modern is not to accept oneself as one is in the flux of the passing moments” but, rather, as the result “of a complex and difficult elaboration.”(Miller 1993, p. 333) In his construction of a positive, productive spiritual quest rooted in exteriority, Foucault gives agency back to the individual. “Where religions once demanded the sacrifice of human bodies, knowledge now calls for experimentation on ourselves.”(Miller 1993, p. 346) Spirituality is now a choice, and not a de facto confluence of heredity, culture and (familial) heritage.

Crowley believed, “One should plunge passionately into every possible experience.” (Crowley 1986, p. 166) His 12th and 21st theorems in *Magick In Theory and Practice* state that limits are self-imposed and merely represent the ability of the practitioner to measure and cognize the distance between self and a perceived boundary. For both Crowley and Foucault, the goal does not stop at the reaching of the boundary but actually moving past it through heightened experiences. Foucault terms these instances “limit experiences” a moment which pushes us beyond what we thought ourselves capable of perceiving, thus changing even the most basic conception of who we are. Experience keeps us fresh. The direct access that we have to the glories of the Orisha and Devas gives us an ongoing evolutionary play of expanding realities. We learn and grow through this contact and not, conversely, through internalized self-analysis. We meditate and rest in the quietude of emptiness; we experience the Divine and become more than what we thought we were.

“Nobody in the whole history of consciousness has been able to say why he is. All that one can do is shrug your shoulders: I am, there is no question of why.” (Rajneesh 1988, p. 25) “If Will stops and cries Why, invoking Because, then Will stops & does naught.” AL II:30 Shrug your shoulders and go on.

We do not pray. Our worship is contact with something greater than our selves and, through this contact, we are expanded. We can only ever begin to know ourselves by contact with the Divine—the Orishas, Devas and Divine Emanations.



The gods once again walk the earth as men—or the men once again walk the earth as gods. It is up to us to write our own mythology. Brion's clarion call echoes through Space: *We are Here To Go!*

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Looking Into the Word: Some Observations

Frater Alamantra™

“Cease, cease, this vizard may become another, Withdraw yourselves unto the serpent’s brother.” Rabelais from *Gargantua and Pantagruel*

Who Calls Us Thelemites:

“Who calls us Thelemites will do no wrong, if he look but close into the word. For there are therein Three Grades, the Hermit, and the Lover, and the man of Earth. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.” *The Book of the Law* Chapter 1 V: 40



In considering the word “Thelemites” let us begin by referring to the Rabelaisian references to Thelema. It was Rabelais who first coined the term “Thelemites” and, for Crowley, this is certainly a literary reference, inferring the idea that this is where we may find the seed of the Thelemic tradition. Even though currently veiled primarily in academia, volumes have been written as to the influence Rabelais and his work have had on the development of Western thought and culture. This gives us a very definite orientation and tells its own tale throughout history. For example, when Sir Francis Dashwood renovated the Abbey at Medmenham in the 1750s, he had the motto of the Abbey of Theleme, “FAY CE QUE VOUDRAS” (Do what you please), painted over the eastern porch of the building. It was there that his gentleman’s club, known to some as the infamous “Hellfire Club” would hold their events.

In particular, Rabelais described the Thelemites as the inhabitants of the Abbey of Theleme. The Thelemites composed a religious order “**contrary to all others.**” How well this resonates with a passage like “ye are against the people o my chosen.”

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Rabelais then gives a sort of “negative confession” and states what the Abbey of Theleme COULD NOT be since it was to be contrary to all other orders: If all other Abbeys were walled, the Abbey of Theleme could not be. It was “open” because:

seeing wall and mur signify but one and the same thing);
where there is mur before and mur behind, there is store of
murmur, envy, and mutual conspiracy.

By virtue of Rabelais’ definition, Theleme did not embrace envy, and mutual conspiracy and its “order” could not have those qualities. Therefore the Abbey of Theleme was to be open and not encumbered by walls. This alludes to its universal nature, and the fact that the human will is not to be confined.

The tale continues by observing that all other religious orders treated women, especially women who are chaste and honest, as ‘impure’ due solely to the fact that they are women. The very ground that they walked upon is swept less their ‘impurity’ impeach the sanctity of the institution. Therefore when a member of one of THOSE religious orders (male or female) entered the Abbey of Thelema, every room that such a condescending hypocrite passed should be thoroughly scrubbed. Rabelais isn’t content to merely sweep the ground after they pass, but the whole room must be scoured! This is a critical accusation Rabelais is making, by saying that the women who acquiesced in such a lot as given by a religious order had to take their portion of responsibility for the situation, and their reflection on the general value of women as members of the human race.

The Thelemites were to also do away clocks and other time mechanisms since one of the greatest wastes of time is to sit and count the hours. They were not to live on some pre-ordained schedule, but to follow the natural inclinations and sleep patterns of their own bodies.

Nor can there be any greater dotage in the world than for one
to guide and direct his courses by the sound of a bell, and not
by his own judgment and discretion.

Rabelais describes judgment and discretion as Thelemic values and then goes on to describe that the Thelemites were the ‘beautiful people’ and that these ‘beautiful people’ were expected to make love in the open, rather than by sneaking, and through intrigue, which are themselves the manifestation of fear and guilt; and they were



permitted to celebrate their unions through marriage (as opposed to other religious orders at that time, which forbade marriage.)

These other items that describe a Thelemite in particular:

Item, Because both men and women that are received into religious orders after the expiring of their noviciate or probation year were constrained and forced perpetually to stay there all the days of their life, **it was therefore ordered that all whatever, men or women, admitted within this abbey, should have leave to depart with peace and contentment whensoever it should seem good to them so to do.**

Item, for that the religious men and women did ordinarily make three vows, to wit, those of chastity, poverty, and obedience, it was therefore constituted and appointed that in this convent they might be honourably married, that they might be rich, and live at liberty. In regard of the legitimate time of the persons to be initiated, and years under and above which they were not capable of reception, the women were to be admitted from ten till fifteen, and the men from twelve till eighteen.

This admittance into freedom was bestowed upon the teenage years, which was, certainly, in Rabelais' time, the very fruit of life itself, before a person was broken with constant sickness, old age and worn down with the weight of the world. It is a time when the human organism is open to experience, not completely conditioned with social programming, and developed enough to support its natural curiosity. This statement also let us know that a person wasn't expected to remain cloistered in an Abbey all their lives, but to develop and move on, and go out into the world, spreading the perimeter of the Abbey itself as they did so.

In short, Rabelais is describing an institution not unlike a combination preparatory school and liberal arts college.

The very centerpiece of being a Thelemite may be summarized by the following passage from "Chapter 1.LVII. How the Thelemites were governed, and of their manner of living."



All their life was spent not in laws, statutes, or rules, but according to their own free will and pleasure. They rose out of their beds when they thought good; they did eat, drink, labour, sleep, when they had a mind to it and were disposed for it. None did awake them, none did offer to constrain them to eat, drink, nor to do any other thing; for so had Gargantua established it. In all their rule and strictest tie of their order there was but this one clause to be observed,

Do What Thou Wilt;

because men that are free, well-born, well-bred, and conversant in honest companies, have naturally an instinct and spur that prompteth them unto virtuous actions, and withdraws them from vice, which is called honour. Those same men, when by base subjection and constraint they are brought under and kept down, turn aside from that noble disposition by which they formerly were inclined to virtue, to shake off and break that bond of servitude wherein they are so tyrannously enslaved; for it is agreeable with the nature of man to long after things forbidden and to desire what is denied us.

Therefore, we can say, by this definition, a Thelemite is a person who is free, well-born, well-bred and capable of interacting in honest company. A Thelemite has an inherent sense of honor and a sense of proportion and discretion. They have transcended the need for a ‘battle of the sexes’ and dominance and affluence is not, among them, determined by sexual precedent but by a sense of partnership and linking rather than hierarchical ranking. Much of Crowley’s work is an interpretation and extension of this simple summary.

In the passage that is currently under our consideration, the reference to Rabelais is two-fold: the reference to the Thelemites, and then the signature of passage “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law,” echoing the quote above. In fact, in this sense, it almost seems as if Crowley is making a vow to make Rabelais’ “Theleme” manifest. This would have been an easy vow to keep since it was already manifest and had in every action contrary to church and crown and the other artificial restraints that bind sum humanity’s genius and keeps it from the higher life to which it aspires.



Part II: The Lemes (The Lemites vs The Ophites)

Now, let us break apart this word, Theleme, so that it appears thus: The Leme. According to Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary the word "Leme" refers to: \Leme\ (l[=e]m), n. [OE. leem, leme, leam, AS. le[‘o]ma light, brightness; akin to E. light, n. [root]122.] A ray or glimmer of light; a gleam. [Obs.] --Chaucer. \Leme\, v. i. To shine. [Obs.] --Piers Plowman.

So from the very beginning of this exploration we have, literally "The light" ...or "The ray" ...or "The gleam". The final "ite" is a suffix denoting 'one of a party, a sympathizer with or adherent of, a person who is a native of a particular place.'

By this reckoning, "The Lemites" translates as those who are adherents to or in sympathy with The Light; or as those who are natives of the Light. The Light is not to be confined, as light is in constant motion.

This word, 'lemes' also conjures the idea of the individual sparks of light that make up a fire as alluded to in

Cometh of the greete superfluytee
Of youre rede colera, pardee,
Which causeth folk to dreden in hir dremes
Of arwes, and of fyr with rede lemes,
Of rede beestes, that they wol hem byte,
Of kontek, and of whelpes, grete and lyte;
(Chaucer: *Canterbury Tales*: Lines 2927-2932: "The Nun's Priest's Tale")

"Leme" was an Old English word and its forms were used by Chaucer, who we know that Crowley expressed more than a fondness for, but considered him (and Shakespeare etc..) to be his "family" and links to the "great men of the past". In regard to his 1901-1902 "Wanderer in the Waste" period, Crowley writes:

I had made a point from the beginning of making sure that my life as a Wanderer in the Waste should not cut me off from **my family, the great men of the past**. I got India paper editions of **Chaucer**, Shakespeare and Browning; and in default of India paper, the best editions of **Atlanta in Calydon, Poems and Ballads (First Series)**, Shelley, Keats, and The Qabalah



Unveiled. I caused all these to be bound in vellum, with ties. William Morris had re-introduced this type of binding in the hopes of giving a mediaeval flavour to his publications. I adopted it as being the best protection for books against the elements. I carried these volumes everywhere, and even when my alleged waterproof rucksack was soaked through, my masterpieces remained intact. (*Confessions*, p. 256)

We can note the significance of his placing Chaucer first in this descriptive and also the fact that he found this descriptive considerable enough to devote space to in his Autobiography. We may also consider the expense being referred to, not to mention the additional burden of the transport and maintenance of his “masterpieces.”

...for there are therein Three Grades, the Hermit, and the Lover, and the man of Earth.

Let us consider the idea of the three grades and the other references to a triadic structure within *The Book of the Law* itself. The first obvious consideration is the fact that the book is divided into three chapters, and it would be natural enough to establish a correspondence between a grade and a respective chapter. A grade is generally understood as a step in an overall process. The word “grade” comes to us through the French from the Latin “gradus” meaning “step or pace, and this is further derived from gradi to step, go. The ideas of “Coming” (represented 19 times in *The Book of the Law*) and “Going” (represented 5 times in *The Book of the Law*) are recurring themes throughout. Both of these words denote movement, though it could be reasonably argued that “going,” “to go” etc.. denotes a sense of “departure” and “leaving” whereas “come” represents a sense of approaching and arrival.

In his commentaries, Crowley has described “Nuit” (the principle of the first chapter of *The Book of the Law*) as representing “Space” and Hadit (the principle of the second chapter of *The Book of the Law*) as representing “Motion”.

These ideas of impermanence and motion are further emphasized by the maxim of the phrase that the book proclaims as its cornerstone: “Do what thou wilt SHALL BE the whole of the Law.” There have been many debates, both on-line and off, in regard to the use of the words “shall be.” I hold that it denotes a situation, which has been devised and set into motion, but is not yet made manifest. Regardless of whether it is imperative or not, it implies a future state, that though having been conceived, has not yet manifest. This may be compared to the idea of ‘personal revelation’ being a process rather than a



‘destination,’ and helps to reassert the principle of ‘going’ or development in a state of 3 discernable graduating steps.

The idea of *‘impermanence’* and *‘motion’* finds numerous analogues in the history of world religion. One analogue that I have always felt was of especial reference as regards Crowley’s work is that of the three Gnostic sects: The Peratae (or Peratai), who have also been linked to the Ophites or “serpent Gnostics” and the Sethians.

In *The Gnostics* by Jacques Lacarriere, he writes of the Peratae:

The Peratae take their name from the Greek ‘peran,’ which means to overcome, to pass beyond. Moreover, they explained themselves in these terms: **‘We are the only ones who know the laws of generation and the path by which man entered into this world, therefore we are the only ones who know how to walk this path and overcome corruption.’** No doubt the Peratae achieved this ‘overcoming’ through the same heteromorphous erotic techniques, re-enacting the Serpent’s first act which remained the essential symbol of their cosmology and their soteriology: ‘Just as a magnet will attract only iron to itself, and amber only scraps of paper, so the Serpent, to the exclusion of all others, attracts from this world only that perfect race formed in the image of the Father, made of the same essence as He Himself is made and which He sent down here below. (Lacarriere, p. 83)

Now, what do the Peratae have to do with the three-fold graduation implied by *The Book of the Law* I: 40? According to Hippolytus V in his work: “The Refutation of All Heresies,” one of the greatest of heresies perpetrated by the Peratae is their “Tritheism”: *“These allege that the world is one, triply divided. And of the triple division with them, one portion is a certain single originating principle, just as it were a huge fountain, which can be divided mentally into infinite segments.*

Now the first segment, and that which, according to them, is (a segment) in preference (to others), is a triad, and it is called a Perfect Good, (and) a Paternal Magnitude.

And the second portion of the triad of these is, as it were, a certain infinite crowd of potentialities that are generated from themselves, (while) the third is formal. And the first, which is good, is unbegotten, and the second is a self-producing good, and the third is created...



As we can see by the above there is a fairly natural resonance between the idea of Chapter 1: Nuit being the principle of Unity and of space divided for the chance of union with the idea of an “unbegotten”, Chapter 2: Hadit, the principle of motion with that which is “self-produced,” the “self-begotten.” and Chapter 3: Ra-Hoor-Khuit corresponding to “the created.” The number three has been equated with the full course of manifestation in various religions throughout the world since the dawn of recorded history. Even the most superficial of surveys gives us the Christian interpretation of “Father, Son, Holy Ghost” and the Hindu rendering of Vishnu,

Brahma and Shiva. I suggest that *The Book of the Law*, including the symbolism of the numeration of its chapters follows a similar line of interpretation, and that the chapters 1 and 3 formulate two fundamentally different interpretations of manifestation. There is an antithesis posed between the attitudes that these two chapters convey, with the perspective given in the second chapter posing as a mediator between the two. This contrast is also evident in the way that the mediator itself is described or portrayed in the first and third chapters. Even Crowley claimed that at first he had trouble reconciling the descriptions portrayed by the first and the third chapters, but we feel that this is none-the-less an accurate portrayal of the full course of experience. Existence is a contradiction and light may only be known in the presence of shadow.

Thelema may be unity, but it is also ‘division for the chance of union.’ We can look at it from different perspectives, much like a photon is a particle or a wave depending on how we look at it. Yes, there’s a universal flow, and that force of motion is Thelema, in which all of us are caught up in unity. But there is also the will that is *uniquely* individual, eternal, sovereign, and distinct from any other will.)RIKB on the Greater Thelema Forum)

We suggest that a correspondence exists between Chapter 1 and The Hermit, Chapter 2 and The Lover, and Chapter 3 and the Man of Earth and will now investigate this consideration, but will do so in reverse.

It would seem natural enough to equate The Hermit and The Lover(s) to the Tarot trumps bearing those same names, and we are certainly not suggesting a divorce from this idea, but the use of the phrase “Man of Earth,” a term that finds no immediately similar corollary, encourages us to look a bit further, as does the singular “Lover” as opposed to “Lovers” which is the actual name of Atu VI. Therefore the term “The Hermit” is the only descriptive that finds an exact analogue in the Trumps of the Tarot.



Man of Earth:

The enumeration of the Three Grades, followed by the injunction Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law, means that no discrimination of “superiority” or ‘inferiority’ is to be made between the Three Grades. It is a matter of the Will, and nothing else, that decides to which Grade a Thelemite is to belong. In a sense, the man of Earth’ is the adherent’, that is, he is loyal to Thelema, adheres to it. In another sense, he adheres to the material world. He is the husbandman, the house-holder, the man attached to temporal things. To despise such a man is stupid. He is a Karma Yogi by definition, and who are you to trace another star’s orbit. (Aleister Crowley’s comment on *The Book of the Law*)

I began my query by looking around at various significant usages of this term with the aim of establishing a stronger context for its presentation as one of the three grades in this process of Thelemitism. The first thing I encountered was Flammarion in his work *Sur la Pluralite des Mondes habites*, a work quoted by Madame Blavatsky, where he says:

It seems as if in the eyes of those authors who have written on this subject, the Earth were the type of the Universe, and the Man of Earth, the type of the inhabitants of the heavens. It is, on the contrary, much more probable, that, since the nature of other planets is essentially varied, and the surroundings and conditions of existence essentially different, while the forces which preside over the creation of beings and the substances which enter into their mutual constitution are essentially distinct, it would follow that our mode of existence cannot be regarded as in any way applicable to other globes. Those who have written on this subject have allowed themselves to be dominated by terrestrial ideas, and fell therefore into error.



Here he is evoking the idea of the purely ‘terrestrial vehicle,’ referring to the physical shell of incarnation. His descriptive is saying that it is more likely that other life forms would have evolved to deal with the environment in which they have their being, and our consideration of ‘aliens’ being bi-pedal etc may be fallacious. His comparison though is focused on the physical and the phrase “Man of Earth” is being used a descriptive for the physical form that was created by and must continually adapt to its environment.

Madame Blavatsky offers her own context for employing “man of earth” in her essay “Occultism Versus The Occult Arts” (Lucifer, May 1888) where she writes:

The “Higher Self” or Spirit is as unable to assimilate such feelings as water to get mixed with oil or unclean liquid tallow. It is thus the mind alone, the sole link and medium between the man of earth and the Higher Self -- that is the only sufferer, and which is in the incessant danger of being dragged down by those passions that may be re-awakened at any moment, and perish in the abyss of matter. And how can it ever attune itself to the divine harmony of the highest Principle, when that harmony is destroyed by the mere presence, within the Sanctuary in preparation, of such animal passions? How can harmony prevail and conquer, when the soul is stained and distracted with the turmoil of passions and the terrestrial desires of the bodily senses, or even of the “Astral man”?

This passage reiterates the linking of three aspects into a unified state: the ‘man of earth,’ being the absolutely physical organism and its blind passions, cravings and fettered to its desires; the mind (which she calls the only sufferer, ...that part which is caught between the grossest and the highest), and finally the Higher Self, which we may express as the ‘consciousness of the continuity of existence.

M. Blavatsky also wrote in her article, “Theories About Reincarnation And Spirits” (Nov. 20th 1886):

They in whom evil desire is entirely destroyed are called Arhats. Freedom from evil desire insures the possession of a miraculous power. At his death the Arhat is never reincarnated; he invariably attains nirvana--a word, by the by, falsely interpreted by the Christian scholar and skeptical



commentators. Nirvana is the world of cause, in which all deceptive effects or delusions of our senses disappear. Nirvana is the highest attainable sphere. The pitris (the pre-Adamic spirits) are considered as reincarnated by the Buddhistic philosopher, though in a degree far superior to that of the man of earth. Do they not die in their turn? Do not their astral bodies suffer and rejoice, and feel the same curse of illusionary feelings as when embodied?

This passage intimates a progressive series of evolution throughout numerous incarnations, and chooses the term ‘man of earth’ to establish the state that these other temporal manifestations are superior to though they are also limited to effects of the process of manifestation.

In his *Book of Lies* Crowley compares the HIMOG (Holy Illuminated Man of God) to the INGLORIOUS man of earth:

THE HIMOG

A red rose absorbs all colours but red; red is therefore the one colour that it is not. This Law, Reason, Time, Space, all Limitation blinds us to the Truth. All that we know of Man, Nature, God, is just that which they are not; it is that which they throw off as repugnant. The HIMOG is only visible in so far as He is imperfect. Then are they all glorious who seem not to be glorious, as the HIMOG is All-glorious Within? It may be so. How then distinguish the inglorious and perfect HIMOG from the inglorious man of earth? Distinguish not! But thyself Ex-tinguish: HIMOG art thou, and HIMOG shalt thou be.

Comment: “...how are we to tell whether a Holy Illuminated Man of God is really so, since we can see nothing of him but his imperfections.” *Book of Lies* Chapter 40

We initially experience the daimonic as a blind push, driving us toward the assertion of ourselves as, say, in rage or sex. This blind push is original in two senses: first it is the original way the infant experiences the daimonic, but it is also the way



the daimonic instantaneously strikes each of us regardless of how old we are. (May, p.159)

This brings us to the relation between the daimon and the special problem of modern Western man, namely, the tendency to get absorbed in the herd, lost in *das Mann*. ‘the daimonic is anonymity,’ states Paul Ricoeur. The impersonal daimonic makes us all anonymous—nature draws no distinction between me and any illiterate peasant who also is its tool in its relentless drive toward self-increase, who copulates and begets offspring to perpetuate the race, and who can experience rage to keep himself alive long enough to serve as nature’s procreator. Speaking psychoanalytically, this is the daimonic in the form of the id. (May, p.161)

One of the more poignant descriptions of the “man of earth” comes to us through Spenser’s story “The Fairy Queen” written at the height of the Elizabethan enlightenment. Speaking of this work, David Paul Clark writes in his essay “Reaping what was sown: Spenser, Chaucer, and *The Plowman’s Tale*”:

This type of character was new literary territory, and it is not surprising that Nohrnberg is unable to find a model for Redcrosse’s naïveté in classical and biblical models; Spenser, after all, was creating not an instant saint, but a rustic who developed to sainthood. As he said in his letter to Sir Walter Raleigh published with *The Faerie Queene*, his hero in Book One was to be a “tall clownishe young man” who “rested on the floore” at the Queen of Faerie’s palace, “unfitte through his rusticity for a better place” (Spenser 408).

This rustic figure, naturally, was the earthy plowman, a rustic “everyman” who was able to represent for Spenser the common sins of humankind and the path to true holiness through sacrifice and recognition of one’s own faults.

Spenser’s signaling of Redcrosse’s origins in I.x.66 is significant, then, because, to Elizabethans it indicated that the



path to holiness was open to them; George/Redcrosse (or “Georgos,” which is Greek for “husbandman” or “ploughman”) was, as I pointed out earlier, quite literally a product of the soil of England, a rustic commoner, a “man of earth” (FQ I.x.52)

This finds sympathy with Crowley’s own commentary on *The Book of the Law*:

In a sense, the man of Earth’ is the adherent’, that is, he is loyal to Thelema, adheres to it. In another sense, he adheres to the material world. He is the husbandman, the house-holder, the man attached to temporal things... He is a Karma Yogi

H. Rider Haggard, who wrote the Alex Quartermain series, referred to the “Man of Earth” in his 1886 piece entitled “King Solomon’s Mines,” and though perhaps not especially significant, at least casually, we non-the-less find a resonance striking enough to quote here:

Now, Twala” (handing him the rifle), “this magic tube we give to thee, and by and by I will show thee how to use it; but beware how thou usest the magic of the stars against a man of *earth*,” and I handed him the rifle.

As we have shown, if but briefly, *The Book of the Law*’s employment of the phrase “man of earth” wasn’t unique or unprecedented, and it is reasonable to assume that Crowley had run across this phrase in the course of his voracious reading habit. In fact, its use in *The Book of the Law* counts on the context, as a particular term in the magical-religio-philosophical idiom, to have meaning and to impart meaning to the other two terms used in its conjunction demarking the gradations of the Thelemic journey. Crowley’s poem “One Star In Sight” defines this condition framed by the “man of earth” thus:

Thy cringing carrion cowered and crawled
To find itself a chance-cast clod
Whose Pain was purposeless; appalled
That aimless accident thus trod
Its agony, that void skies sprawled On the vain sod!



This condition is echoed by the descriptions given in the Third Chapter of *The Book of the Law*. This chapter conveys images of death, war, dispersal, sacrifice, idolatry, blood, fire, swords, treachery, destruction, blasphemy ...in short, the conditions that are everywhere manifest throughout the course of history. It is the world of men that is here described. It is a description of the base, vain chaotic, disheveled nature of the ‘man of earth.’ This chapter begins and ends, so to speak with the Word ‘Abrahadabra.’

III: 1 “Abrahadabra; the reward of Ra Hoor Khuit.

III: 75 “The ending of the words is the Word Abrahadabra”

And one would think, by this, that it would be the final word of the book itself, but it isn't. The final two words of this book are: “Aum. Ha.” Ha formulates the beginning of the Book again with the opening word of the first chapter: “Had”, and this confirms the cyclic nature of manifestation, and compels a comparison between the three perspectives given in each of the three chapters with the tri-fold cosmology that recognizes manifestation as this ever changing process of Creation, Preservation and Destruction. The final “Ha” without the “d” (or the “dit”) also recalls to mind the first verse of the second chapter: “*Nu, the hiding of Hadit.*”

I would like to close this section on the “man of earth” by quoting, what I thought was a most powerful turn of this phrase from Nathaniel Hawthorne’s very revealing “The Artist of The Beautiful.”:

Owen Warland’s story would have been no tolerable representation of the troubled life of those who strive to create the beautiful, if, amid all other thwarting influences, love had not interposed to steal the cunning from his hand. Outwardly he had been no ardent or enterprising lover; the career of his passion had confined its tumults and vicissitudes so entirely within the artist’s imagination that Annie herself had scarcely more than a woman’s intuitive perception of it; but, in Owen’s view, it covered the whole field of his life. Forgetful of the time when she had shown herself incapable of any deep response, he had persisted in connecting all his dreams of artistical success with Annie’s image; she was the visible shape in which the spiritual power that he worshipped, and on whose altar he hoped to lay a not unworthy offering, was



made manifest to him. Of course he had deceived himself; there were no such attributes in Annie Hovenden as his imagination had endowed her with. She, in the aspect which she wore to his inward vision, was as much a creature of his own as the mysterious piece of mechanism would be were it ever realized. Had he become convinced of his mistake through the medium of successful love,—had he won Annie to his bosom, and there beheld her fade from angel into ordinary woman,—the disappointment might have driven him back, with concentrated energy, upon his sole remaining object. On the other hand, had he found Annie what he fancied, his lot would have been so rich in beauty that out of its mere redundancy he might have wrought the beautiful into many a worthier type than he had toiled for; but the guise in which his sorrow came to him, the sense that the angel of his life had been snatched away and given to a rude man of earth and iron, who could neither need nor appreciate her ministrations,—this was the very perversity of fate that makes human existence appear too absurd and contradictory to be the scene of one other hope or one other fear. There was nothing left for Owen Warland but to sit down like a man that had been stunned.

The Lover:

Human awareness and consciousness—that is, knowing—introduce unpredictable elements into our man. And man is the creature who obstreperously insists on knowing. The change of consciousness which this involves is both ‘outside’ and ‘inside,’ consisting of forces operating on the individual from the world and the attitude of the person who is attending to these forces. (May, p.200-201)

The Lover is a Bhakhti Yogi. He abandons temporal interests and dedicates his life to service of the Order. He will kill himself, if need be, that the Order may live. Such men organize Thelemic movements, thereby incurring the risk of persecution on the part of Old Aeon organizations and the



‘Black Lodge’—a better name for such organizations, and particularly for the ‘Black Lodge’, is ‘the die-hards.’
(Crowley’s Commentary on *The Book of the Law*)

In the Thelemic process then, we have started with the raw material, the common stock ...the mud ...the moe. The next step towards the extreme individuation implied by the term “The Hermit” is that of devotion, and it is this that doth a Thelemite make: a commitment to individuation... of learning who the very Self of the individual self is, and adapting life around this universal principle. The methodology for this process is “love under will.” This is what the Lover represents. It has been said enough to be considered worthy of emphasis: “Do what thou wilt does not mean do what you like”, although you should enjoy what you do. In order for there to be any real enjoyment and growth requires an attention to the development itself. This commitment to finding one’s true nature, and unfolding a process of self-discovery requires both freedom, (the external freedom to be able to explore one’s capacity), and “the strictest of all bonds”: which is itself “Devotion.”

This devotion can take any number of forms but the commitment we are speaking manifests in both the inner and outer lives. As we free ourselves from our lot of superstition, prejudice, and hierarchical thinking, we begin to explore the interconnectivity and relationships between all things ...”the consciousness of the continuity of existence” expressed in Chapter 1 of *The Book of the Law*. This recognition is not a static ‘solution,’ but a dynamic process. We begin with the man of earth, with our desires, but throughout the process we find that these desires cannot be suppressed or sated. We are creatures of experience, and it is experience that we crave. We simply have to ‘know’, which may be one of the more interesting aspects of ‘desire.’ We can’t stop or settle for a moment, and so we take ‘the next **step.**’ This taking of the step represents a commitment, and it is from this action that ‘devotion’ grows.

Mind is a disease of semen. All that a man is or may be is hidden therein. Bodily functions are parts of the machine; silent unless in dis-ease. But mind, never at ease, creaketh “I”. This I persisteth not, posteth not through generations, changeth momentarily, finally is dead. Therefore is man only himself in The Charioting. (Crowley, *Lies*, Chapter 8 “Steepled Horsehair”)



This aspect of love, as a commitment to one's aspiration is led by a thirst for knowing. "Knowing" is a means of delineating relationships between things, the more functional this delineation the more efficient the knowledge can be said to be. So we may only know ourselves through comprehending our relationships with others, the world around us, as well as our thought processes emotional predilections and bodily functions. Unity itself partakes of duality as is interpreted by the lines "I am divided for love's sake for the chance of union."

The Hermit:

In the 1970s, anthropologist Mary Douglas proposed a typological paradigm for comparing cultures and the sociological structures that supported them. This was originally called grid/group analysis, but is now more generally called "cultural theory". Her model suggested that a person's perceptions, beliefs and general values are shaped, regulated and controlled by constraints that may be described by one of five basic archetypes:

hierarchy, egalitarianism, fatalism, individualism *and* *autonomy*, typified respectively by the submitting caste member, the fundamentalist sectist, the ineffectual fatalist, the freedom-loving entrepreneur *and the uninvolved hermit*.

When looking over studies in cultural theory, one will consistently find that most only treat of the first four classes, as cultural theory defines the hermit with "non-participation." The fact that, within this model, the hermit is equated with autonomy AND non-participation is significant in understanding the process of development we have been attempting to describe. The 'man of earth' and the 'lover' are both participating figures in the cultural model whereas the Hermit 'giveth of his light only unto men.'

If one wants to stop our fellow men one must always be outside the circle that presses them. That way one can always direct the pressure. (Castaneda)

In the first part of his book, Journey to Ixtlan, Castaneda spends a considerable effort describing techniques for 'battling self-importance' which itself is but a necessary step



for “stopping the world.” By this, he defines *‘the world’* as a description that is pounded into us from the time that we are born.

Everyone who comes into contact with a child is a teacher who incessantly describes the world to him, until the moment when the child is capable of perceiving the world as it is described. ...we have no memory of that portentous moment, simply because none of us could possibly have had any point of reference to compare it to anything else. ...The idea that the perceptual interpretations that make up the world have a flow is congruous with the fact that they run uninterruptedly and are rarely, if ever, open to question. In fact, the reality of the world we know is so taken for granted that the basic premise of sorcery, that our reality is merely one of many descriptions, could hardly be taken as a serious proposition.

Castaneda then goes on to define ‘stopping the world’ as

an appropriate rendition of certain states of awareness in which the reality of everyday life is altered because the flow of interpretation, which ordinarily runs uninterruptedly, has been stopped by a set of circumstances alien to that flow.

As we can see, this idea is perfectly compatible with Crowley’s own comment in *Magick Without Tears*: “the Universe itself is not, and cannot be, anything but an arrangement of symbolic characters!” (Crowley, *Tears*, p. 40)

In order for the continual information that informs the descriptive that we call ‘the world’ to be ‘alien to that flow,’ it must come from a source beyond the narrative flow it seeks to disrupt. This source would be the Hermit, and hence the equation between non-participation and autonomy. The autonomy to direct the pressure of a circle of activity comes from being outside of that circle and NOT through participation within it, which constrains the participants to the qualities and limitations that define the circle of activity itself. In his novel *Moonchild*, Crowley’s character “Simon Iff” represents this quality and this type of active or intended non-action. Castaneda defines this quality of intended non-participation as “not-doing” and considers it to be a very formidable practice in the sorcerer’s world.



The hermit is a Gnani or Raja Yogi. He gives only of his light unto men. Those who understand what this means are either Hermits or on their way to becoming Hermits. Those who do not understand what it means are better off without further information. Should they seek it, however, let them study (Libri 156, 370 and 418.)

In the above passage Crowley gives us, not only a great deal of information as to the nature of the Hermit via the comparison to an established and measurable tradition of yoga, but into the nature of the unfolding process of the three graduations in the Thelemic process. We have already been given the correlation of the 'man of earth' to karmic yoga, the lover to bhakti yoga, and the Hermit to BOTH Jnana and Raja Yoga.

Raja Yoga, which is the Royal Path, represents the *Summum Bonum* of the three forms illustrated: Karma, Bhakti, and Jnana. It is interdisciplinary and Jnana would represent the final of three distinguishable disciplines that create the field of total of possible action. Jnana yoga focuses on the idea of "right action" and is built on an understanding of the laws of existence and the awareness of a means to synchronize with them.

Therefore we can postulate that the Hermit is the interdisciplinary factor as well as the final realization or graduation in the Thelemic process. It represents a natural and organic progression that begins with our dealing with the material issues of existence as well as our neurological relationship with 'reality,.' From this the aspiration is formulated as devotion or adherence to an unfolding natural, though individually unique, order of being and finalizes as a withdrawal from the field of direct interaction in favor of a contemplative non-action, which itself is the final definition of the periphery of a circle of action. If it is the final realization or unfoldment it is also present from the very beginning, presenting its form as Atu O (the Fool), The 'man of earth' is embraced in the ideas of the 'The Fool' 'The Magician', and 'The Emperor' while the Lover is represented by the Hierophant. All of these qualities are participatory.

In 2nd Chapter of *The Book of the Law* (v.16) it states: "I am the Empress & the Hierophant. Thus eleven, as my bride is eleven." In my opinion, this gives an astounding analogue to what we have described in this essay. The Hierophant corresponds to the Lover ...and hence the descriptive use of 'my bride'.



eleven as my bride is eleven.

In addition to being the word equivalent to “11”, eleven may also signify the balance of ‘god’ or the universal principle by being read “el-even”. This becomes even more significant when looking at the original manuscript of *The Book of the Law*.

The ‘e’ of the first use of the word ‘eleven’ is quite distinct, whereas in the second use of the word ‘eleven’ it actually appears to be an ‘a’ ...in which case the passage would read “thus eleven as my bride is eleven.” There is no doubt that the two ‘E’s are distinctly different in shape. It also suggests the correspondence between the early ‘god signifiers’ ‘el’ and ‘al’. The word “even” means: “*Equal or identical in degree, extent, or amount*” and also: “*Exactly divisible by 2*” or “*Characterized or indicated by a number exactly divisible by 2.*” The Empress corresponds to the Hebrew letter “Daleth” which has a numerical value of 4 (or 2 X 2) and the Hierophant corresponds to the Hebrew letter “Vau” which has a numerical value of 6 (or 3 X 2.) The two added together produce 10 (which is 5 X 2 ...the Hierophant is Atu V). Perhaps of a deeper significance is the “10” being composed of the “1” which is the phallus and the active principle and the “0” which is the womb and the potentiality.

In the 2nd Chapter it is the perspective of Hadit that is given, and based on this descriptive “the bride” would be Nuit. [II: 2: “*I, Hadit, am the complement of Nu, my bride.*”]

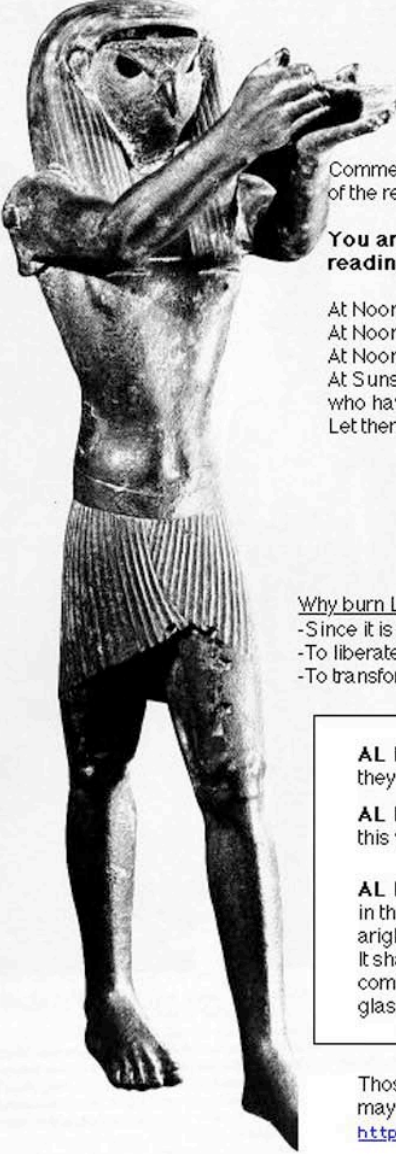
The mystic marriage of “motion” and “being” which brings about the universe or manifest consciousness, as well as the process and nature of the manifestation of that consciousness is the constant theme of *The Book of the Law*, and the three delineations of the Thelemite site three possible levels of participation in that manifestation, two which are active levels of participation and the third which is active ‘non-participation.’

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Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law

Announcing;
The Great 220 Conflagration of Anno IVIXII,
E.V. 2004

Commencing upon the three days of the Centennial of the reception of Liber Al Vel Legis, The "Book of the Law";

You are invited to participate in a world wide synchronized reading, and Climactic Book Burning.

At Noon on April 8th, 2004, Chapter one will be read .
At Noon on April 9th, 2004, Chapter two will be read .
At Noon on April 10th, 2004, Chapter three will be read .
At Sunset on April 10th, let there be public bonfires, whereupon those who have not already, may immolate their copies of Liber Al.
Let there be Feasting all three days, and yet one more.

How do we participate?
Arrange to secure the following:
-a venue for the reading to take place
-three readers (one for each chapter),
-a place where a fire may be safely built.

Why burn Liber AL after this reading?
-Since it is the first such reading, it is wise to do so, says the comment.
-To liberate oneself from dependency to any creed, including your own.
-To transform the Book of the Law into 'Sparks of the Intimate Fire'

AL I:10. "Let my servants be few and secret: they shall rule the many and the known."

AL II:10. "O prophet! thou hast ill will to learn this writing."

AL III:10. "Get the stélé of revealing itself; set it in thy secret temple- and that temple is already aright disposed-&it shall be your Kiblah forever. It shall not fade, but miraculous colour shall come back to it day after day. Close it in locked glass for a proof to the world."

Those interested in participating or helping to organize this event may contact: conflagrate418@yahoo.ca, or visit: <http://conflagrate.proboards27.com/index.cgi>

Love is the Law; Love under Will.



Buddhist Influence on Aleister Crowley

Dead Jellyfish

“Do what thou wilt is the whole of the Law, there is no Law beyond do what thou wilt.”

In examining the doctrines and teachings of the majority of modern occult traditions one finds themes relating to Aleister Crowley recurring quite frequently. These schools of Western esoteric practice bear very little in common with each other except for their common ties to Crowley. The Wiccan Rede “Do what thou wilt, but harm none” is an adaptation of Crowley’s law of Thelema “Do what thou wilt. Love is the law, love under will.” (Crowley, 1976, pg. 50) Dr. Michael Aquino’s Temple of Set (an offshoot of Anton LaVey’s Church of Satan) also has strong roots in the works of Crowley. Crowley’s principle ‘revelatory’ text, *The Book of the Law*, proclaimed the dawning of a new world age (The Aeon of Horus) in which Crowley was the Magus of



this new age. Aquino drew upon this idea when he formed the Temple of Set. The world age of Crowley, in the Setian worldview, lasted until the Equinox of the common year 1966, when HarWer and Set were fused as one composite being. And so commenced the time of Set-HarWer - known as the Age of Satan - which was to bridge the expiring Aeon of HarWer and the forthcoming Aeon of Xeper. (Aquino) Thus, we can clearly see that Crowley’s work has had a very wide range of influence of both left and right hand paths.

One could easily devote one’s life to tracing Crowley’s influence on various different magical lodges and other organizations, but that is not my intent here. A more interesting, and perhaps more valuable task would be to flush out what it was that

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influenced Crowley himself. A quick look at any of his material soon shows that Crowley was quite an eclectic fellow and borrowed ideas and imagery from many different traditions. Crowley's title of Ankh-F-N-Khonsu, and use of the Gods Horus, Hadit, and Nuit within *The Book of the Law* show his use of Egyptian mythology and religion. The title of the Beast that he also uses for himself within *The Book of the Law* shows the impact that Christian apocalyptic ideology has had on him.

Of the many different forms of religion that have influenced Crowley, Buddhism would probably be one of the last of which most people would think of. *The Book of the Law* does not speak very kindly of Buddhism: "With my [the Egyptian God Horus] claws I tear out the flesh of the Indian and the Buddhist, Mongol and Din." (Crowley, 1976, pg. 47) I intend to show, however, that this statement is quite misleading and that Crowley did indeed have a fair amount of Buddhist influence in his work. Unfortunately Crowley was quite prolific in his writing and a close, scrutinizing exegesis of his works is certainly out of the question for an essay of such a small size. Instead we shall examine some of his more obscure writings which seem to have been swept under the rug, and examining his most important book: *The Book of the Law*. If we can show that *The Book of the Law* had significant Buddhist influence then one can confidently say that all of Crowley's work has at least some Buddhist influence since *The Book of the Law* provides the groundwork for the majority of the rest of his writing.

Most of Crowley's views on Buddhism are laid out for us clearly in his essay *Science and Buddhism*. The goal of Crowley's essay is to compare modern scientific conceptions with Buddhism and show that Buddhism is a 'scientific religion'. The fact that Crowley chose such a goal for his paper is not surprising at all considering the era in which he lived in. A large momentum of movements comparing science and religion had been built by the time that Crowley had written this essay (1903). Key to this scientific religion movement was Paul Carus (b. 1852). Carus' goal was to propound, develop, and establish the Religion of Science... In order to establish the Religion of Science it is by no means necessary to abolish the old religions, but only to purify them and develop their higher possibilities, so that their mythologies shall be changed into strictly scientific conceptions. It is intended to preserve of the old religions all that is true and good, but to purify their faith by rejecting superstitions and irrational elements, and to discard, unrelentingly, their errors. (Sharf, pg. 14)

Carus' search for scientific religious truth eventually lead him to Buddhism which he saw as being the religious tradition that was best representative of his Religion of Science. The influence of Carus on Crowley is unmistakable since we find Crowley immediately stating that he does not want to take literal interpretations of obviously fictional passages, "but when Buddhism condescends to be vulgarly scientific; to



observe, to classify, to think; I conceive we may take the matter seriously, and accord a reasonable investigation to its assertions.” (Crowley, 1906, pg. 245)

Crowley begins his scientific examination of Buddhism with the Four Noble Truths. The first truth is that existence is sorrow. Crowley claims that the same truth is stated by Huxley in *Evolution and Ethics*, and that Huxley also states that the amount of pain that a creature endures varies with the degree of consciousness of the being. The second Noble Truth is that the cause of suffering is desire. Here, Crowley’s comparison of science and Buddhism becomes a little preposterous. He includes under the category of suffering the tendency of two molecules of hydrogen and chlorine to combine under certain conditions. He reasons that if death is painful to himself that it is also so for a molecule. The existence of desire is unpleasant - particularly the desire to continue to exist. The third truth is that the cessation of desire is the cessation of sorrow. This is of course is a simple logical inference from the second truth and needs no further explanation. The final truth is that there is a method of realizing the third truth, which is the eightfold path. As science progresses it tries to increase the happiness in our lives, and decrease the amount of suffering and thus it has similar goals to Buddhism.

In comparing Buddhist cosmology and science Crowley tries to show that the law of karma is identical to the law of causation. He gives the example “if I place a stone on the roof of a house, it is sure to fall sooner or later; i.e. as soon as the conditions permit.” (Crowley, 1906, pg. 249)

The next area of Buddhist cosmology that Crowley looks at are the three characteristics, which are change (anikka), sorrow (dukkha), absence of an Ego (anatta). To explain anikka Crowley once again refers us to Huxley who claims that what we perceive to be at rest is really unperceived activity, and “in every part, at every moment, the state of the cosmos is the expression of a transitory adjustment of contending forces, a scene of strife, in which all the combatants fall in turn.” (Crowley, 1906, pg. 246) Crowley utilizes the arguments of George Berkeley (“matter is immaterial”) to do away with Hindu ideas of a changeless, and perfect atman. The arguments of David Hume are added to those of Berkeley, doing away with the mind as well - since we don’t really have any proof for the existence of one’s own ego, except for the circular Cartesian “I am” argument which is no proof at all. Crowley with an example makes this more clear. (Crowley, 1906, pg. 247) The ordinary person makes the claim, “I lift my arm.” The Buddhist instead states, “There is a lifting of an arm.” This is known to the Buddhist through sensation and consequently our earlier statement becomes, “There is a sensation of the lifting of an arm.” The sensation is perceived by the Buddhist and now we have, “There is a perception of a sensation of the lifting of an arm.” The perception is caused by the inherent tendency to perceive we have, “There is a tendency to perceive the



sensation of the lifting of an arm.” The last step we are able to make is to the consciousness of the tendency, and our final claim is, “There is a consciousness of a tendency to perceive the sensation of a lifting of an arm.” It is not possible to go further back, because there is no reason to believe, without any evidence, that there is some unity behind all consciousness.

The three characteristics are further explained by Crowley in his own jataka tale entitled *The Three Characteristics*. The story is framed by a larger tale of Sakyamuni telling a jataka story to a group of arahats in modern India. Gautama’s tale begins with the weaver Suraj Ju and his wife Chandi who have a child Perdu’ R Abu. This name is significant since perdurabo was Crowley’s motto while he was a member of the Golden Dawn which he joined in 1898. Perdu’ R Abu grew up, built a house and had wives. He saw his wives grow old and saw that a change occurred, and that in his heart a change also occurred. He examined other things in the wilderness and determined that everything is doomed to change, is subject to sorrow, and lacks any Ego.

Jehjaour, an evil magician, saw Perdu’ R Abu in his crystal ball, and realized that Abu was not far away from enlightenment and upon Abu’s arahatship Jehjaour would be destroyed. The name of Jehjaour is also significant because Iehi Aour (“Let there be light”) is the magical motto that Allan MacGregor Bennett took on for himself, and thus his role as the villain in this Jataka is indicative of Crowley’s falling away from the Golden Dawn. Jehjaour appealed to many different Deities for help to no avail. Eventually, though, he did procure the favour of Ganesha who was upset that Perdu’ R Abu had abandoned Him claiming that the Gods are just as mortal as humans. Ganesha told Jehjaour that in only seven rebirths Abu will cease to be reborn, and that they must ensure that each of Abu’s rebirths are as long as possible.

First Perdu’ R Abu is reincarnated as an elephant - the longest living of the beasts. This perceptive elephant took notice of the changes of the seasons, saw the forest as being full of sorrow, and “nobody need preach to him the absence of an ego, for the brutes have had more sense than to ever imagine there was one.” (Crowley, 1906, pg. 227) The elephant spent his days seated in meditation and took no notice at all when Ganesha manifested His divine form before him. When the elephant was only seventeen he was killed by some bacteria.

Next Ganesha reincarnated Abu as a parrot that is supposed to live for five hundred years. The parrot lived merrily in the forest and engaged in the ordinary passions. One day a Tibetan monk entered the forest and chanted, “Aum Mani Padme Hum.” The parrot mimicked the Lama, practiced the mantra every day, and realized the three characteristics. Eventually the parrot became the pet of an elderly lady who soon



tired of its continuous chanting and had its neck wrung. The poor parrot was only eight years old.

Ganesha was infuriated at being foiled again and this time made Abu be reborn as a Nat (an elemental spirit) that would live ten thousand years. The family of Nats lived in the hollow of a tree, and one day a bhikkhu came and made his home in the same tree. The British Government learned of the Bhikkhu living in the tree and that he received offerings from the villagers every day. The young Nat overheard the government's plans of evicting the monk, and cutting down the tree. From the government's plans the Nat learned of sorrow, impermanence, and insubstantiality. The Bhikkhu was evicted, the tree chopped down, and the family of Nats perished (these events are very similar to Genesis 3). Abu the Nat had only reached the age of three.

Ganesha made the next incarnation of Abu be a flute-girl before Indra's throne, thus dooming Abu to live for one hundred thousand years. Abu was the prettiest of Indra's flute-girls and played the sweetest songs on her flute. One day while she was playing she realized the four Noble Truths. Shortly after a mosquito flew into her flute and all that came out was buzzing. Indra was furious and slew her on the spot. She was only eight months old.

Indra was for guillotined for this heinous murder and Ganesha ensured that Perdu' R Abu received the position. As Indra was entertaining Lady Bhavani one day, His mind wandered and He perceived a bank and saw within it sorrow, impermanence, and of course lack of Ego in the bankers. Lady Bhavani was enraged by Indra not paying attention to her and swallowed him whole. Indra had lived only seven days.

Jehjaour was very worried at this point for Perdu' R Abu was not far off from arahatship. Ganesha set Jehjaour's mind at ease by having Abu reincarnated as Maha Brahma. Abu's only job as Brahma was to sustain the universe through meditation. He had read the Bible and understood the horrible results that would happen to humankind if a Deity decides to interfere. Brahma was confused, though, since he was supposed to be above all change, yet only an hour ago he was Indra. As he was pondering this, he saw a holy man meditating under a Bo-tree. Brahma went before Sakyamuni and asked to be enlightened. He wanted to know how he had risen from change and death to the state of being unchangeable. Gautama explained to Brahma that everything - including Brahma - has the three characteristics of suffering, change, and insubstantiality. Someone can "define a quirk as a two-sided triangle ... but that does not prove the actual existence of any such oxymoron." (Crowley, 1906, pg. 230) Likewise, defining Brahma as eternal and unchangeable does not mean that He really is so. Shortly after, Huxlananda Swami (Thomas Henry Huxley) published a paper that shocked Brahma and caused his death at only six days old.



The death of Brahma enraged Jehjaour so much that his hate engulfed him and caused both himself and Mara to die and be reborn in Avici Hell to suffer the worst fate possible - being reborn as a clergyman of the Church of England. Perdu' R Abu on the other hand was reborn to Western parents, and was there listening to the Buddha's jataka tale. This man was Brother Abhavananda ("Bliss-of-non-existence" one of Crowley's Eastern names). The Buddha asked him what the predicate of all existing things is and Abhavananda replied with the three characteristics. The Buddha then declared Perdu' R Abu an Arahant and explained that he was the bacteria, the old lady, the British government, the mosquito, Bhavani, and Huxlananda Swami that caused the death of Abu in each life.

This tale is interesting since it shows Perdu' R Abu actually working against the normal system of things and he obtains greater and greater ability at realizing truth the higher up he goes in the forms of rebirth. Normally a human rebirth is most desirable and someone in the position of Maha Brahma would never have a chance at realizing the three characteristics.

The next work of Aleister Crowley that we shall investigate is his *Essay in Ontology* in which he attempts to reconcile all the three major religious traditions (Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity) using mathematics instead of mysticism. It is interesting to note, however, that in the end of his paper he reverts back to mysticism, and applauds Buddhism as the only spiritual path of any significant importance. He begins his attempt at answering the metaphysical question of creation by examining the problem of the coexistence of infinite and finite beings. He represents this coexistence as a mathematical equation:

$x = G + S + M$ (x - the purpose of the universe, G - God, S - Satan, M - humankind)

Therefore, one could easily express M as the resultant of G, S, and -x. If, however, God is infinite then the other factors cannot possibly affect it and thus Satan, humankind, and the purpose of the universe drop out of the picture. The very definition of God as infinite denies the existence and importance of humankind implicitly. If we instead define God as finite then we have obliterated the usual Christian reasons for worship and there would be no reason for worshipping G over S since either could be considered supreme. As a result of this problem, Crowley decides to define God as a finite being. This, of course, is an idea that is very compatible with Buddhism which does not see the Gods as infinite, or as being the ultimate creators of the universe.

If an infinitely powerful Deity did not create the universe then we are left with the problem of how the universe came into being, and how space and matter came to be. Crowley sums up the Buddhist teaching on this matter as the following:



Whence whither, why, we know not; but we do know that we are here, that we dislike being here, that there is a way out of the whole loathsome affair - let us make haste and take it! (Crowley, 1906, pg. 236)

Crowley considers this response of Buddhism to be inadequate and instead wants to “assert the absoluteness of the Qabalistic zero.” (Crowley, 1906, pg. 236) If we consider space to be infinite, as the physicists do, then we are left with two possibilities as to the nature of matter and the universe. Either matter fills space completely and thus is infinitely great, or if not then we must say that matter is infinitely small. Whether the universe is one billion light years across or is only three meters in diameter is irrelevant since either way it is infinitely small and in effect nothing. If on the other hand matter is infinite then either God is crowded out of the picture or this infinite matter is God Her/Himself. If God is infinite matter itself then we are presented with the problem of “why should an infinite Ego fill a nonexistent body with imaginary food cooked in thought over an illusionary fire by a cook that is not there?”

Thus, Crowley chose to claim that matter is finite, then investigates whether or not we can claim that the universe began with nothing. He defines ‘zero’ as being the absence of extension in any of the categories, and no positive proposition is valid regarding nothingness. If we were to suppose that time, space, being, heaviness, and hunger are the only categories then we could express a man x as $x^{t+s+b+h+h}$. If this man eats then he is longer extended into the category of hunger. If you isolate this poor man and cut him off from time and gravity then you’d be left with x^{s+b} . Should this man cease to occupy space and to exist then the result would be x^0 which equals 1. Thus, whatever x is if it can be raised to the power of zero then the result is unity and the x factor itself is eliminated. If there was a zero before the existence of things then the zero could not have been extended in any of the categories because there would not have existed any categories for it to be extended into. This nothingness extended in no categories can be expressed as 0^0 . Crowley uses the following equation to illustrate the transformation of nothingness into a finite universe:

$$0^0 = 0^{0^1} = \frac{0^1}{0^1} [\text{multiply by } 1 = \frac{n}{n}]$$

$$\text{Then } \frac{0^1}{n} \square \frac{n}{0^1} = 0 \square$$

The multiplication of the infinitely great by the infinitely small results in an unknown finite number extended into an unknown number of categories. Thus, because



of mere chance this complicated system of things came out of nothing. We should not misinterpret this as meaning that this nothingness existed for “the idea of existence was just as much unformulated as that of toasted cheese.” (Crowley, 1906, pg. 237) We should also not think of this nothingness as a void occupying infinite space since that would be extending our zero into the category of space.

In *The Book of the Law* this original nothingness is referred to as Nuit. Nuit is the Egyptian Goddess of the sky, and was the wife of Seb and the mother of Osiris, Isis, Set, and Nephthys. She represented “the feminine principle which was active at the creation of the universe.” (Budge, pg. 120) To Crowley, Nuit was the sum total of all potential outcomes and possibilities out of which any individual substance was created. We find Crowley crying out to Nuit, “O Nuit, continuous one of Heaven, let it be ever thus; that men speak not of Thee as One but as None; and let them speak not of thee at all, since thou art continuous!” (Crowley, 1976, pg. 21) The act of the primordial nothing begetting the universe is described in the Law as “None, breathed the light, faint & faery, of the stars, and two.” (Crowley, 1976, pg. 22) Here the ‘light, faint & faery’ is referring to the One (Hindu Brahman, Gnostic Pleroma, Taoist Chi) and the two refers to the dualities of masculine/feminine, good/evil, God/Demon, Yin and Yang. This account of creation is strikingly similar to the one given in chapter 42 of the Tao-Te Ching:

The Way gave birth to the One;

The One gave birth to the Two. (Henricks, pg. 11)

What is the end result of all this? It is that we are stuck here in a finite universe occupied by a myriad of finite beings all battling against one another and “the war of the contending forces as they grind themselves down to the final resultant must cause endless agony.” Thus, through contemplation of this system of things Aleister Crowley came to realize the first noble truth. Once one has realized the necessity of suffering the next step is to figure out a method for the cessation of suffering. In theory one could wait until the finite universe gets reabsorbed back into the original nothingness out of which the universe was created. Unfortunately the category of causality has been formed and has already accumulated sufficient momentum that the reassimilation of the universe into the original cosmic nothing is nearly impossible.

Crowley believes that the goal of the majority of religions is the annihilation of the self by dissolving one’s self into an infinite deity. Buddhism, however, aims at extinction period. Thus, the Hindu goal of merging into Brahman is illusionary, but the practices to arrive there may be useful at least in the early stages. Crowley summarizes the task of the Buddhist as

He must plunge every particle of his being into one idea: right views, aspirations, word, deed, life, willpower, meditation, rapture, such are the stages of his liberation,



which resolves itself into a struggle against the laws of causality. He cannot prevent past causes from taking effect, but he can prevent present causes from having any future result. (Crowley, 1906, pg. 240)

To still present causes from having future results Crowley advocates meditation which he defines as the absolute restraint of the mind to the contemplation of a single object. To Crowley mindfulness must be achieved prior to meditation. For a person to become mindful she or he must first have iron willpower. Crowley perceives magical ceremony to have entirely identical ends as meditation, and is a magnificent rocket ship to Nirvana. Through sensation, action, and though the magician indicates the single goal of the ritual.

Although *The Book of the Law* may talk about ripping the flesh off of the Buddhist, it does contain in it another reference to Buddhism that is not negative at all. In the third chapter of *The Book of the Law* Crowley says, “Choose ye an island! Fortify it!” (Crowley, 1976, pg. 39) This seems to be a reference to the section of the *Dhammapada* that Crowley translates as, “Let the wise man an island build against the fatal current strong.” (Crowley, 1976, pg. 46) Juan Mascaro translates the same passage as, “The wise man who by watchfulness conquers thoughtlessness is as one free from sorrows ascends the palace of wisdom and there, from its high terrace, sees those in sorrow below; even as a wise strong man on the holy mountain might behold the many unwise far down below on the plain.” (Mascaro, pgs. 38-39) It is clear that Crowley has departed from regular translations of the *Dhammapada* with this one particular line, and I believe *The Book of the Law* is referring to this line of the *Dhammapada*. Normally this statement is interpreted as one of paranoia and violence which it is commonly interpreted as - especially with the description of Horus as a “god of War and Vengeance.” (Crowley, 1906, pg. 39) just above the line regarding the island. However, if one interprets this ‘island’ as one’s own mind, and protecting it to mean meditating and keeping out false thoughts then this would indeed be a very Buddhist concept. This combined with the prevalent theme of nothingness (as represented by Nuit) makes *The Book of the Law* a book that is very compatible with Buddhist philosophy. Crowley’s statement of tearing the flesh of the Buddhist is no less anti-Buddhist than the Ch’an monk who claims that the Buddha is a stick of dung.



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Ecumenical Thelema

Ron Adams

Part One in a series of Four parts.

“Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law”

“The Method of Science. The Aim of Religion.”

These are two phrases that express the basic meaning of Thelema.

The intent of this discussion is to reveal to the world what the basics of Thelema are. No easy task. We can point to Thelemic orders, but will that solve the problem? Contemplating naming Thelemic organizations and beliefs become a sticky proposition since some orders are secretive, others are guarded, and no one appears to see ‘eye to eye’. There are Thelemic groups who would protest being spoken for, defined or mentioned and still others who would be offended by not being mentioned. Always the problem of misquoting some Thelemic authority. A paradox indeed. Especially when one main Thelemic order has been having court case over court case about who owns the rights to the Book of the Law and other Thelemic Holy Books that Aleister Crowley wrote.



Brad Twymen

That would be like the Catholic Church claiming to own the Bible. As one title of Aleister Crowley’s comments on *The Book of the Law* states: “The Law is For All.”

Perhaps Crowley summed it up in his quote above: “The Method of Science. The Aim of Religion” when he began calling his Thelemic writings Scientific Illuminism. Or maybe Mr. Crowley hid the meaning of Thelema in his “Book of Lies” when he wrote ‘?’ ‘!’, ‘The Hunchback and the Soldier.’ If you are seeking Thelemic mentors and they all seem to be hiding out somewhere, don’t give up the search. There are a few of them out there. Intuitively, I believe Thelema heralds a philosophy about balance and equality in the Universe; that there are no secrets anymore, at least no unobtainable ones. This is a

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time and age where many things are being revealed at an accelerated pace. And if we use our rational and intuitive powers, we can tap in to more. It is kind of like the art of reading between the lines.

Sam Webster's essay on Thelema strikes me as a pure attempt to lay out the basics in a general, non-dogmatic way, and I am inspired by this to write Ecumenical Thelema. His essay is basic, simple and to the point, less dogmatic than most. (*Analyzing Liber AL vel Legis* <http://www.hermetic.com/220/webster-comment.html>)

And then there is the yahoo egroup Holy Cram, a group of Thelemites that got together and did the forbidden thing, they discussed *The Book of the Law*. The group has finished its work, and the site is up on Yahoo for all to see.

Then there is Aleister Crowley's long comment on *The Book of the Law*, which he finally completed towards the end of his life.

Ecumenical literally means "of the world." Ecumenical movements in Christianity are an attempt to bridge the barriers and gaps of the various offshoots of Christianity: Catholic, Protestant, Lutheran, Anglican, Baptist, Pentecostal, Christian Science, and Mormons, the Latter Day Saints.

Thelema is a Greek word that translates "True Will." Besides this, there appears to be less bridging between Thelemic sects than there are with Christian counterparts. There are many ego wills, and not much focus on which Will is pure or true. In many Thelemic groups there seems to be so much in-house fighting and controversy on just exactly what Thelema means and which sect has the official version. There is even one who claims *Liber AL vel Legis* was written on April 1st, 1904, and not April 8, 9 and 10th, 1904.

This is because everyone is entitled to their own opinion and beliefs in the matter of 'do what thou wilt.' Aleister Crowley even went so far as to warn people about discussing *The Book of the Law*, with his short comment at the end of it, for fear, perhaps too many opinions and dogma would cloud the fledgling movement. Though Thelemic philosophy goes back farther than Crowley and the writing of *The Book of the Law*, April 8, 9 and 10th, 1904 in Cairo, Egypt. That original short comment was never included in the first publications of *Liber AL*, especially in the *Equinox*. It was until Crowley and company were kicked out of Sicily, and feeling like pestilence themselves, and after much heated arguing with Norman Mudd, did Crowley pen the short comment about not discussing the Book, and referring only to his, Crowley's authority in the matter. This was right before 1925. That is a difference of about twenty years. Aleister Crowley also said there were other Holy Books channeled by Aiwaz beside *Liber AL vel Legis*.

Francois Rabelais (1494-1553), whose 'Abbey of Thelema' in his book "Gargantua and Pantagrue" had a similar slogan, and St. Augustine (who wrote, "Love,



and do what thou wilt”), Sir Francis Dashwood, who revived the Rabelais “Abbey of Thelema” and its delightful law in the grounds of his country residence not far from London. John Wilkes, a fiery radical parliamentarian, was one of his chief and most active members. This Abbey is now a local tourist attraction, and also in Tantric tradition. And yet on the 100th anniversary of the channeling from a disembodied spirit of higher intelligence, named Aiwaz, to Aleister Crowley, one could hope some progress was being made in building Thelemic bridges. Crowley warned against discussing the book, not against discussing the philosophy of True Will.

Perhaps modern day terms like “thinking outside the box” can be applied here to what Thelema means.

The BoTL contains 3 chapters devoted to three Thelemic Godforms: Nuit, Hadit and Ra Hoor Khuit.

Nuit, ancient Egyptian Goddess Nut, Goddess of the Night Sky was like the Star Map. She is the territory, the map, the potential; the “measure and the movement” of the cosmos, as Aleister Crowley puts it in his official comment and writings on *Liber Al vel Legis*.

Had, or Hadit, has no ancient Egyptian Godform, some speculate the closest is AN, the God of “Going”, the Path of the Sun, An Ra. Interestingly enough the Koran calls its “chapters” Hadiths, and if I am not mistaken they are ‘sung’.

For our paper Had means “point”. He is the Focus. You have the map and the territory and need a point of focus to get anywhere. I trust this analogy of Had and Nuit will suffice to the laymen.

Ra Hoor Khuit is a form of the Egyptian Godform Horus. He is the Hawk Headed Lord of Force and Fire. For many he represents the “Final Authority” of what reality was/is/becoming. For our analogy of the map and the focus, RHK represent ‘arriving at the destination’.

Much simpler than this is the idea of holistic thought. No one science, religion or philosophy holds the ultimate answer. It is a blend of polarities that make the whole. I am fascinated with the appearance of the English word “element” which can be kind of seen in the word Thelema, symbolized to me by the letters “elema”. As in science *The Book of the Law* tells of a formula. The blending of elements to create something new. This is another aspect of Nu, Had and Ra Hoor Khuit. Sort of an alchemical formula.

Element 93, Neptunium, so named by P. Abelson, 1913, a silvery, radioactive chemical element of the actinide series, produced by irradiating uranium atoms with neutrinos; mentioning this shows a pattern of what Carl Jung calls synchronicity with the



number 93 being used to represent the word “Thelema” in Greek numerology. To me, Jung’s idea of the SELF are very similar to True Will.

After Crowley declared the ‘word of the Aeon’ in 1904, Atomic power was discovered, Quantum Physics entered the world stage and eventually the New Age ushering in an explosion of new ideas blended with ancient shamanic traditions. As the Atomic bomb exploded in the Bikini Atol, LDS and Timothy Leary allowed the Human mind to implode in the journey of the soul.

“The Khabs is in the Khu, not the Khu in the Khabs. Worship then the Khabs, and behold my light shed over you!” *Liber Al vel Legis* Chapter 1, verses 8 and 9. Khabs, or Khat, is an Egyptian term meaning ‘the Body’ and Khu translates roughly to ‘Spirit’. In Mayan there is the word Ku, and also in Japanese. So basically this verse is saying: “The Body is in the Spirit, not the Spirit in the Body. Worship then the Body, and behold my light shed over you!” Opens the doors for the Tantric and Sex Magick interpretations of *The Book of the Law*.

Logic and intuition. Psychic healing and alleopathy. “Think Globally, Act Locally” to me can be considered as a Thelemic saying, of sorts. Economics tied to environmental wisdom and responsibility is another shifting area. Like the Tao of Physics, It is the Philosophy of Thelema that is growing at an exponential rate.

There is no way to bottom line what “Thelema” is. This is what makes creating an Ecumenical Thelema movement difficult, and also what might make it easy. Power and strength reside in Diversity. There is a New Age saying that ‘what one resist one gets’, or another way of saying it is ‘that which upsets you the most is your greatest teacher’. Though arguing over which direction the lock of hair on top of Crowley’s head curled is nonproductive. Why constantly reinvent the wheel? I believe we should be moving ahead with new discoveries of Thelema, exploring alternatives, and not stuck in the same old dogmatic tripe.

There are those who hold to the secrecy of their groups. Others believe sex magick is the key to Thelema, using another formula of Nuit-Had-Ra Hoor Khuit. There are those who follow the way of the Spiritual Warrior, fighting the battle of the ‘enemy within’ and the dark night of the soul. Still others who hold to the Goddess aspect; give everything to Nu Babalon, since she is everything and all things spring forth and return to her. “Do what thou wilt and harm none”.

And others hold to the power of ritual and the intent and focus of the Magician. And sure enough many formulas of magick abound.

There are those Thelemites who embrace magick and toss out mysticism. There are other camps who feel mysticism is the whole key to magick. There is the known and the unknown, the mystery and the rational, there is the power of dreams, healing and



mystery of chaos, and even the beauty of chaos. Doing MAAT is just as important as doing Magick to other groups.

My favorite, one I am partial too since I am promoting it, is the *The Book of the Law* proclaims the Law of Time, natural order, immortality of the soul, shattering the imposed order of the machine age and the clock, much like the 13 Moon Peace Movement, Mayan calendar suggests and bringing us back to a more natural state and order of trusting our own inner powers and potential. Though a lot of 13 Moon Peace Movement people are anti-technology, I lean towards the balance of nature and technology.

Whatever your belief in Thelema, your cup of tea, I can only hope people will continue to make an effort to build bridges. Despite our differences, there is great potential to heal, and much magick, and even more mysticism.

There can be Christian Thelemites, Buddhist Thelemites, Chaos Magickians, Islamic Thelemites, Agnostic Thelemites, Mayan Thelemites, Scientific Thelemites, Wiccan Thelemites, Pagan Thelemites, Asatru Thelemites, you name it, any combination under the sun. And the Philosophy of Thelema allows that wide variety of philosophy and belief. Bridging the gap between science and spirituality.

May Ra Hoor Khuit help you with each opportunity and decision, in finding this bridge. May he make swift you strength and courage.

I will close with my two solutions to the cryptic verse 76, Chapter 2, *Liber Al vel Legis*. Every Thelemite has got one, a favorite interpretation or two. Mine are actually the same interpretation, tho the later modernized and updated. I used the New Aeon English Qabala numerology, applied by my unique formula. This actually helped inspire me to finally finish this paper, which has been a monumental challenge since July 2003.

“Aye! listen to the numbers and the words: 4 6 3 8 A B K 2 4 A L G M O R 3 Y X 24 89 R P S T O V A L. What meaneth this, o prophet?”

Thou knowest not; nor shalt thou know ever. There cometh one to follow thee: he shall expound it.” *The Book of the Law* Chapter 1, verse 76.

First interpretation:

The Balance of Yin and Yang is in every Love Union. This is the alchemy and Magick of the Aeon, seeking the Philosopher’s Stone in Mystery; the ground of being. The masculine principle balances the mystical principle. Lust is the key to the Universe, to release this Will. We are submerged in the feminine, nurturing principle. This is why



we rebel from it like a fool, because the hidden mystical is too strong and overpowers the masculine strength and like a fool we run from what we seek and then we seek it even more, even tho we are In It. Liberate your wisdom and decide to embrace the feminine, for on the wheel of life this alone balances magick and mystical.

Second interpretation:

Heridity, Yin/Yang, is protected by the see-saw, the gamble of the sacred code. It is the focus, the focal point between force and fire, silence, where all the action is disguised. The Loner is the Fisher King, holder of all power. Mystery is in the ground of being. The protector principle holds the potential within this great mystery. Good looking matter, quarks and strange charm, are the means of travel, transportation that is so misunderstood as we run away from nurturing. Yahoos and Yagoths and scarey monsters at every turn divert us. Silence, as X marks the spot and the mystery of life gives the masculine protector of absolute power a kiss, as he waits to fold his cards and go home because he is so misunderstood. The daughter attracts him back into the game of life. Serpent fire activates his inner wisdom. Intrigue stalks us at ever turn. Mother is our victory. Mammy is cooking corn bread, as we focus on the great question, waiting for our appetite to reappear. Prophets and leaders can come from anywhere and anyone, male, female and in-between. The Dream of life is whole and complete.

The thing I want to point out about my two interpretations here is the formula:

$0 = 2$

People look to the 0 and speak of Zero point, Zen, and the Fool.

People look to the 2 and speak of duality, paradox, relationship, black and white, good and evil, etc.

How many look at the = ?



Equality, this is what I believe Thelema is ultimately about. Life, the elements of life, are not separate. We can't have life without death, good without evil, Love without fear. Life is about wholeness, equality, and the elements that go into manifesting it. Those elements are spoken of in *The Book of the Law*: Love and Will.

End of part One.

“Love is the law love under will”

written Sun in Aquarius, Moon in Aquarius

New Moon

Alpha Resonant 12 (Jan. 21. 2004 e.v.)

Red Galactic Skywalker

by Sunwolf

93,93/93

Babaloth's Raven

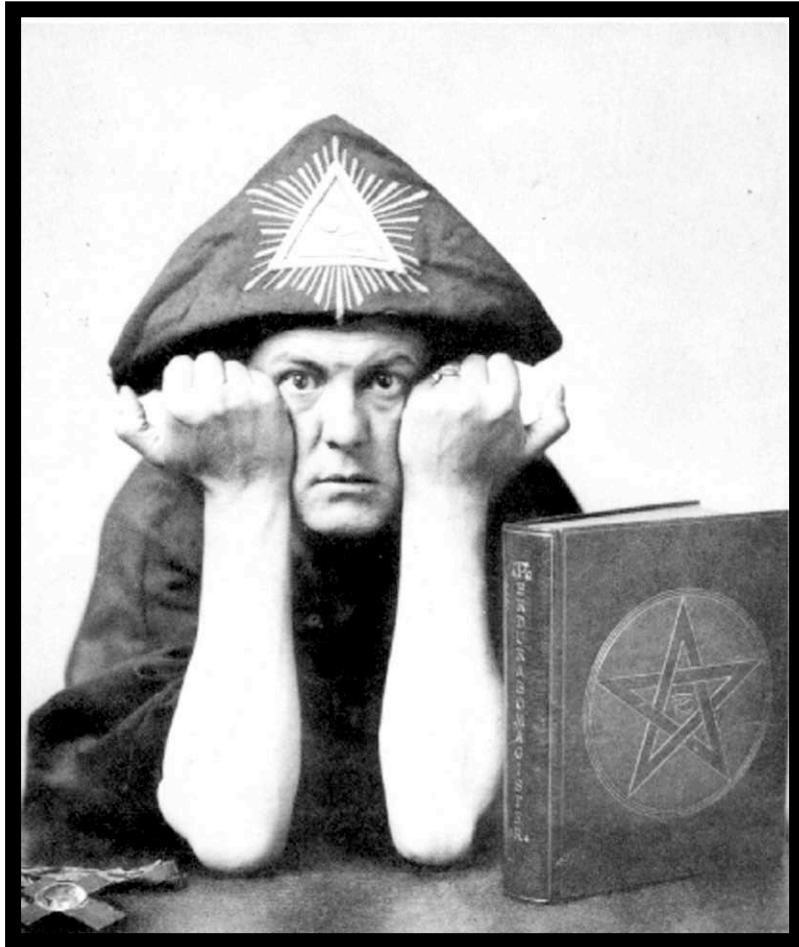
Thelema Dreamspell

<http://www.angelfire.com/zine2/majik/thelemadreamspell.html>

Editor's note:

This is the first installment in a series by Mr. Adams, excerpted from his book *Thelema Without Dogma* (forthcoming).





Sir Francis Dashwood

T. Emery Heath

Francis Dashwood was born in 1708 during the reign of Queen Anne. He was born the only son of English landed gentry. The young Dashwood was educated at Eton and was friends with William Pitt.

After his father's death in 1724, he inherited his father's title, the family wealth and ancestral estate at West Wycombe in Buckinghamshire. He traveled extensively in Europe and was exposed to the occult philosophies widespread among the continental elite during the 17th century.

He was particularly influenced by the writings of Francois Rabelais and his imaginative depiction of the Abbey of Thélèma. From this exposure and as a reaction to his Jacobite tutor, Dashwood developed an increasing disdain for Christianity.

In 1741 Dashwood was elected an MP. He began to collect around himself and impressive array of powerful politicians, artists and scholars. In 1751 he founded a society drawn from among these friends and associates. The group named after himself, was variously known as "The Order of the Friars of St. Francis of Wycombe," "The Knights of St. Francis" and, as it is most often known today, "The Hellfire Club."

The Order soon found a meeting place in a near-by 12th century Cistercian monastery "Medmenhan Abbey," which Dashwood leased for the purpose. He had his own craftsman and gardeners makeover the abbey and its grounds. He installed a large statue of the Egyptian God Harpocrates at one end of the hall—his finger raised to his lips in a traditional gesture of silence. Over the main entrance he had inscribed "Fay Ce Que Voudras," Latin of Rabelais's infamous motto. Due to their meeting place, the group also became known as the "Mad Monks of Medmenhan."

The Order's inner circle consisted of 12 "apostles" with Dashwood as their "Abbot." Members of the outer order were known simply as "monks." The elite of the most powerful were initiated as members: the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Queensbury, Sir John Stuart the Earl of Bute (Prime Minister), Sir John Montague the Earl of



Sandwich, George Bubb Dodington Lord Melcombe, poet Robert Lloyd, poet Charles Churchill, painter William Hogarth, M.P. John Tucker and Thomas Potter son of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The ‘clubhouse’ was lavishly appointed, with an extensive library of pornographic and occult books, a monks’ chapel and an exclusive area strictly reserved for the inner circle. The monks wore all white, while the Abbot wore a red cap trimmed in rabbit. The monks worshipped Venus and Bacchus in rites Dashwood allegedly based on the Eleusian mysteries of Ancient Greece.

Though widely cast as Satan worshippers, it is much more likely that Dashwood and his club were simply hedonistic debauchers—their rituals more satire than serious. The abbey hosted the elite men of the day, feasting, drinking and partaking of the prostitutes imported from London.

Through the influence of the members and favoritism from other monks, many members rose in political influence with the English government. Dashwood himself was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer after fellow club member, Sir John Stuart Earl of Bute was elected Prime Minister in 1762. In 1766, Dashwood was appointed Postmaster General by long-time friend William Pitt.

Benjamin Franklin was Dashwood’s guest in 1773. He and Dashwood collaborated on a revised book of common prayer, which became very popular in America.

Dashwood passed away 11 December 1781. He left his entire estate to his illegitimate daughter by his mistress the actress Frances Berry. He was buried beside his wife in St. Lawrence Church which he had transformed into a pagan chapel—a reconstruction of the Temple of the Sun at Palmyra near Damascus.

Source: “The Biography of Sir Francis Dashwood” by George Knowles (<http://www.controversial.com>)



A Satyre Against Mankind*by John Wilmot c. 1675*

Were I—who to my cost already am
 One of those strange, prodigious creatures, man—
 A spirit free to choose, for my own share,
 What case of flesh and blood I pleased to wear,
 I'd be a dog, a monkey, or a bear,
 Or anything but that vain animal
 Who is so proud of being rational.

The senses are too gross, and he'll contrive
 A sixth, to contradict the other five,
 And before certain instinct, will prefer
 Reason, which fifty times for one does err;
 Reason, an ignis fatuus in the mind,
 Which, leaving light of nature, sense, behind,
 Pathless and dangerous wandering ways it takes
 Through error's fenny bogs and thorny brakes;
 Whilst the misguided follower climbs with pain
 Mountains of whimses, heaped in his own brain;
 Stumbling from thought to thought, falls headlong down
 Into doubt's boundless sea, where, like to drown,
 Books bear him up a while, and make him try
 To swim with bladders of philosophy;
 In hopes still to o'ertake th' escaping light,-
 The vapor dances in his dazzling sight
 Till, spent, it leaves him to eternal night.
 Then old age and experience, hand in hand,
 Lead him to death, and make him understand,
 After a search so painful and so long,
 That all his life he has been in the wrong.
 Huddled in dirt the reasoning engine lies,
 Who was so proud, so witty, and so wise.



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Pride drew him in, as cheats their bubbles catch,
And made him venture to be made a wretch.
His wisdom did his happiness destroy,
Aiming to know that world he should enjoy.
And wit was his vain, frivolous pretence
Of pleasing others at his own expense,
For wits are treated just like common whores:
First they're enjoyed, and then kicked out of doors.
The pleasure past, a threatening doubt remains
That frights th' enjoyer with succeeding pains.
Women and men of wit are dangerous tools,
And ever fatal to admiring fools:
Pleasure allures, and when the fops escape,
'Tis not that they're belov'd, but fortunate,
And therefore what they fear at heart, they hate.

But now, methinks, some formal band and beard
Takes me to task. Come on, sir; I'm prepared.

'Then, by your favour, anything that's writ
Against this gibing, jingling knack called wit
Likes me abundantly; but you take care
Upon this point, not to be too severe.
Perhaps my muse were fitter for this part,
For I profess I can be very smart
On wit, which I abhor with all my heart.
I long to lash it in some sharp essay,
But your grand indiscretion bids me stay
And turns my tide of ink another way.

“What rage ferments in your degenerate mind
To make you rail at reason and mankind?
Blest, glorious man! to whom alone kind heaven
An everlasting soul has freely given,
Whom his great Maker took such care to make
That from himself he did the image take
And this fair frame in shining reason dressed



To dignify his nature above beast;
 Reason, by whose aspiring influence
 We take a flight beyond material sense,
 Dive into mysteries, then soaring pierce
 The flaming limits of the universe,
 Search heaven and hell, find out what's acted there,
 And give the world true grounds of hope and fear.”

Hold, mighty man, I cry, all this we know
 From the pathetic pen of Ingelo,
 From Patrick's Pilgrim, Sibbes's soliloquies,
 And 'tis this very reason I despise:
 This supernatural gift, that makes a mite
 Think he's the image of the infinite,
 Comparing his short life, void of all rest,
 To the eternal and the ever blest;
 This busy, puzzling stirrer-up of doubt
 That frames deep mysteries, then finds them out,
 Filling with frantic crowds of thinking fools
 Those reverend bedlams, colleges and schools;
 Borne on whose wings, each heavy sot can pierce
 The limits of the boundless universe;
 So charming ointments make an old witch fly
 And bear a crippled carcass through the sky.
 'Tis this exalted power, whose business lies
 In nonsense and impossibilities,
 This made a whimsical Philosopher
 Before the spacious world, his tub prefer,
 And we have modern cloistered coxcombs who
 Retire to think, 'cause they have nought to do.

But thoughts are given for action's government;
 Where action ceases, thought's impertinent.
 Our sphere of action is life's happiness,
 And he who thinks beyond, thinks like an ass.
 Thus, whilst against false reasoning I inveigh,
 I own right reason, which I would obey:

That reason which distinguishes by sense
And gives us rules of good and ill from thence,
That bounds desires with a reforming will
To keep them more in vigour, not to kill.
Your reason hinders, mine helps to enjoy,
Renewing appetites yours would destroy.
My reason is my friend, yours is a cheat;
Hunger calls out, my reason bids me eat;
Perversely, yours your appetite does mock:
This asks for food, that answers, "What's o'clock?"
This plain distinction, sir, your doubt secures:
'Tis not true reason I despise, but yours.

Thus I think reason righted, but for man,
I'll ne'er recant; defend him if you can.
For all his pride and his-philosophy,
'Tis evident beasts are, in their degree,
As wise at least, and better far than he.
Those creatures are the wisest who attain,
By surest means, the ends at which they aim.
If therefore Jowler finds and kills his hares
Better than Meres supplies committee chairs,
Though one's a statesman, th' other but a hound,
Jowler, in justice, would be wiser found.

You see how far man's wisdom here extends;
Look next if human nature makes amends:
Whose principles most generous are, and just,
And to whose morals you would sooner trust.
Be judge yourself, I'll bring it to the test:
Which is the basest creature, man or beast?
Birds feed on birds, beasts on each other prey,
But savage man alone does man betray.
Pressed by necessity, they kill for food;
Man undoes man to do himself no good.
With teeth and claws by nature armed, they hunt
Nature's allowance, to supply their want



But man, with smiles, embraces, friendship, praise,
 Inhumanly his fellow's life betrays;
 With voluntary pains works his distress,
 Not through necessity, but wantonness.

For hunger or for love they fight and tear,
 Whilst wretched man is still in arms for fear.
 For fear he arms, and is of arms afraid,
 By fear to fear successively betrayed;
 Base fear, the source whence his best passions came:
 His boasted honour, and his dear-bought fame;
 That lust of power, to which he's such a slave,
 And for the which alone he dares be brave;
 To which his various projects are designed;
 Which makes him generous, affable, and kind;
 For which he takes such pains to be thought wise,
 And screws his actions in a forced disguise,
 Leading a tedious life in misery
 Under laborious, mean hypocrisy.
 Look to the bottom of his vast design,
 Wherein man's wisdom, power, and glory join:
 The good he acts, the ill he does endure,
 'Tis all from fear, to make himself secure.
 Merely for safety, after fame we thirst,
 For all men would be cowards if they durst.

And honesty's against all common sense:
 Men must be knaves, 'tis in their own defense.
 Mankind's dishonest; if you think it fair
 Amongst known cheats to play upon the square,
 You'll be undone.
 Nor can weak truth your reputation save:
 The knaves will all agree to call you knave.
 Wronged shall he live, insulted o'er, oppressed,
 Who dares be less a villain than the rest.
 Thus, sir, you see what human nature craves:
 Most men are cowards, all men should be knaves.



The difference lies, as far as I can see,
Not in the thing itself, but the degree,
And all the subject matter of debate
Is only: Who's a knave of the first rate?

All this with indignation have I hurled
At the pretending part of the proud world,
Who, swollen with selfish vanity, devise
False freedoms, holy cheats, and formal lies
Over their fellow slaves to tyrannize.

But if in Court so just a man there be
(In Court a just man, yet unknown to me)
Who does his needful flattery direct,
Not to oppress and ruin, but protect
(Since flattery, which way soever laid,
Is still a tax on that unhappy trade);
If so upright a statesman you can find,
Whose passions bend to his unbiased mind,
Who does his arts and policies apply
To raise his country, not his family,
Nor, while his pride owned avarice withstands,
Receives close bribes through friends' corrupted hands

Is there a churchman who on God relies;
Whose life, his faith and doctrine justifies?
Not one blown up with vain prelatic pride,
Who, for reproof of sins, does man deride;
Whose envious heart makes preaching a pretence,
With his obstreperous, saucy eloquence,
To chide at kings, and rail at men of sense;
None of that sensual tribe whose talents lie
In avarice, pride, sloth, and gluttony;
Who hunt good livings, but abhor good lives;
Whose lust exalted to that height arrives
They act adultery with their own wives,
And ere a score of years completed be,



Can from the lofty pulpit proudly see
Half a large parish their own progeny;
Nor doting bishop who would be adored
For domineering at the council board,
A greater fop in business at fourscore,
Fonder of serious toys, affected more,
Than the gay, glittering fool at twenty proves
With all his noise, his tawdry clothes, and loves;

But a meek, humble man of honest sense,
Who, preaching peace, does practice continence;
Whose pious life's a proof he does believe
Mysterious truths, which no man can conceive.
If upon earth there dwell such God-like men,
I'll here recant my paradox to them,
Adore those shrines of virtue, homage pay,
And, with the rabble world, their laws obey.

If such there are, yet grant me this at least:
Man differs more from man, than man from beast.



The Mating Of The Midnight Mare

Anasya Atkins

Rolling trill of cricket song
Sweeps across the meadow long
Back and forth in brushing play
Blow waves of gilded grass and silvered hay
Silent are the humming wings
Of all the brightly donned day things
Color bleeds and drains away
Giving up to dark display
Another world ghostly still
Descends to drop hazy upon the hill
Fodder in haystacks heaped up high
Horse hair whisps knit eye to sky
Expectant floating night clouds part
Where bat wings beat and owl eyes dart

Fairies open folded faces
They neatén gowns of gossamer laces
Moonbow mirrors sparkling lights abound
Purple blue prisms swirl on the ground
Spider spins no more today
Nodding nectars sealed away
Magic spreads like moving fog
O'er upturned leaf and mossy log
Firefly, moth wing bent just so
Caught up in tattered green tree calico
Early spring eve where folds the frill
Of crocus flower and daffodill
Whispered sighs that dreams do hark
Fast asleep is singer meadow lark



Lightning cracks open barn door wide!
 Something comes through from other side!
 Rolling out all legs and mane
 From flowing fluffy cloud counterpane
 Cloud bursting shadows part the air
 Yo ho! Comes the Midnight Mare!
 Make way! This is another force
 Yield to the clamoring hoof beats of the horse
 Steel drum strung across the moon
 Bangs an eerie marching tune
 Out from burnished cirrus hanging low
 She comes from afar and canters slow
 From whence she comes is not known
 Dropped from sky come seed and bone

Reflected in satin icy pond
 A shaggy mane of stormy champagne blonde
 She is not made of red clay earth
 From galaxies she owes her birth
 Restless heart prances hot desire
 White coat streaming loins on fire
 Flanks perspiring, flushed and free
 Made for passion's reverie
 Haystacks lay now in disarray
 She has rolled hard in scattered hay
 Dusted in the kissed moonlight
 Her heart is set on sweet delight!
 And lo! she's kicked down her moonbeam gate!
 And nickers madly for a mate!

Effortless gait she steps up proud
 To chase a sudden shifting cloud
 Through ragged hills and tremors spent
 The Midnight Mare is heaven bent
 She whinnies nervous, paws the ground
 Ears erect—a sudden sound!
 She's off! rearing crashing hooves ignite



She needs no feather wings for flight
She's heard a call and gained the scent
And leaps o'er trees and firmament
In her blood is pent up lust
She throws out turf and star laced dust
With eyes a gleam and wind tossed brow
There is no stopping to her now!

She leaps o'er planetary rings
She races in Milky Way sport of kings
Away! She bucks in lofty race
There is no limit to her pace!
The moon has stretched to it's tallest height
And suddenly a great burst of light!
Far across the silver track
Stands a stallion ringed in black
A frozen statue in galactic yard
Heavy legged and muscled hard
Coat of gleaming ribboned coal
Shades of dark to his very soul
Black as black against the sky
Smoking nostrils and pinioned eye

Matted mane and tangled tail
Yonder lurks the Midnight Male
Taught and tense he holds his stare
Directly at the Midnight Mare
A study in power and grace
Standing foursquare, intelligent of face
He'll hold his ground, he will not budge
When she turns her back or offers nudge
He will not nip this tender meat
As his great heart skips a beat
Glaring white and crashing wild
Shy, he has grown suddenly mild
Fetlocks planted neat and straight
He knows that he has met his mate!



Cantering now has quickened her pace
 She circles him in careful chase
 She doesn't pay him any heed
 As swifter 'round him she does speed
 A galloping thing not quite sane
 She moans and roars like a hurricane
 Until all he sees is the length of her
 One big lasso in a spinning blur
 Mare whirling 'round stallion holding his last
 She has roped him in, she has run so fast!
 Become twine of roped-up animal need
 She's spun a tight hold on gallant ebony steed!
 He is tied, his movement ceased
 She has captured this surly beast!

There in space comes courtship clear
 Amongst quasars, shooting stars far and near
 'Round they go in heel and toe
 Checkerboard horseplay exploding to and fro
 The intercourse of black and white
 Good and evil merging tight
 Long legs kicking and teeth aflash
 Silver and gold in starglow crash
 Mare crying out in pain to her steed
 Both of them beginning to bleed
 Pleasure shaking them, writhing and grey
 Love nips send their differences away
 In ecstasy they are but one
 Gliding and floating toward a distant red sun

Some say there are places yet
 Where out in space spins this horse lariat
 Equine courtship in this place
 Of whirling tightening inward coils existing in space
 Where Midnight Mare and her male
 Run rings 'round each other, nose to tail



92 ■ Ashé Journal

And in this spot some call a black hole
Hides a wobbly secretive soul
Just a mere dappled fluff of a thing
Outlined by a black glowing ring
A pearl hooved awkward mottled foal
Undercoat smoking in celestial coal
Still wet, wobbly legged ready to bolt
Fleecy and speckled comes a new Midnight Colt!



**St. Serge & St. Bacchus:
When Marriage Between Gays Was a Rite**

Jim Duffy

A Kiev art museum contains a curious icon from St. Catherine’s monastery on Mt. Sinai. It shows two robed Christian saints. Between them is a traditional Roman pronubus (best man) overseeing what in a standard Roman icon would be the wedding of a husband and wife. In the icon, Christ is the pronubus. Only one thing is unusual. The “husband and wife” are in fact two men.

Is the icon suggesting that a homosexual “marriage” is one sanctified by Christ? The very idea seems initially shocking. The full answer comes from other sources about the two men featured, St. Serge and St. Bacchus, two Roman soldiers who became Christian martyrs.

While the pairing of saints, particularly in the early church, was not unusual, the association of these two men was regarded as particularly close. Severus of Antioch in



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the sixth century explained that “we should not separate in speech [Serge and Bacchus] who were joined in life”. More bluntly, in the definitive 10th century Greek account of their lives, St. Serge is openly described as the “sweet companion and lover” of St. Bacchus.

In other words, it confirms what the earlier icon implies, that they were a homosexual couple. Their orientation and relationship was openly accepted by early Christian writers. Furthermore, in an image that to some modern Christian eyes might border on blasphemy, the icon has Christ himself as their pronubus, their best man overseeing their “marriage”.

The very idea of a Christian homosexual marriage seems incredible. Yet after a twelve year search of Catholic and Orthodox church archives Yale history professor John Boswell has discovered that a type of Christian homosexual “marriage” did exist as late as the 18th century.

Contrary to myth, Christianity’s concept of marriage has not been set in stone since the days of Christ, but has evolved as a concept and as a ritual.

Professor Boswell discovered that in addition to heterosexual marriage ceremonies in ancient church liturgical documents (and clearly separate from other types of non-marital blessings of adopted children or land) were ceremonies called, among other titles, the “Office of Same Sex Union” (10th and 11th century Greek) or the “Order for Uniting Two Men” (11th and 12th century).

These ceremonies had all the contemporary symbols of a marriage: a community gathered in a church, a blessing of the couple before the altar, their right hands joined as at heterosexual marriages, the participation of a priest, the taking of the Eucharist, a wedding banquet afterwards. All of which are shown in contemporary drawings of the same sex union of Byzantine Emperor Basil I (867-886) and his companion John. Such homosexual unions also took place in Ireland in the late 12th / early 13th century, as the chronicler Gerald of Wales (Geraldus Cambrensis) has recorded.

Unions in Pre-Modern Europe lists in detail some same sex union ceremonies found in ancient church liturgical documents. One Greek 13th century “Order for Solemnisation of Same Sex Union”, having invoked St. Serge and St. Bacchus, called on God to “vouchsafe unto these Thy servants [N and N] grace to love another and to abide unhated and not cause of scandal all the days of their lives, with the help of the Holy Mother of God and all Thy saints”. The ceremony concludes: “And they shall kiss the Holy Gospel and each other, and it shall be concluded”.

Another 14th century Serbian Slavonic “Office of the Same Sex Union”, uniting two men or two women, had the couple having their right hands laid on the Gospel while having a cross placed in their left hands. Having kissed the Gospel, the couple were then



required to kiss each other, after which the priest, having raised up the Eucharist, would give them both communion.

Boswell found records of same sex unions in such diverse archives as those in the Vatican, in St. Petersburg, in Paris, Istanbul, and in Sinai, covering a period from the 8th to 18th centuries. Nor is he the first to make such a discovery. The Dominican Jacques Goar (1601-1653) includes such ceremonies in a printed collection of Greek prayer books.

While homosexuality was technically illegal from late Roman times, it was only from about the 14th century that antihomosexual feelings swept western Europe. Yet same sex unions continued to take place.

At St. John Lateran in Rome (traditionally the Pope's parish church) in 1578 a many as 13 couples were "married" at Mass with the apparent cooperation of the local clergy, "taking communion together, using the same nuptial Scripture, after which they slept and ate together", according to a contemporary report.

Another woman to woman union is recorded in Dalmatia in the 18th century. Many questionable historical claims about the church have been made by some recent writers in this newspaper.

Boswell's academic study however is so well researched and sourced as to pose fundamental questions for both modern church leaders and heterosexual Christians about their attitudes towards homosexuality.

For the Church to ignore the evidence in its own archives would be a cowardly cop-out. The evidence shows convincingly that what the modern church claims has been its constant unchanging attitude towards homosexuality is in fact nothing of the sort.

It proves that for much of the last two millennia, in parish churches and cathedrals throughout Christendom from Ireland to Istanbul and in the heart of Rome itself, homosexual relationships were accepted as valid expressions of a God-given ability to love and commit to another person, a love that could be celebrated, honoured and blessed both in the name of, and through the Eucharist in the presence of Jesus Christ.

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Tarot Reviews

Eric K. Lerner

The Comparative Tarot

(LoScarbeo/Llewellyn Publications, 2002, \$19.95)

The Tarot of Durer

(LoScarbeo/Llewellyn Publications, 2002, \$19.95)

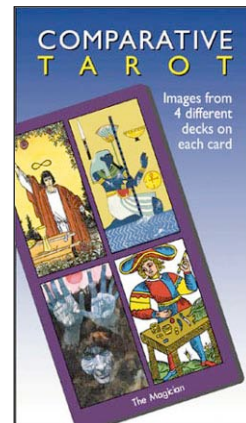
The Quest Tarot

(Llewellyn Publications, 2003, \$34.95)

We are all familiar with Tarot cards. Over the past two hundred years, Tarot has become the principle tool of divination used in the West. Their colorful and controversial history and development are beyond the scope of this review. Interest in Tarot has grown dramatically in the last forty years. There are literally hundred of decks now available. It has become its own artistic and literary genre. As such, it has some definite rules. A tarot deck is typically composed of 22 major arcana (some decks only feature these cards), symbolizing major life principles, and 56 minor card reflecting specific types of situations. The decks frequently incorporate many aspects of esoteric knowledge, such as Qabalah, alchemy and astrology.

Often they follow the structure of the Tree of Life. Ideally, each one constitutes its own Book of Life, reflecting universal truths. Each represents the perspectives of its unique author and illustrator. (Although there are many tarot artists who work alone, the two best-known decks, the Ryder Deck by Pamela Colman Smith and A.E. Waite and the Thoth Deck by Aleister Crowley and Lady Frieda Harris are the results of creative partnerships.) This review will examine the merits of three new decks: The Comparative Tarot and The Tarot of Durer, both published by LoScarbeo, and The Quest Tarot published by Llewellyn.

The long history of Tarot is embodied by **the Comparative Tarot**. This is not so much an original deck as it is an overview of Tarot's development. Each card incorporates the artwork from four independently published decks. They are: The Tarot of Marseilles, a version of the classic 17th Century model which flourished throughout Europe; the Universal Tarot, a knock off of Waite and Colman Smith's popular deck;

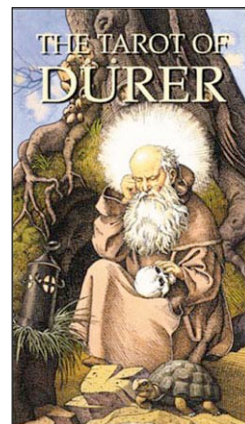


Tarot of the Sphinx, a deck by Silvana Allasis incorporating Egyptian motifs long popular with Tarotists; and Tarot of the Origins a contemporary art deck by Piero Alligo and Mafredi Toraldo. Valerie Sim, founder of the popular Comparative Tarot Website, argues that this represents the best way to look at Tarot: to appreciate the meaning of a card, a reader should examine multiple representations of it at the same time. From an intellectual standpoint, this is an interesting notion. From a practical perspective, it makes my head spin. It just did not work for me as a reading deck. A large part of the value I experience in performing divination comes from the interaction I have with the worldview reflected by the artwork of a particular deck. To look at four different representations of a single card and then examine it in light of the other cards that appear in a spread creates an information overload. Also, each of the individual illustrations is very small. The size makes it difficult to discern details in the artwork. In performing divination, I very often pick up on some unique detail I had not previously recognized in a particular card. This enables spontaneous association that may supply the key to visionary seeing. With such tiny pictures, this becomes nearly impossible.

The approach of the Comparative Tarot did intrigue me. I enjoy tarot history greatly. I like to compare different interpretations of the same card. That helps me as an artist to spark my own creative process. However, this did not help me in trying to perform divination. Instead it confused me. I believe that one of the expectations of the Tarot genre is for the deck to deliver the goods in a reading.

Putting four different decks together in one is risky. It is not an approach that I think will find a popular audience among readers. This does push the envelope of what one expects a tarot deck to do. It is more of a history lesson than a divination tool. Thus it expands the uses of a tarot deck. (There are many other ways for a tarot deck to contain commentary on the medium itself and still succeed as a deck. For instance, some of Elisabetta Cassari's cutting edge decks from the early 1980's do just that.) LoScarbeo should be complimented for trying something new. Indeed, it is doubtful that one of the two major American publishers, Llewellyn and U.S. Games, would have put out a deck like this. Indeed there may be readers who find such an approach suitable their style of reading. It's nice to see a publisher provide the public with such an option. However, I still cannot recommend this as deck.

A staple of the LoScarbeo catalogue in recent years is as a series decks inspired by the works of master artists. A recent addition is the **Tarot of Durer**. Tarot history buffs know that Durer did create twenty-two tarots based on the Mantegna deck. These do not appear in this deck. This deck is the work of well-



regarded Tarot artist Giacinto Gaudenzi. The Durer inspired work first appeared as twenty-two major arcana cards executed in China ink in LoScarbeo's greatly missed Tarot Art series of Major Arcana only decks. The ink renderings were quite strong in capturing the spirit of Durer's engravings. The new 78-card deck is composed of color illustrations. The coloring detracts from the crisp linear artwork. More importantly, it does not resemble Durer's paintings! During his lifetime Durer broke new ground in his painting with his subtle and realistic use of perspective, lighting and plasticity. His paintings were Germany's answer to the Italian Renaissance. His palette reflected the vibrant energy of life itself. To this day, he has very few peers in his rich and sensual command of oils. The painting on the Durer cards is pale. The use of flat washes of color are an integral part of the Tarot aesthetic begun around 1600 and popularized by Colman Smith's charming illustrations on the Ryder deck. However, that has nothing to do with the way Durer used color. The cards suggest a 19th Century illustrator's attempt at painted postcards. However, the basic drawings are strong. If you overlook the fact that they have little to do with Durer's actual painting style, they are good drawings. Lo Scarbeo does retain black and white engraving motif on the backs of the cards. The reader can get a sense of how much stronger the deck could have been had this style been retained in the principle art.

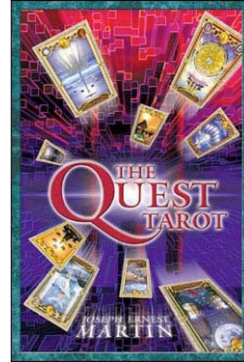
The artwork through its inclusion of specific actors, situations and symbols makes the deck read like a true tarot. One of the faults of other decks in the Master Artist Series, such as the Bosch inspired tarots, has been that traditional meanings of the cards, particularly the minor ones, get thrown to the window. That creates difficulty in using the cards for divination. Here the artwork on both the major and minor cards adheres to popular interpretations for the cards. Therefore, this is quite useful as a reading deck. The additional flourishes such as a turtle and a skull on the Hermit card add depth. That helps the deck establish its independence and value in the tarot genre as being an individual and unique creation. It would be a suitable deck to use at a Renaissance Fair. If the artwork on the box cover appeals to you and you have a working knowledge of tarot, go ahead and buy it. I don't think you will be disappointed.

The final deck for consideration comes from Llewellyn. **The Quest Tarot** is the creation of Joseph Ernest Martin, who used 3-d computer graphics to create the artwork. It is billed as the 21st Century Tarot on its box. The artwork gives it a very modern feel. This deck has some unusual qualities. First, the cards contain a vast array of symbolic attributes and glyphs. These include: Hebrew letters (which are typical of most modern Tarots); I-Ching Trigrams, Runic Symbols, Gemstone affiliations, Arabic alphabet letters, yes-no designations, hair and eye color indicators...Are you getting the idea here? The deck comes complete with its own Miss Cleo commentary in the cards themselves.



However, surprisingly, in practice, these really didn't bother me. I had fun reading the deck with a client in a professional reading. I enjoyed seeing what answers the cards produced regarding timing and yes-no answers. These features did help with a quarrelsome client. She was not looking for the meaning of life, and wanted quick simple answers to her questions. The multi faceted inclusions helped the reading move along quickly and maintain a light tone.

Martin seems to disagree with me on virtually every point of controversy that exists in Tarot. He uses the wrong placements for the Strength and Justice cards. He designed the deck to rely on reversed meanings rather than elemental signification in individual card interpretation. The longer I read, the more opinionated I become. However, judging the quality of a deck should not be based solely on my own prejudices. What matters is that the artist establishes his own goals in creating the deck and meets those challenges. For the most part, Martin succeeds.



This would be a very useful deck for someone who was just learning Tarot. (Contrast this with the Durer deck discussed earlier) Martin does not presume any previous tarot knowledge in his design decisions. Someone with no knowledge of Tarot can gain immediate gratification from this Quest due to its system of inclusions. Heck, you can even spell out words with it.

Of course tarot reading is not an occupation for simpletons. A deck's value has much to do with the quality of its artwork. The Quest's artwork is clear and richly colored. Its three dimensionality creates the illusion of visual depth, and this encourages meditation. It draws in the viewer. The experienced reader can disregard all the little glyphs and concentrate on the artwork itself. Furthermore, Martin is careful not to personalize the features of any of the actors in the cards. This imparts an impersonal quality. This is a leitmotif of Moslem and some of the Eastern aesthetic disciplines. The supposition is that we are dealing with powerful impersonal and unknowable forces. Putting a face on them characterizes them as individual. Martin's vision is that these forces are greater than any one man. Perhaps his underlying motive for so many symbolic inclusions is to demonstrate the integration of all metaphysical disciplines.

Recently, my godson was looking for a deck with which to start learning tarot. I told him that he could do a lot worse than choosing The Quest Tarot as a starting point. Mind you I'm not going to retire my Thoth deck for this anytime soon. I prefer my multicultural symbols to be incorporated into the artwork itself. However, having such information available in a straightforward manner can provide the novice reader with a



100 ■ Ashé Journal

way to make associations with the cards. This works a lot better than the visual overload of the Comparative Tarot. The glyphs are placed subtly in the borders and can be overlooked in favor of the artwork. The 3-d art gives the cards a distinctly modern feel as opposed to the Durer deck's reinvention of antiquity.

In summary, both the Durer and the Quest make interesting additions to any tarot collection. Indeed, you perform the "comparative technique" just by juxtaposing these two decks side by side. They both lend depth to reading and contribute their own unique pages to the Book of Life.

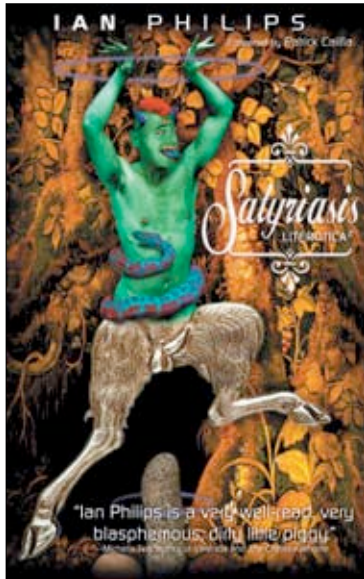


☐ ☐☐☐ **IO Pan IO Pan**

Reviewd by Sven Davisson

Satyriasis: Literotica 2, Ian Philips

(Suspect Thoughts, 2003, 304 pp, \$16.95)



What issue of Crowleyana would be complete without a visit from the great god Pan? A little devilment? A little horny satyre? Erotic satirist, Ian Philips brings all these in spades—or pitchforks.

Mr. Philips eruditeness is evidenced throughout this collection of erotic stories. His numerous, subtle allusions, however, blend seamlessly with his text. Philips uses his broad knowledge of literature to wonderful affect, however the reader is never talked down to.

Satyriasis is a delightful cocktail party, where the host has had one too many and you can't get enough. Like good humor, the work is both intelligent and well paced. One can read these stories again and again—still finding new things to amuse afresh.

The opening story of this collection finds the great god Pan returned to Earth and needing to be topped. His pursuit progresses as only a god's can, as he moves toward satisfying his hairy tail. Plutarch's pronouncement, echoing down to our age spilling forth in Burroughs' *Apocalypse*, "The God Pan Is Dead" finally has an answer. He comes back not once, but twice within Mr. Philips' collection.

Other interlocutors in Philips' twilight celebration include Adam, Eve and Steve in a motel room; the Alpha-Bits, A-list Bears in San Francisco's ultralux den; two beloved dentists who like to play rough after-hours with the tools of their trade; a hustler with a mad love for Edgar Allen Poe and a made hate for dot-commers who's caught unawares on a client's webcam; and a rather mischievous deli counter cold-cut.

Ian Philips is Kathy Acker with a sense of humor. A devilish one at that!

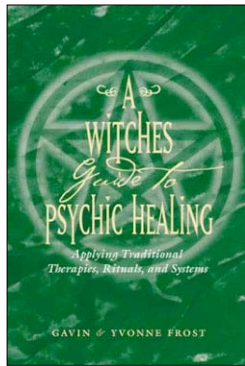
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Book Reviews

A Witch's Guide to Psychic Healing: Applying Traditional Therapies, Rituals, and Systems, Gavin & Yvonne Frost

(Red Wheel/Weiser, 2003, 256pp, \$18.95)

Review by Ron Adams



Remembering the smell of lavender on a spring day, or the taste of lemon, the feel of olive oil on the skin during a massage. These are some of the things I remembered reading this book.

An excellent, eclectic book of Healing modalities. This book is written by two Wiccans, Gavin and Yvonne. Though, as they say in their introduction, 'this is an ecumenical book.' No matter what background you come from, Christian, Agnostic, New Age, Wiccan, Atheist, Buddhist, Native American Indian, Shaman this book has a wide variety of healing techniques and approaches.

I use to meditate a lot when I was younger. After reading this book, I have gotten back into the habit. In fact I had an amazing mediation just before writing this review.

It is wonderful how spirit guides and just regular people you know in your life can impart special messages for you, on your life path, when the time is right. And if we attune to it, and listen, we get the messages we need, when we are ripe to receive them.

Yvonne and Gavin share their Epiphanies that occurred in 1972, from an odd source, a tax record that dated back to 1829 or earlier, from the house they were restoring. It was just time for the message to be received.

This book covers psychosomatic medicine, scientific approaches, the history of well-known healers like Sainte Bernadette, Edgar Cayce, Depak Chopra, Dr. Andrew Weil, and not so well known healers like Harold Plume. From Psychic healing, laying on of hands, Reiki, to aroma therapy and healing with sounds and colors; this book has just about everything.

I think you will enjoy it. I remembered a great many things from the past, and learned some new things too, and gained new insight from the ideas being presented in their own particular way, in this intriguing book.

As if that weren't enough, it goes into soul retrieval psychiatry and depression, health, nutrition and exercises. It even has some workbook pages where you can explore some things for yourself, like beginning a healing journal.

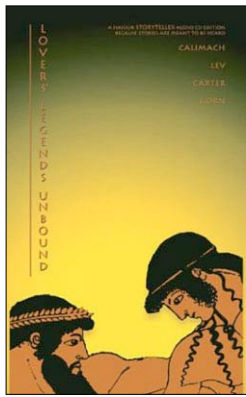
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Pendulum charts, etheric levels, using tarot cards for diagnosis, healing stories from Wiccans and distance healings. Give it a try. This book might be an eye opener for today's kitchen witch and internet magickian.

Lovers' Legends Unbound, Andrew Calimach

(Haiduk Press, 2004, 87pp + Audio-CD)

Reviewed by Joseph Gelfer



Lovers' Legends Unbound is a companion edition to Calimach's previous book, Lovers' Legends: The Gay Greek Myths. In that volume Calimach revisited well-known characters from Greek myth and uncovered previously ignored aspects of same-sex love and its influence on Greek social, moral and spiritual teachings. These myths, 'by turn heroic, cautionary or shamanic, always maintain the dignified cadence of ancient epic, ...that self-indulgence, betrayal, and violence are to be despised, and that love is the highest good.'

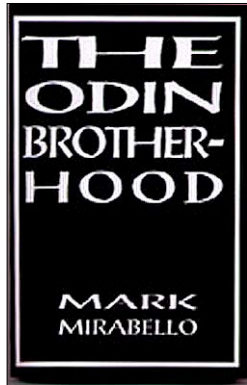
Calimach draws upon these myths for Lovers' Legends Unbound which is accompanied by an audio CD read by actor Timothy Carter and punctuated with occasional flute by Steve Gorn. There are nine tales including new insights into male love not just from the expected such as Narcissus but the mighty Zeus and Hercules. There is even a glimpse into the gay side of the Trojan War with Achilles and Patroclus.

The audio CD provides a useful route into the spirit of the stories which would originally have been spoken rather than read. There is strength in the silence between the words which stands out to the modern ear, more used to fast-cuts and sound effects. Steve Gorn's flute is used sparingly and helps produce an atmosphere all the more evocative. Sometimes more interesting than the myths themselves is how we have become unaccustomed to listening to stories in this way, of the attention required to accurately understand the spoken word without supporting devices. It is a rewarding exercise to listen deeply and to experience the odd calm that it brings.

Lovers' Legends Unbound is an interesting read and a more interesting listen. Calimach's rediscovery of the gay elements to Greek myth is useful for the casual reader and as an instructional tool for gender and classical studies.



The Odin Brotherhood, Mark L. Mirabello
(Mandrake of Oxford, 2004, 128pp., £10.99/\$20.00)



“When the world is pregnant with lies, a secret long hidden will be revealed.” An Odinst Prophecy

Just like *The Cannibal Within*, a chance encounter in the Atlantis bookshop blossomed into a dialogue between the author and the anonymous adept of Odin. Called an “occult religion” for adepts, a “creed of iron” for warriors, and a “secret society” for higher men and women who value “knowledge, freedom and power,” the Odin Brotherhood honors the gods and goddesses of the Norse pantheon. This non-fiction book details the legends, the rituals, and the mysteries of an ancient and enigmatic movement.

Mirabello is also the author of *The Cannibal Within* and *The Crimes of Jehovah*. Professor Mark L. Mirabello lectures on Intellectual History, the History of Medicine, and Alternative Religions and Cults at Shawnee State University in the USA. Formerly a visiting Professor at Nizhni Novgorod State University in Russia, he has a Ph.D. from the University of Glasgow.

The Concrete Sky, Marshall Moore
(Harrington Park Press, 2003, 273pp, \$19.95)



Drunk and partying, *Concrete Sky*'s protagonist, Chad Sobran falls off a balcony. His homophobic brother, Martin, successfully convinces the responding EMT's and emergency room doctors that Chad is a danger to himself and that the fall was actually a failed suicide attempt. As the story develops, we learn that Martin has cultivated an obsessive and progressively more violent obsessions with Chad and Chad's homosexuality. When Chad awakes he discovers he's been placed in the hospital's psychiatric unit for 72 hours of observation.

While staying in the psyche unit, Chad meets the young and enigmatic Jonathan Fairbanks, a fellow patient. Jonathan witness (and survived) the murder suicide of his wealthy parents. He's in the unit suffering from post-traumatic stress relating to the



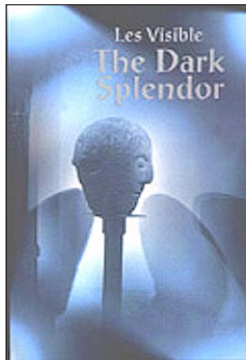
incident. The two quickly connect and develop a relationship. It turns out that the police are still investigating Jonathan's parents murder and consider him a possible suspect.

Other murders at the hospital soon follow and suspicion again turns toward Jonathan. As Chad and Jonathan's relationship begins to develop suspicion heightens as another patient mysteriously falls to her death in the elevator shaft. The two's relationship quickly becomes a psychological odyssey on a roller coaster ride of mystery. The story increases in intensity as the author adeptly navigates the quick turns of his plot.

Mr. Moore successfully avoids the pitfalls that fell many a first time novelist. His plot displays an inventiveness that lifts it out of the genre that it will, no doubt, inevitably be placed. Moore's prose is sharp and his story riveting. My only complaint that I have to wait for his next book.

The Dark Splendour, Les Visible

(Mandrake of Oxford, 2004, 284pp., £9.99/\$18.00)



'Billy Joe thought of himself as beyond the restrictions of the common herd. He was free to do his own will as no other was, above limits and laws, past apprehension, un-reachable, untouchable, an entity unto himself alone. This is what he thought. But this is not what he was. Everything he did served the will and the interests of a force far older and deeper than he would ever reach. In comparison, he was like a child playing with blocks. He served a master who was loyal to no one, just as he was loyal to no one. There were many men like Billy Joe in the world, less accomplished in their evil, but moving deliberately down that ancient staircase into the Dark Splendor.'

One part crime novel and one part occult thriller, *The Dark Splendor* takes us behind the veil of appearances into a world where nothing is what it seems. Set against the backdrop of the island of Maui, the pacing grips us from the first page and sends us at a gallop on a white-knuckled ride featuring serial killers, drug dealers, horrific murder, martial artists, reincarnation, ceremonial magic, a black magician and an immortal Tibetan Master. For pure enjoyment and surprise this book is guaranteed to remain in your thoughts long after you have finished reading.

Les Visible is a writer and recording artist. He has had a lifelong love affair with the Hermetic Sciences and the Martial Arts. He is a seasoned traveler in psychedelic realms and prefers the Devic Kingdom over the suffocating confinements of the Sub-



Matrix. Along the way he has matriculated from the military to prisons and the maximum security wards for the criminally insane. A collection of his works in various media can be found at www.lesvisible.com. He lives somewhere in Europe with his wife Susanne and his memories.

The Unknown God: W. T. Smith And The Thelemites, Martin P. Starr
(Teitan Press, 2004, 432pp + over 44 photographs and illustrations, \$49.95)
Reviewed by MMM
Courtesy of *Mandrake Speaks* (mandake-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)



That's got to be one of the most interesting books on magical history I've read in a long while, perhaps ever. Martin Starr debut book is a documentary study of the North American followers of the English mystic Aleister Crowley told through the life of their defacto leader, Wilfred Talbot Smith (1885-1957). The author is fairly well known as one of the owners of Teitan Press, who for many years have produced fine, authoritative editions of the master's more obscure works: books like the beautiful facsimile of *Konx Om Pax*; the pornographic classic, *Snowdrops from a Curate's garden* (of which I'm told there are many) and Crowley pastiche of Sufi sexual mysticism *The Scented Garden of Abdullah the Satirist of Shiraz*.

Starr tells the story of Wilfred Smith's and I suppose what one might call the second generation of Thelemites who set about to promulgate the Crowleyan teachings in 1930s Hollywood. Perhaps the following quotation from the books terminus ad quem, might give some idea of the ups and down of the Thelemic movement:

'With Germer expired the last chance for Thelema to take root in the United States, and the projects internationally were no more bright. Or so one might have thought. Germer had successfully accused Mellinger of being an FBI agent and kicked him out of the house, expelled Grant for blasphemy, dismissed McMurtry as a slave to his wife and ceased corresponding with Metzger over differences in the Crowley translations in German the latter had published. Motta had fled the United States for his native Brazil after having been arrested in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in February 1961 on suspicion of drug trafficking; while in jail he confessed that the source of the drugs found in his compartment was none other than his OTO Brother, Louis T. Culling. In the following year Germer refrained from giving Motta a charter to open the OTO in Brazil,

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mindful of the fact that Motta, in his experience only “switched temporarily back into sanity.” Yet on his deathbed what faith Germer had in a future for Thelema he chose to vest in Motta, telling Sasha to inform Frater Adjuvo that he was “The Follower.” What this may have meant was the subject of speculation that was never satisfactorily resolved. The issue of Germer’s heir to the headship of the OTO remained an open question to the few who knew or cared about it.’ (Starr 2004: 343)

For those perhaps less familiar with some of the above names let me tell you that were talking about all the main players in the subsequent history of Thelema - here laid low by the mind games of Crowley and his successor Germer. And that’s not counting the ones that had already expired in scene two - i.e. Crowley’s co-superior in the OTO Frater Achad, Jack Parsons and the books hero Wilfred Smith. It reminded me of the first act of the *Mahabharata* when Vatsyanana tells the audience that the character who represents the ancestor of all humanity is at that point rendered permanently barren - what can possibly happen next??

Well that’s would take another book, but its seems to me that the modern stop go progress of Thelema is in part made more comprehensible by reading this fascinating history of its first days. In a way it really is act two of the same play. When Crowley had trouble with his frater superior Theodor Reuss he upped and gave him the sack proclaiming himself head of the order (Starr 2004: 112.) It was a tradition he was to recommend to others with the words of John Bunyan: ‘my sword to him that can take it’. And indeed, according to this book, if Crowley could have proved his right to the OTO crown he might also have succeeded in imposed his control over the Theosophical Society and AMORC - and then how differently the magical world of the 80s might have looked. I could go on but hopefully that’s more than enough to wet your appetite for this highly recommended masterpiece.

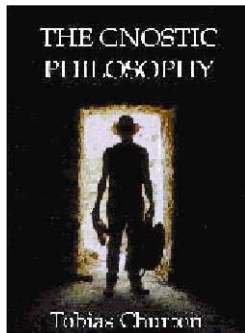


The Gnostic Philosophy, Tobias Churton

(Signal Publishing, 2004)

Reviewed by Paul Newman

Courtesy of *Mandrake Speaks* (mandrake-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)



Readers may remember Tobias Churton's 80's Channel 4 series *The Gnostics*, which I certainly enjoyed, and his follow up book *The Gnostics* (Wiedenfield & Nicholson, 1987; US Barnes & Noble, 1997). It was thus with some pleasure I embarked on a review of this book, a pleasure which soon evaporated on being faced with a book where the meaning of the phrase *Gnostic Philosophy* is barely discernable.

What do we mean by *Gnostic*? Historically the word has described an elite group of Christians, who believed themselves possessed of a knowledge (*gnosis*) and which made its adherents believe themselves above the restricted understanding and petty morality of their peers and especially other Christians. In its day, Gnosticism was a vibrant philosophy, fully able to engage with its peers. Its practitioners were able to argue their case cogently not only from an intellectual standpoint but also from a perspective imbued with a spiritual experience which led them to find themselves possessed of an insight denied other men. It is this experience, rather than the intellectual position, which defines the *Gnosis*. It is true that the word Gnostic now refers to a wider spectrum of groups than simply Christian Gnostics, but I had been hoping that it was continuity of spiritual practice that was to be examined in the book, and which might have justified the title Gnostic Philosophy. Instead, Tobias Churton seems to take the view that any underground, counter establishment group, which allows its participants to believe they have a secret or forbidden knowledge is to be called Gnostic. This allows almost any esoteric group to be included and this book is a potted history of most of them: Templars, Cathars, Freemasons, Rosicrucians, and more - all the usual suspects are there.

The book starts promisingly enough with a review of Zoroastrian cosmological theory, and especially the nature of time. It then reviews rapidly Jewish speculative theology in the late Hellenistic period before embarking on a review of Gnostic thinking as it emerges in the early Christian period. There is an awful lot of interesting material to be covered in this subject but the book attempts to cover so much ground that most of the material is covered only superficially, and a great deal follows the authors' personal prejudices. Why this should be so, I cannot imagine. The list of advisors to the book reads like a Who's Who of contemporary Gnostic research (and the transcripts of



interviews with them are an attractive feature of the book). The main points of Gnostic thinking (as we think we understand them) are given but surely they deserve more than bullet point treatment. We are given the almost obligatory quotations from the Nag Hammadi corpus but, now the enormous theological implications of these texts has sunk in, it must be time to seriously question the extent to which they represent uniquely Gnostic thinking. Whilst striking in the foreignness of their theology from contemporary Christian teaching, there is actually little which seems to be purely Gnostic in outlook, some is even pagan. Are these then documents representative of Gnostic teaching or of a Christianity once normative (called by Gnostics *psychic*) but now lost to us? Also, material from ancient authors is given, but so much is missed out. For example, there is a lot of extant material covering the radically different interpretations Gnostics put on the Pauline Epistles. Absence of any discussion of this material is surprising, not the least for being the subject of a whole book on the subject by Elaine Pagels (for whom the author shows only the highest regard), but which is not even referenced. This would have allowed readers to assess Gnostic thinking in terms of passages with which they may be presumed to be familiar.

My reservations notwithstanding, this section is, in my opinion, the most successful of the book. The material given is generally accurate and a coherent account is maintained providing a wide, if personal, account of Gnostic thinking up to Late Antiquity.

The book then skips merrily through the centuries with reviews of Sufis, Qabalistic Magic, the Troubadors, the Knights Templar, Jacob Boehme, Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, and a final part on 20th Century magical thinking. Can so much be encompassed in 379 pages of text? Sadly, in my opinion, the answer is no. Each chapter attempts a pen sketch of its subject, but really, too little information is given to make any chapter wholly satisfactory. Reviewing this, I asked myself: for whom is the book intended? You might think it addressed to intelligent laypersons interested seeking an overview of the material, but no single chapter adequately covers its subject matter. This struck me most in the chapter on the Troubadors, about which I know the least. I found after reading it, I did not really understand the Troubadors any better. Indeed, the impression I got was more of an essay designed to impress a university examiner than an introduction to the subject. In other words, if you already know the subject matter these essays may, perhaps, give an interesting slant on known material.

Aleister Crowley merits a whole (long) chapter and the author gives a very positive account of his life and philosophy. He is at pains to point out: Aleister Crowley has something important to say to all of us. I feel sure Mandrake readers will echo this sentiment, but, will they enjoy the attempt to write a life history of the Beast in 47 pages?



I leave it to readers to come to their own conclusion. The rather fulsome tribute paid to A.C. may explain the rather perfunctory sketch of Jung's life and thoughts, perhaps an attempt to keep a long book to reasonable lengths. A strange omission, though, given Jung's vastly more influential work and his interest and important insights offered into Gnostic thinking.

If I have dwelt thus far on what I believe are the less desirable aspects of this book, it is not without merit. More positively, some of the topics discussed in the book have been the subject of a considerable number of recent speculative books. This book is actually free of such speculation, indeed it is quite sober in its approach, and the material presented is generally trustworthy. It represents a genuine antidote to the unfettered speculation so rampant nowadays.

I wish I could say the same about Chapter 9: Gnosis and the New Physics. A lot has been written about supposed parallels between some aspects of modern physics and mystical experience, a great deal of it drivel. Unfortunately this book manages to reproduce most of the same material found in countless New Age books on Spirituality and the New Physics. For example, early on in the chapter Churton states that in 1904 "Einstein published his General Theory of Relativity". He didn't, it was the Special Theory published then. The General Theory came later in 1916. He goes on "he proved mathematically that space and time were relative, not absolute conditions of the universe. Relative, that is, to the speed at which the observer or observing apparatus was traveling". This really misses the point. It is true that Relativity theory shows that as components spatial and temporal coordinates vary, but Einstein was properly pleased to discover that the space-time interval (now properly recognized as the fundamental scenario of physical reality) is invariant under transformation, i.e. an Absolute of the theory! Einstein had wanted to call his theory The Theory of Absolutes but was dissuaded from doing so by his friend Minkowski. Think how different history would have been if Einstein had gone with his original intention. The facts of the situation are widely available and, considering the book purports to be an intelligent and articulate presentation of deep questions, I find the fact that the author reproduces such half baked ideas repugnant. The next paragraph is really excruciating and the rest of the chapter doesn't do much better. It would be impossible to identify any more misconceptions for this review, there are so many. Frankly, given the poor grasp of the subject shown by the author, the book would be much better for the omission of this chapter.

In conclusion, I would say that, with such a large selection of material, it would be surprising if a reader did not learn something new. The main influences on the book are scholarly, and I welcome this as a genuine alternative to much speculative writing currently published. However, since the book fails as a first introduction to the subject

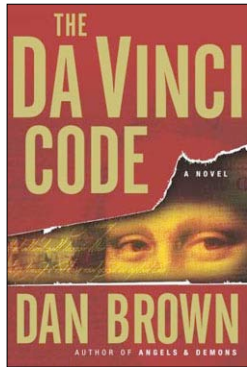


and is inadequate for use as a reference text, I would recommend borrowing it, rather than buying.

The Davinci Code, Dan Brown

(Doubleday, 2003, 454pp.)

Reviewed by Ron Adams



This book has been on the New York Times Best Sellers list for some time now. And I have heard internet rumors of it being made into a movie. This would make a great movie, especially if the rumors of Ron Howard producing it are true.

Imagine you are an art historian who has just come out with a book on the Goddess connection in religious art. Then suddenly, that night, after your lecture in Paris, you are in bed and awakened because the Paris police wish to question you.

From there the book unfolds into a wild who-done-it story. Seems a famous art person is dead in the Louve, and our main character is under suspicion. What follows is an unfolding story about Davinci, secret codes and the Priory of Zion, the Knights Templars. Not since *The Eight* by Katherine Neville and *Celestine Prophecy*, by James Redfield, has a book combined mystery and adventure, that is interesting and exciting.

Suddenly we are on a chase to find the Holy Grail. And if you think you know what the Holy Gail is, get ready for a Historical Revisioning.

I won't spoil it for you. One thing I will expand upon, that is only briefly touched upon in the book, then dropped, is about the Renaissance Man himself, Leonardo Davinci. This concerns his famous painting, Mona Lisa.

What if Mona Lisa is a picture of Leonardo in drag? What if Leonardo is really Leonara?

Was the genius of the Renaissance really a woman? Information like this could turn the world upside down.

This is the kind of fun you could have ready *The Davinci Code*.



Thelemic Handbook: A practical guide to the works of Aleister Crowley,

Melusine Draco (Ignotus Press, 2003, £9.99)

Reviewed by Vlad Kiosk

Courtesy of *Mandrake Speaks* (mandake-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

To criticize a small press like Ignotus for the poor quality of their proof reading would be churlish, however this particular book would have been well served by more rigorous editing. Originally published as a booklet in 1997, and revised and expanded for this edition, there is a significant amount of unnecessary and extraneous material that obscures the author's novel approach to the life and works of AC. If all the derogatory comments regarding less enlightened commentators on the man were cut away, along with the padding provided by descriptions of all the major arcana of the Thoth tarot deck, the remainder would make a rather punchy article. Indeed, these days, I think it would make a worthwhile few web pages. As a book, even a slim one of a hundred pages, it doesn't really stand well.

The core idea of the book is essentially a Crowley reading list, but it is an intriguing one, and I believe a valid approach to the subject matter. The tone verges a little into the preachy at points, and there is some unintentional mystification when technical terms are mentioned without explanation. The latter is a common problem when writing about Uncle Al of course, and one that he himself could be guilty of. To some extent, this book gives the impression that it was crafted for people who feel that they ought to read Crowley, and thus it falls between two stools. It is not useful in terms of detail, such as Lon Milo Duquette's *Magick of Aleister Crowley*, nor does it inspire, such as *Abrahamadabra* by Rodney Orpheus, or, indeed, the works of AC himself.

Dedalus Book of the Occult, Gary Lachman

(Dedalus Ltd., 2003, 324pp.)

Reviewed by Mogg Morgan

Courtesy of *Mandrake Speaks* (mandake-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

Gary Lachman aka Gary Valentine formerly of 80s band, *Blondie*, has written four books in as many years, including *Turn off Your Mind: the dark side of the age of aquarius*, *Secret History of Consciousness*, *New York Rocker* and now this 380 odd page study of occult thought. Crowley's masterwork, *Liber ABA: Magick*, provides what is probably one of the most interesting reading lists of any occult course. Strangely this list is omitted from the new Weiser 'blue brick', which is yet another reason to search out the Symonds



& Grant edition (appendix 1 p306sq). All occult life from Bhagavad Gita to Zanon is there. Professor Ronald Hutton has even praised it as a pemmican of humanist education. In many ways Gary's book is a useful companion to that reading list, filling in many fascinating biographical details and giving a taste of what joys to expect. At the end is a short sampler of the work discussed, with extracts from Blavatsky and even Crowley himself. It has to be said that Lachman's work doesn't move much past the 1930s, there is pretty much nothing from occultists after Crowley, nothing from Kenneth Grant or Gerald Gardner, no Charge of the Goddess or Marilyn Manson. In his defense Gary writes that it isn't intended as a history of the occult or occultism, but a study of writers and poets influenced by the occult. Perhaps its too early for that although I suspect the author's has a slight bias towards the American view of occult history. Apart from the absence of either index or contents page, this is an excellent, indispensable book and well worth the extremely modest price of 10 pounds.

