OCCULTISM IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Edited by
Henrik Bogdan and
Gordan Djurdjevic

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Occultism in a global perspective

Henrik Bogdan and Gordan Djurdjevic

Terms such as "the occult", "occultism", "occult sciences", "occult properties" and "occult philosophy" share a good deal of semantic commonality, and all have their etymological root in the Latin adjective "occultus", meaning "hidden" or "secret". Broadly speaking, what distinguishes occultism as a branch of human activity is an orientation towards hidden aspects of reality, those that are held to be commonly inaccessible to ordinary senses; an activity that simultaneously shares a certain similarity with both science and religion but cannot be reduced to either of them. The texts gathered in the present volume focus on occultism as a form of theory and practice that assumed its distinctive form in mid-century France and became widely popular through writings of Alphonse Louis Constant, better known as Éliphas Lévi (1810–75), and that subsequently found its most influential organizational paradigm – in the English-speaking world – in the shape of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn towards the end of that same century. Thematic concerns of this cultural phenomenon are to a large degree similar to what is currently and commonly referred to as Western esotericism, with prominent place given to disciplines such as magic, alchemy, astrology, tarot and their subdivisions and correlates. And while it could be theoretically possible, although with significant difficulty, to separate and isolate various specific threads that inhere in the category of occultism and to represent it as a unified entity, it is more appropriate to allow for a healthy dose of thematic overlap and taxonomical fluidity when studying the subject. It is in fact one of the assumptions of this book that occultism is a diverse, multiform and complex phenomenon.

More specifically, occultism is understood throughout this anthology as referring to "modernized" forms of Western esotericism; that is, forms of esotericism that due to the impact of modernity, globalization and secularization

were transformed and reinterpreted in the wake of the disenchantment of Western society.[1] Scholars such as Marco Pasi, Alex Owen, Corinna Treitel and Wouter J. Hanegraaff have argued that "occultism" should not be interpreted as reaction against modernity or as a "flight from reason", but rather as an integral part of modernity itself. This view challenges the assumption of previous scholarly literature which often argued that occultism is characterized by an embrace of irrationalism, an escape from – or even a revolt against –rationality and the modern scientific worldview.[2]

What is arguably most characteristic of the occult worldview is that its mental universe is dominated by the operations of correlative thinking. A distinctive feature of this type of thinking lies in an attempt to understand the world as a network of mutually related sympathies or analogies. In the West, correlative thinking is at least as old as its formulation and elaboration in Neoplatonic philosophy, but it is by no means exclusive to this cultural sphere as it is also found to be of similar extent and importance in, for example, Indian and Chinese civilizations and their respective zones of influence, and it is quite possible that it represents a (near) universal human tendency. Needless to say, correlative or analogical thinking manifests in a variety of forms that undergo historical changes and are coloured by the conditions of their respective social environments, and thus this suggestion of its transcultural nature and age-long durability should not be read as a declaration of its unchanging form and essential character.

Whatever their underlying philosophical and metaphysical assumptions and convictions, occultists habitually attempt to engage in some form of practice that finds the rationale of its effectiveness in the notion of analogy or correspondence between physical acts (such as ritual gestures), words and ideas, and the ultimate recipients, targets and goals of these activities. By shuffling the tarot cards, for example, while concentrating on the subject of the inquiry, any received mental images and associations are brought into correlation with the matter at hand and the future outcome of the events is divined based on the conjecture governed by the alignment of mutually related analogies between aforesaid elements. It should be obvious that intuition and imagination play a significant role in the process. And while astrology, alchemy, ritual magic and related currents contain a significant core of utilitarian objectives, occultism also represents its project as worthy of loftiest goals, making it – at least in the eyes of its adherents – not only a technique but also (and perhaps primarily) an ideology that provides both an explanation of the world and a means to attainment of wisdom and spiritual perfection. The quest for spiritual perfection includes notions of the attainment of perfect knowledge or *gnosis*, whereby man is believed to reach self-deification or union with the godhead. This salvific knowledge, frequently shrouded in discourses of secrecy, is often interpreted as a form of experiential knowledge which is non-communicable. The search for gnosis is of course not a new feature of nineteenth-century occultism, but can

be seen as a central part of Western esotericism from late antiquity onwards. For instance, while providing a definition of magic, the seminal Renaissance occult philosopher Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1535) wrote that, while it was obvious that the emanations of the divine source penetrate to the lowest rungs of matter – a commonly held assumption at the time – it simultaneously followed that an ascent back to the source was equally possible, and this was precisely the ambition of magic to achieve. The map of reality, in other words, could also be read as a map of journey, and the driving vehicle was, at least for some people, magic.

The cultural conditions at the time of Éliphas Lévi's major writings were characterized by a growing sense of anxiety and disillusionment regarding normative science and its influence on human life. It is thus perfectly understandable that Lévi was able to reach a wide and appreciative audience with his suggestion that magic "reunites into one and the same science that, which can be more certain in philosophy and that, which is infallible and eternal in religion" (Lévi 1860: 2). Lévi projected a romanticized image of all branches of occultism, although a degree of his own deep appreciation of Roman Catholicism – traditionally opposed to magic – generated a palpable sense of ambivalence towards the subject, which he helped popularize like few others before him. It is perhaps rather telling that he opened his *Histoire de la Magie* (*ibid.*: 41–2) with the story of fallen angels who, according to the apocryphal *Book of Enoch*, transmitted the art of magic to mortal women – a mytheme that signals both the transcendental source of magical knowledge and the moral vacillation regarding the same. It is however in his portrayal of magic as the summit of human knowledge and highest spiritual aspirations that Lévi exerted his strongest influence and generated a widespread interest in the subject, what came to be known as "the French occult revival" (McIntosh 1972). Although scholars tend to agree on using Eliphas Lévi and his writings as the commencement of occultism (naturally, this is an artificial starting-point since Lévi was not an isolated case that was detached from its own context and history, and the occultism expressed in Lévi's works drew on previous modernized forms of esotericism, such as mesmerism), it is the Anglo-American forms of occultism that have attracted most scholarly attention, in particular Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–91) and the Theosophical movement, the British occultist initiatory society the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Aleister Crowley (1875–1947) and his new religious movement Thelema, and Gerald Gardner (1884–1964) and the modern witchcraft movement. The full histories of these movements have been dealt with extensively elsewhere, and for our present purpose it will thus suffice to paint the backdrop with the widest of brushes.

The link between French and British occultism in this historical moment is exemplified by the writer Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803–73), extremely popular in his time, who personally knew Lévi. His vast knowledge of the field is in particular displayed in the novels *Zanoni* (1842), *A Strange Story* (1862) and *The Coming Race* (1871). Bulwer-Lytton was elected a patron of the esoteric

group Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia, although without any actual engagement on his part, which is of interest primarily for the fact that all the future leaders of the seminal Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn were also members of the society. The Golden Dawn was founded in 1888 and consisted of several temples in England, and later France. Its organizational form, established on the pattern of the kabbalistic Tree of Life, was due largely to the genius of Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers (1854–1918). The Golden Dawn combined into a meaningful whole a corpus consisting of ritualized transmission of knowledge (initiations), theoretical instructions ("Knowledge Lectures") and a good deal of practical work (including tarot, astrology, astral travel, invocations and talismanic magic). The iconography and pantheon were strongly influenced by Egyptology as understood through the lenses of the occultist imaginary: in the turn of the phrase of Christopher Lehrich (2007: 1) – who on his part referenced the title of the four-volume sequence of novels by John Crowley – what was involved was not a historical Egypt but an imagined Ægypt. This should not be interpreted as something to criticize but rather to understand: that occultism – and esotericism in general – implies and requires a distinct and self-consistent episteme.

The Golden Dawn consisted of three levels or orders. In simplified terms, those were: the introductory order; the second order (Adepts); and the Secret Chiefs, somewhat resembling Madame Blavatsky's Mahatmas, separated from ordinary humanity by an "Abyss". Mathers argues that the bulk of knowledge deposited into the three degrees of Adeptship originated from those superhuman Chiefs, but it was Aleister Crowley's contention that Mathers eventually lost contact with them, resulting in the spiritual and organizational collapse of the Golden Dawn. On his part, Crowley claimed to have re-established such contact by his reception of *The Book of the Law* (1904), a text that signalled the inception of the New Aeon of Thelema (Greek for "will"), with Crowley as the Prophet. Focusing on the notion that the primary task of humanity is the discovery of pure will and a life in accordance with it, as suggested by the precept "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law", Crowley created an elaborate system of what he called Magick, containing elements of both Western and Eastern esotericism with the primary ideological anchor in the religious philosophy of Thelema. In addition, Crowley presided over two important magical fraternities: the A∴A∴ (a Thelemic reconstruction and development of the Golden Dawn) and Ordo Templi Orientis or OTO (a Thelemic reconstruction and development of a liberal masonic order accepting both men and women as initiates), both of which are still active today, as are the several reconstituted orders of the original Golden Dawn.

A mention should also be made of the still-popular work of Dion Fortune (Violet Mary Firth, 1890–1946), whose literary output added an all-important recognition of the power of female spirituality and a pagan sense of connection with the land and local mythology, and the even more, in fact extremely,

influential work of Gerald Gardner (1884–1964) – himself an OTO initiate – who created the "world religion" (in the turn of the phrase of Ronald Hutton) of modern Wicca.

The above is an extremely simplified and rough sketch of the basic outline of occultism as it is usually described in textbooks and introductory works to occultism. It was our working hypothesis that most of the readers would have some basic familiarity with the subject as outlined here and it seemed rather apparent that most of the academic work in the field of Western esotericism was similarly focused on the same. As many others, we were simultaneously aware that occultism is a much larger social and cultural phenomenon and we felt that an engagement with a wider geographic locus is called for. Finally, we assumed that this wider, "global", occult scene is in some cases and to some degree directly influenced by the French and British proponents and organizations, that there will be some reasonable similarity with ideological presuppositions and social forms of engagement with the subject even in those cases where there is no such direct link, and finally, that there are interesting and important discursive, intellectual and societal variables resulting from different cultural habitats and historical contingencies. It is this last element that we found most interesting and important to explore and focus upon.

It should be stressed that we do not adhere to the notion of a "universal occultism" – whatever that might imply. As already mentioned, occultism is understood as specific current within the broader field of Western esotericism, and the basic aim of this anthology is to understand how occultism changes when it "spreads" to new environments, that is to place occultism in its cultural, political and social context. As such, our aim is similar to those of Alex Owen's *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (2004), Corinna Treitel's *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern* (2004), David Harvey Allen, *Beyond the Enlightenment: Occultism and Politics in Modern France* (2005) and Julia Mannherz's recent *Modern Occultism in Late Imperial Russia* (2012), and others. These works show that occultism develops differently in different cultural and social settings, while at the same time retaining many of the original elements of nineteenth-century French occultism encountered in the writings of Éliphas Lévi. The fact that there are obvious cultural differences in occultism were noted already in the pioneering study by Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment* (1996), in which he made a difference between "occultism of the left" and "occultism of the right". The first category, "occultism of the left", is found in the English-speaking parts of the world and it is centred on the notion of solar worship and phallicism as the basis of religion which was propagated by Enlightenment libertines, combined with a strong "pagan" and anti-Christian stance. In contrast to this, the "occultism of the right" was a predominantly French phenomenon, which was characterized by strong Roman Catholic sentiments and an emphasis on reconnecting with a universal tradition, a connection which many French

occultists believed had been broken with the French Revolution. This division of a right and left occultism is a clear example of how differently occultism has developed in the English- and French-speaking parts of the world, respectively. But what about occultism in other European countries such as Italy, Germany, Turkey or Yugoslavia? Or in other parts of the world, such as Australia and South America? The present collection is not, and cannot be, a complete survey and analysis of occultism around the world. The aim is much more modest: each chapter gives an example of occultism in a specific context, and we have striven for case-studies that are usually not included in general textbooks and surveys on the occult in order to broaden the perception and understanding of occultism. The present collection should be seen as an invitation to study occultism from a wider perspective, and to acknowledge that occultism is not merely a French or British phenomenon, but rather a Western esoteric current that has travelled around the world, having been reinterpreted in a number of different ways.

CHAPTER OUTLINES

Placing occultism – and by extension Western esotericism – in a global perspective the problems connected with the notions of what we actually mean by "Western" become apparent. For pragmatic reasons, we have chosen to follow Hanegraaff's suggestion to view the "Western" in Western esotericism as referring to the specificity of the field:

> To avoid any confusion, then, it should be clear that the adjective "Western" is not understood here as a qualifier within a larger field, demarcating the occidental section of some general world-wide "esotericism". On the contrary, it is meant to highlight the *specificity* of esotericism understood as an inherently Western domain of research, in contrast to globalizing or universalizing understandings of the term.
> (Hanegraaff 2013: 15)

Kennet Granholm goes to the heart of the matter of the theoretical problems connected with "Western" in Chapter 2, "Locating the West: Problematizing the *Western* in Western Esotericism and Occultism". While the term esotericism has received much theoretical discussion in the academic study of Western esotericism and occultism, Granholm argues that the term Western has not. That esotericism is a scholarly construction is widely accepted in academic quarters, but the term Western is likewise a construct – and one that is in many ways a far more complex and problematic construct than the word esotericism. The West is simultaneously a political/ideological, popular and scholarly construct, and something the constructed nature of which most often remains

implicit and unmentioned. What is the *Western* of Western esotericism? Is it a geographical region? Is it a cultural sphere? What the West is will be different in different contexts and uses. Furthermore, the idea of the West naturally changes through history. In the contemporary globalizing world, increasingly characterized by transnational connections, the idea of a separate and distinct West becomes even more problematic. "The West" has influenced "the East" and vice versa, introducing traditionally non-Western terms and ideas into the European sphere of esotericism and occultism, and introducing "Western" esoteric and occult notions, practices and groups into the "Eastern" sphere. In an atmosphere of increased plurality and pluralism these connections take on an increasingly complex character that is harder and harder to untangle.

If we look at esoteric discourses throughout history we find that the source of esoteric wisdom is often attributed to that which is foreign, alien and far away in space and/or time. For certain Renaissance esotericists Plato represented an esoteric wisdom the origin of which ultimately lay outside Greece. Egypt was the imagined origin of esoteric wisdom for a long time, and when it became too familiar this role was assigned to India. This process goes on, and is particularly visible in occultist notions of lost continents such as Atlantis and Lemuria, extra-terrestrials and pre-Christian European paganisms representing the perennial philosophy. It would seem that the idea of the far-away, mystical "orient" is a key feature in esoteric and occult discourse, and it could be claimed that the terms "Western" and "Eastern" (or non-Western) are more relevant for insider esoteric rhetoric than for scholarly discourse. At the very least, Granholm asserts, attention needs to be paid to how the term "Western" is used.

Hans Thomas Hakl explores, in Chapter 3, "The Magical Order of the Fraternitas Saturni". Little known outside the German-speaking area, the Fraternitas Saturni, founded in 1926 or 1928 by Eugen Grosche (1888–1964), fused several strands of occultism into a highly idiosyncratic whole. Relying on elements of ritual magic, alchemy, Rosicrucianism and Thelema, the order's ideology focused on a form of the Gnostic myth that posited a dualism involving on one hand a Solar principle (Chrestos) and on the other its opposite, which in the traditional (geocentric) astrological view is represented by Saturn, a malefic planet at the furthest distance from the central Sun. Saturn is here understood as analogous, *cum grano salis*, to both Lucifer and Satan (each standing for "higher" and "lower octaves" of Saturn, respectively) as well as the "dark brother" of the Sun. A Saturnian adept, relying on the notion that "God has a bright and a dark face", understands that, thus conceived, Lucifer possesses as much spiritual potential and salvific power as does the solar principle. For those inclined to follow this path, it consists of solitude, austerity and "compassionless love" – all ennobling virtues according to the system. A highly eclectic organization, incorporating *inter alia* elements of tantric Hinduism, the Fraternitas Saturni focused on magic as the main avenue of its practical work. Due to the fact that

some practices involved both sexual magic and the use of drugs, and that it viewed Satan in positive light, it is not surprising that the Fraternitas Saturni received some negative press, and it is quite conceivable that its idiosyncratic teachings with a somewhat pronounced sinister aura contributed to its relative obscurity. Its significant literary output and the elaborate system of practical occultism, however, call for a more substantial engagement with the history and teachings of the order.

In Chapter 4, "'In Communication with the Powers of Darkness': Satanism in Turn-of-the-Century Denmark and its Use as a Legitimating Device in Present-Day Esotericism", Per Faxneld looks into the work and influence of Carl William Hansen, a.k.a. Ben Kadosh (1872–1936). Perhaps influenced by his birth and upbringing in a lower working class environment, Ben Kadosh rejected Lutheran Christianity and its system of values and celebrated instead Satan/Lucifer/Baphomet, most notably by publishing a 30-page pamphlet, "The Dawn of a New Morning: The Return of the World's Master Builder" (1906). Written in a disorganized and unclear fashion, the pamphlet suggested that Hiram Abif, the Great Architect honoured by Freemasons, was in fact Satan/Lucifer, and it called for the creation of a cult devoted to his worship. As Faxneld makes clear, the larger implication behind this literary document concerns the often overlooked fact that there were expressions of satanic ideology preceding Anton Szandor LaVey and his Church of Satan (founded in 1966), and even Ben Kadosh was preceded by Stanislaw Przybyszewski and his "Die Synagoge des Satan" ([1897] 1979). Despite its limitations, Ben Kadosh's work proved to be rather influential: he himself achieved some notoriety and corresponded with August Strindberg and Gustav Meyrink, and eventually even became a subject of several literary works. Faxneld concludes by underscoring Ben Kadosh's influence on the contemporary Satanists in Scandinavia to whom he appeals as a historical precedent, a link with the tradition that legitimizes their own efforts.

In Chapter 5, "Hidden Wisdom in the Ill-Ordered House: A Survey of Occultism in Former Yugoslavia", Gordan Djurdjevic explores various manifestations of this cultural phenomenon in literature, avant-garde art movements, and more specifically in the work of Živorad Mihajlović Slavinski and Janez Trobentar. Slavinski is arguably the person most responsible for generating the interest in the esoteric subjects in this geographic area, to which he contributed a continuous stream of publications since the early 1970s. Written in an accessible style, often focused on practical application of the teachings, his books address a wide variety of thematic concerns, often from a psychological point of view. Slavinski eventually embraced Charles Berner's method of the "enlightenment intensives", which he modified and adopted as a principal technique in his "White Gnostic Church" (Ecclesia Gnostica Alba), an ecclesiastical branch within Slavinski's implementation of Kenneth Grant's Typhonian Order, of which he was designated a highest degree in the country, just before the

eruption of the wars in the 1990s. Due to a number of factors, as yet insufficiently studied and understood, in this same period the Yugoslav branch of Aleister Crowley's OTO became the most populous group of such kind in Europe. One of the keys of its success probably relates to the vigorous literary activity, which mostly consisted of translations, typically from Crowley. The final section of the chapter focuses on the work of the Slovenian Thelemite Janez Trobentar, who is singled out primarily for his own original literary contributions.

In Chapter 6, "Occultism and Christianity in Twentieth-Century Italy: Tommaso Palamidessi's Christian Magic", Francesco Baroni discusses an example of Italian occultism, which differs considerably from some of the more well-known examples of Italian occultists, such as Julius Evola and Arturo Reghini who, in different ways, sought to distance themselves from Christianity and the Catholic Church. Astrologer, medium, theosophist, director of a yoga school and founder of an esoteric order in Turin during the 1940s, Tommaso Palamidessi (1915–83) created in Rome, in 1968, the association *Archeosofica*, resting on the esoteric doctrine called Archeosophy. *Archeosofica* counts today a few hundred members both in Italy and in the rest of Europe (mainly in Germany, Portugal and France). Archeosophical doctrine combines the motley occult background of its founder with a strong Christian inspiration. The core of Archeosophy is its ascetic programme: out-of-body experiences, methods of meditation on the chakras and exercises of remembrance of past lives compose the itinerary of self-awareness and of ascent towards God recommended by Palamidessi. Archeosophy includes two kinds of theurgy. First, within the Archeosophical Society we find the "Lotocrucian Order", structured in thirteen degrees, which the follower gains by means of a series of initiatory rituals. This order practises "high theurgy", consisting in evocations of angelic beings, and in special rituals aiming at purifying the spiritual constitution of the participants. A second form of theurgy lies in what Palamidessi calls "artistic ascesis", based on the painting of sacred icons and the meditation on them. Sacred icons, according to Palamidessi, emit a spiritual power due in part to the symbolism of their colours, shape and proportions, and in part to the "special divine presence" which the ascetic calls upon them. To induce the descent of the divine presence, the painter of the icon resorts to the laying-on of hands and to a special prayer to the Christian Trinity.

These two forms of "Christian theurgy" show up one of the main features of archeosophy: the blend of a vast range of occultist notions and practices with both Catholic and Orthodox elements, in order to build up an esoteric Christian synthesis. Historically speaking, the background of archeosophical theurgy has to be looked for in the Italian esoteric revival of the first half of the twentieth century: the group "Ur", led by Julius Evola (1898–1974), had shown a significant interest in various forms of ceremonial magic. For a full understanding of Palamidessi's thought, however, one cannot neglect the importance of second-generation theosophists (especially Annie Besant and

Charles Webster Leadbeater) and of their re-evaluation of mystical and esoteric currents of early Christianity. The origins of the modern notion of "Christian esotericism", playing a pivotal role within the archeosophical doctrine, has to be found in that milieu, as well as, later on, in Steiner's anthroposophy and Guénon's traditionalism.

In Chapter 7, "Savitri Devi, Miguel Serrano, and the Global Phenomenon of Esoteric Hitlerism", Arthur Versluis discusses the reception of the teachings of Savitri Devi (Maximime Portaz, 1904–82) – who combined occultism with National Socialism and created a current that is usually referred to as "esoteric Hitlerism" – in the work of the Chilean author Miguel Serrano (1917–2009). Serrano is best known in the Anglophone world for his literary fiction and for his reminiscences concerning Carl Jung and Herman Hesse. Serrano was a Chilean diplomat for decades – ambassador to Austria, to India, and elsewhere. Readers with an interest in initiatory literature were drawn to his esoteric fiction, widely published in the 1970s and 1980s, with works like *The Ultimate Flower*, an initiatory novel featuring a spiritual Master and his circle in the tradition of Novalis, which joins Chilean/Andes references to European esotericism; or his reminiscences of his spiritual quest in Asia, entitled *The Serpent of Paradise: The Story of an Indian Pilgrimage*; or his later works in English, like *El/Ella: Book of Magic Love* and *Nos: Book of the Resurrection. Nos* and *El/Ella* resemble in some respects the fiction of Herman Hesse, or perhaps to a lesser extent that of Jorge Luis Borges: they seem like elegant literary parables. But in fact they presented, in a more or less palatable form, a central aspect of Serrano's esoteric Hitlerism, which is, according to Versluis, a kind of left-hand tantrism. Central to all of Serrano's subsequent works is the idea of male–female union and the fulfilment of man through this inner union.

Serrano's later work could be designated as the ultimate form of the "return of the repressed". At the end of the twentieth century, there was arguably no set of archetypes more universally maligned and rejected than those associated with Nazism and Adolf Hitler, yet Serrano seeks to "reverse" history and make Hitler the hero of his narrative – indeed, to make Nazism represent virtually the culmination of Eastern and Western religion alike, and to make of Hitler the mythic figure incarnated who can, Serrano thinks, bring about the yearned-for Golden Age. Serrano sees Hitler as prefiguring and representing primordial man, and he sees Chile as playing an important role in esoteric Hitlerism – which of course it does in circular fashion, since Serrano is Chilean. Serrano sees Chile in particular, and South America in general, as playing a central role in a para-historical narrative based in the idea that Hitler was an avatar or a messianic figure who heroically opposed the "robotic" "slaves" of the demiurge, Jehovah, God of the Jews. Versluis argues that Serrano's esoteric Hitlerism is a synthetic construction like Blavatsky's "secret doctrine" – it is assembled out of particular world religious traditions, notably in Serrano's case Hinduism and Norse religion – and it is deliberately shocking to Jewish and Christian

sensibilities. Serrano is a prolific and strange author who remains influential in what is sometimes termed the "far Right."

Another example of the reception – and reinterpretation – of occultism in a South American context, is the case of the Columbian occultist Samael Aun Weor, dealt with by PierLuigi Zoccatelli in Chapter 8, "Sexual Magic and Gnosis in Colombia: Tracing the Influence of G. I. Gurdjieff on Samael Aun Weor". Zoccatelli analyses the previously uninvestigated influence of the ideas of the Caucasian esoteric thinker George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (1866–1949), the creator of what many years ago was defined as the "forest school", on Samael Aun Weor (1917–77), the founder of a surprisingly popular neo-Gnostic movement. Zoccatelli has chosen this particular case study for three main reasons: First, both G. I. Gurdjieff and Samael Aun Weor have given rise to an extremely complex genealogy of groups and movements, often in varying degree of conflict with each other, widespread around the globe, with thousands (if not tens of thousands) of followers, to such an extent that it is possible to apply to them the term "hypertrophy of filiation". In this regard, although there are numerous studies of the filiation and posterity spawned by Gurdjieff's teaching, no such studies of Samael Aun Weor exist. Second, the hermeneutic and sociological cipher defined as "the charisma of the book" may be applied to both personalities, as it may indeed to most "classical" authors of modern and contemporary esotericism. This is a peculiar yet near-universal phenomenon which, focusing attention on a deeper level of reality and performing a unifying function by speaking to people beyond barriers of their culture of origin or personal culture, invites individuals to confront their own life and needs, and to find an answer addressed specifically to them in a book. Third, considering the enormously important role played by Gurdjieff in the panorama of contemporary esotericism and occultism, the analysis of Gurdjieff's influence on Samael Aun Weor throws into relief one aspect of Gurdjieff's teaching that is not generally held to be either at the centre or on the fringes of the "self-realizing" practices performed by the pupils of the "forest school", or of their theoretical preoccupations, but which, transplanted to Samael Aun Weor's "Gnostic movement" assumed an absolutely central role, although its source was never disclosed. Zoccatelli argues that the practice of sexual magic is the key to the whole Weorite system and, further, that this derives from an almost literal adaptation of Gurdjieff's ideas.

While the previous chapters have dealt with various forms of occultism that have developed in predominantly Christian environments, Thierry Zarcone focuses on occultism in an Islamic milieu in Chapter 9, "'Occultism' in an Islamic Context: The Case of Modern Turkey from the Nineteenth Century to the Present Time". In his chapter Zarcone aims first to clarify the use and the legitimacy of the term occultism in an Islamic context in general and in the Ottoman/Turkish area in particular. Zarcone argues that occultism does not refer automatically to Sufism, that is Islamic mysticism, although there are some currents in Sufism that must be classified as occultist. This is the case, among

other, of the Bektashi Sufi order, a Sufi lineage that held secret meetings and practised various forms of ceremonies. The first section of this chapter deals with the doctrine and rituals of this brotherhood and focuses on some other currents more or less linked with the heritage of Hermes (Idris) in Islam. A second section examines the relationships between "Islamic esotericism" and "Western esotericism", or occultism, through the cases of the aforementioned Gurdjieff, occultist Rudolf Freiherr von Sebottendorff (Adam Alfred Rudolf Glauer, 1875–1945?) and the Danish anthropologist Carl Vett (1871–1956), who visited Turkey at the end of the nineteenth century and early in the twentieth century in search of esoteric knowledge and contacts with members of local esoteric organizations (mostly Sufis). A third section investigates the emergence of Western occultist and psychic sciences in Turkey, such as spiritualism. The fourth and last section is devoted to the introduction in Turkey of the doctrine of the French Traditionalist thinker René Guénon (1886–1951) in the 1980s, its influence upon some academic milieus and the vivid opposition of Islam towards his writings when translated into Turkish.

While the interaction between occultism and Islamic traditions remain a virtually unexplored field of research, considerably more scholarly attention has been given to reception of Hinduism in occultism. A case in point is, of course, the theosophy of Blavatsky and Olcott, which to a large extent can be described as a Western interpretation of Hindu and Buddhist traditions, set within the context of nineteenth-century occultism. In Chapter 10, "Reception of occultism in India: the case of the Holy Order of Krishna", Henrik Bogdan discusses the other side of the encounter of occultism with Eastern spiritual practices, that is, the migration of occultism into a Hindu context. Using the Holy Order of Krishna (which has existed for over a century) as a case study, Bogdan discusses how aspects of occultism have been adopted and reinterpreted in a Hindu context – and more specifically, the adoption and reinterpretation of Aleister Crowley's motto "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" by the Holy Order of Krishna as a "supreme mantra" during the 1920s and 1930s. Bogdan furthermore traces the reverse influence of the Holy Order of Krishna upon British occultism through the enigmatic Swami Pareswara Bikshu (or Yogi Bhikshu). Bikshu, who was affiliated with the Holy Order of Krishna, acted as the personal "guru" to a Londoner named David Curwen (1893–1984), who got in contact with Aleister Crowley in 1944, and became the last IXth degree member of the Ordo Templi Orientis during Crowley's lifetime. Bikshu's views on Tantra, as expressed in an important manuscript commentary on the *Ananada Lahari*, would later exert a profound influence on the British occultist Kenneth Grant (1924–2011) and his interpretation of sexual magic.

In Chapter 11, "Transnational Necromancy: W. B. Yeats, Izumi Kyôka and *Neo-Nô* as Occultic Stagecraft", Emily Aoife Somers argues that the noticeable trends in the scholarship of what is generally described as *the occult* are the assessments as to how these seemingly marginal practices found ways of

operating alongside major modes of thought and practice in the formation of modernity. Nations-in-change, such as Japan and Ireland, are particularly open to these evaluations, as many ideologues in these geographies drew upon fantastic, esoteric and occultic tropes to present identities that were unstable, uncertain and liminal. With works such as Michael Dylan Foster's research on *yôkaigaku* (monsterology) and Gerald Figal's analysis of *fushigi no sekai* (the mysteries) in mind, Somers argues that much of the occultist literary activity in Japan had, in fact, been cooperatively influenced by similar movements in Ireland. For the purposes of this chapter, she focuses on how W. B. Yeats (1865–1939), well known for his work with the Golden Dawn, sought to develop forms of initiatic drama that would breach the typified dimensions of space and time, through a stagecraft of ritualized necromancy that challenged the trajectory of more mainstream ideology.

Through his interests in both the occult and classical Japanese dramaturgy, especially the *nô*, Yeats fashioned a kind of theatre for generating interdimension entrances and exits. Critics have been scathing in their assessments of his work as orientalism. However, that Yeats's *neo-nô*, as a contemporary re-envisioning of the early modern form, had a strong influence on esoteric Japanese playwrights of his time has not been acknowledged. In particular, Somers examines the relationship of Yeats to the avant-garde author Izumi Kyôka (1873–1939), a leading occultist playwright of modern Japan. The chapter describes and theorizes the kinds of occultic strategies that these authors employed to deconstruct institutional norms such as *religion* and *nation*. By considering the intercultural dialogue taking place, Somers offers transnational readings, ones that account for the enormous artistic and esoteric activity between Ireland and Japan at that time. Yeats's *nô* (a term he rarely used himself) can best be understood in comparison to his Japanese contemporaries. Yeats's drama, in terms of style and content, influenced the works of Izumi Kyôka's *neo-nô* (*kindai nô*) through a shared sense of *twilight* as an occult operation in the metaphysic of change. Twilight, as a conjoining chronotrope, became a shared code-word between these two authors: the ancestral is invoked, and interrogated, through the occultic performance of *neo-nô*. Cultural memory, engaged through performative necromancy, becomes a dynamic *twilight* (*tasogare*), through which recovery and re-narrativization is possible.

Somers notes that Christopher Lehrich made some interesting points in allocating Zeami's *nô* theatre to the general project of nation studies (*kokugaku*). However, Lehrich's assertions that Zeami was an occultist, likened to John Dee, are both inappropriate and anachronistic, according to Somers. Almost all specialists in Japanese classical literature would resist such a typification of Zeami's work. However, Somers seeks to revise Lehrich's fundamental theories by situating them in a more appropriate era: Izumi Kyôka and W. B. Yeats both sought to develop an anti-realist drama that countered the dogmatic, legislative fashioning of creed and citizenship. The central argument is that, in these two authors,

we see dynamic examples of occultic strategies being employed to threaten the centres of power and stability, through a deliberately esoteric medium that was both interdimensional and transnational in content and conceptualization.

Finally, in Chapter 12, "An Australian Original: Rosaleen Norton and Her Magical Cosmology", Nevill Drury explores the magical cosmology of the controversial Australian witch and trance artist Rosaleen Norton (1917–79). Within the social context of post-Second World War Australia, Norton was unquestionably an unconventional figure at a time when the local population was approximately 80 per cent Christian. Norton claimed to be an initiated follower of the Great God Pan and also revered Hecate, Lilith and Lucifer. Norton claimed to encounter these mythic beings as experientially real on the "inner planes" that she accessed while in a state of self-induced trance. Many of her most significant artworks were based on these magical encounters.

Influenced by a range of visionary traditions, including Kundalini Yoga, Kabbalah, medieval Goetia and the Thelemic magick of Aleister Crowley, Norton embraced a magical perspective that would today be associated with the so-called "Left-Hand Path", although this term was not one she used to describe her work or philosophy. Norton's artistic career began in the 1940s, with publication of some of her earliest occult drawings, and reached a significant milestone in 1952 when the controversial volume *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* – co-authored with her lover, the poet Gavin Greenlees – was released in Sydney, immediately attracting a charge of obscenity. Norton rapidly acquired a media-led reputation as the wicked "Witch of Kings Cross", was vilified by journalists during the 1950s and 1960s, and was branded by many as demonic. But Norton's magical approach was not entirely "dark". Her perception that the Great God Pan provided a source of universal vitality led her to revere nature as innately sacred, and in many ways she can be regarded as a significant forerunner of those Wiccans and Goddess worshippers from a later generation who would similarly embrace the concept of sacred ecology and seek to "re-sacralize" the Earth.

FINAL REMARKS

It is our hope that the present anthology may contribute to the increasing academic interest in the study of occultism as a diverse and vibrant form of alternative religiosity and human culture in general. The constant transfer of occultist ideas, discourses and practices in a globalized world force us to reflect on the changeability of that which we chose to call occultism, and for that we need to develop new analytical approaches. We are aware of the fact that the present collection of studies surveys only a tip of the iceberg and that a great deal of further research needs to be done. If the following chapters manage to spark an interest in such a research, our task as editors will be accomplished.

NOTES

1. Discussions concerning the definition of Western esotericism are ongoing. For the most significant recent works on the subject, see Hanegraaff (2012, 2013) and von Stuckrad (2010). The use of the term "Western esotericism" in this anthology is grounded in the field of research to which these works are related.
2. This older understanding of occultism is perhaps most clearly expressed in the pioneering work of James Webb (1971).

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CHAPTER 2

LOCATING THE WEST

Problematizing the *Western* in Western esotericism and occultism

Kennet Granholm

Although the study of Western esotericism is fairly new as an independent discipline, the question of what meaning "esotericism" holds has been the subject of much scholarly debate. Unfortunately, the meaning of "Western" has not been subjected to the same rigorous scrutiny. If "Western" is to be a defining term, as it can be expected to be in the study of *Western* esotericism, then it should be discussed thoroughly. The term may seem simple, but it is actually a tricky one to define in a way that makes it analytically useful. As with identities in general, "the West" as a region, "Western" as a quality and "Westerner" as a self-identity are often defined in relation to that which is conceived of as non-Western. In this, esotericists have been no different. However, whereas the "non-Western" is commonly depicted in a negative tone in order to present the "Western" in a good light (see Saïd 1979), esotericists have tended to adopt romanticized views of "the other", or at least of certain aspects of "the other". The prominence of this romanticizing tendency, combined with the near impossibility to demarcate "the West" from the "non-West" in any conclusive and satisfactory manner, suggests that "Western" is best approached as an internal, emic, category in esoteric discourse. Furthermore, in a late-modern globalizing world solid distinctions between "West" and "non-West" are becoming increasingly difficult and problematic to sustain.

In this chapter I will look at how "Western" has been conceptualized both within and beyond the study of esotericism and occultism. I will treat the issue of "positive orientalism" in esoteric discourse, and look at how societal change in late modernity further complicates the "Westernness" of Western esotericism. While the term esotericism is used more frequently than occultism in this chapter, the latter term is of major relevance here. There is not full agreement on the specific meaning of occultism, and I will not attempt to provide any sort of

refined definition here. However, in simplifying matters, occultism can be said to be a distinct development of the esoteric in the post-Enlightenment, under the influence of modern societal changes such as the hegemonization of the ideologies of reason and rationality, adaptation to modern scientific worldviews, and the general diminished influence of Christian institutions.

WHAT IS THE WEST?

In an academic discipline that purports to study something "Western", the meaning of this term could be assumed to be given significant treatment. Alas, this is not the case.[1] For the most part the meaning of the term remains implicit. There are only a few instances of limited treatment of the subject. Antoine Faivre (1994: 7; see also Faivre 1993: xiii) defines "the West" as "the vast Greco-Roman ensemble, both medieval and modern in which the Jewish and Christian religions have cohabited with Islam for several centuries". Later on, in the fourth edition of his *L'Ésotérisme* (2007), he discusses a "West 'visited' by some Jewish, Islamic, or even far-Eastern religious traditions" (quoted in Pasi 2010: 152). Beyond this vague notion no further treatment is provided. In the *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism* (Hanegraaff *et al*. 2005) the issue largely remains untouched, as it does in works by important scholars in the field (e.g. Hanegraaff 1996; Versluis 2007; Goodrick-Clarke 2008). Kocku von Stuckrad, while critical to many other basic assumptions in earlier studies in the field, has not directed significant attention to the treatment of the meaning of "Western". Indeed, the term Western is included in the titles of his books (e.g. von Stuckrad 2005b, 2010) and he does seem to deal with the "Western cultural sphere", although in recent years moving to use the somewhat less problematic, though still amorphous, term European. Marco Pasi (2010), while raising much the same concerns as I do in this chapter, does not provide substantial solutions to the problem. In discussing Faivre's approach as dealing with "Christian and post-Christian forms" of esotericism, he asks whether the denominator "Western" perhaps should be exchanged for "Christian" (Pasi 2010: 164). If we cannot get satisfactory answers to the meaning and extent of "Western" in scholarship on Western esotericism, we need to turn elsewhere.

Any discussion on the meaning of "the West" must also engage in discussion on "Europe". I am not proposing equating the two, but often "Western culture" is used to denote a "European culture" which has spread beyond Europe (see Bailkey *et al.* 1962: 62). The ancient Greeks divided the world into three parts: Asia, Europe and Africa, with the river Tanais (Don) as the border between the first two (de Boer 1995: 14–15). Greece was neither European nor Asian, but rather a mixture of the best characteristics of the courageous and independent but unskilled and unwise Europeans and the skilful and wise but uncourageous

and weak Asians (*ibid*.: 17). With the conflicts between the Greeks and the Persians in the fifth century BCE, more polemic distinctions began to be made where the Greeks stood for "freedom" and the Persians for "tyranny" – and the conflict came to be seen as one between Europe and Asia (*ibid*.: 16). The tripartite division of the world was taken up by Jewish scholar Flavius Josephus (37?–100 CE) who described the world as divided among Noah's three sons Japheth (Europe), Ham (Africa) and Shem (Asia) (*ibid*.: 20). Later on Augustine used this division to provide justification for European domination over the other continents, with the name Japheth having the "hidden meaning" of "enlargement" or "spreading out" (*ibid*.: 21). While much of geographical Europe lay under Roman rule for the first four centuries CE, there appears to have been no notion of a common culture (McCormick 1999: 33). The "birth of Europe" is often dated to the early middle ages (500–1050), particularly from the reign of Charlemagne (from 800 CE), with Christianity, the Latin language and Rome as factors that created a unified cultural area (McCormick 1999: 33–4; Huntington 1998: 50).

The view of a "Europe united in Christendom" is, however, the result of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century projection. It is really only then, with some limited discussion in the seventeenth century, that the idea of one Europe emerges (de Boer 1995: 13–14, 69–70; McCormick 1999: 36; see also Pasi 2010: 155). Actual proposals and projects in this regard emerged only during and after the First World War[2] (de Boer 1995: 90-101), with increased political support after the Second World War (Waever 1995: 152–3).[3] There was, however, a split between the Soviet Union-controlled eastern parts and the US-aligned western parts of Europe, with only the latter regarded as properly European (*ibid*.: 154, 173). With the formation of NATO, with strong US involvement, perspectives shifted towards views of a "Western" rather than simply a "European" culture and civilization (though it should be noted that there was opposition to this inclusion of North America) (*ibid*.: 161–4). Political changes in the 1980s led to a broadening of Europe to include many "Eastern European" regions. To conclusively set the borders of Europe is no easier today than earlier in history. In the post-Second World War European integration project the focus lies on the centres of Europe, for example France and Germany, with no real eastern border, just a gradual "thinning out"[4] (*ibid*.: 176, 195–202).

While "Europe" is a far less problematic term than "the West", it is not a plain and simple matter to define it. This is due to an apparent dual significance of the term, as both a geographical region and a culture with a specific "inner character of its inhabitants" (McCormick 1999: 32). In terms of region there exists no clear, self-evident eastern border. Conventionally, the eastern border has been presented as "running down the Ural Mountains, across the Caspian sea, and along the Caucasus Mountains" (*ibid*.: 41). Curiously enough the Balkans, including Greece, "have long been regarded as a zone of transition between two 'civilizations'" (*ibid*.: 42). The purported birthplace of European/

Western culture is thus no longer regarded as being Western in a proper sense (see Huntington 1998: 162)!

As the notion of Europe arose with the ancient Greeks, so does the standard narrative of the origin of European/Western culture also start with Greece.[5] In older historical works distinctions are made between Greek and near eastern culture, with the former being governed by reason and the latter by "divine rulers". The Greek were also considered "the first to formulate many of the western world's fundamental concepts in philosophy, science, and art", and fostered debate and argument, law and freedom, democracy and civil liberties, rationality and reason – all in contrast to "near eastern superstitions and traditions" (Bailkey *et al*. 1962: 50, 63). The narrative continues with the seed of Western civilization being assimilated by Rome – "the great intermediary" – and passed on to the peoples of Western Europe (*ibid*.: 62, 64, 77). Although the Roman world-state drew influences from a multitude of cultures, it was still described as "predominantly a synthesis of Greek and Latin cultures", and non-Greek contributions considered less significant and formational (*ibid*.: 77). Along with Greece, older historical sources describe Rome as considerably more enlightened than the "non-West". In comparing Rome and Carthage the latter is described as "governed by a selfish, wealthy commercial aristocracy, who hired mercenaries to fight for them", and in the conflict between the states Rome's victory was due to its "loyal body of free citizens" (*ibid*.: 68).

This idea of "Western Civilization" as a continuation of Greek (and Roman) culture/civilization has a hegemonic position, something which is aptly demonstrated in Rick Riordan's novels about the demigod son of Poseidon, Percy Jackson:

> What you call "Western civilization". Do you think it's just an abstract concept? No, it's a living force. A collective consciousness that has burned bright for thousands of years … The fire started in Greece. Then, as you well know – or as I hope you know, since you passed my course – the heart of the fire moved to Rome, and so did the gods … The gods simply moved, to Germany, to France, to Spain, for a while. Wherever the flame was brightest, the gods were there … America is now the heart of the flame. It is the great power of the West. And so Olympus is here. And we are here. (Riordan 2005: 72–3)

Western/European culture is also often described as Christian culture, with the Christian Church as "the only hope for the survival of western civilization" after the fall of Rome (Bailkey *et al*. 1962: 139). Otto I the Great (912–73, reigned from 962) spread Christianity and Western civilization by incorporating Slavs and "pagan Vikings" and defended Western culture against the threat of Muslim Arabs and Asiatic tribes (*ibid*.: 141–3, 146, 215–17; see also Huntington 1998: 50–51). Not all Slavs were included though, as Mongol domination "completed

the break between Russia and western European civilization" (Bailkey *et al.* 1962: 262). Muslims, who held most of the Iberian peninsula for more than 700 years – far longer than its "Christian" phases before or after, are described as an "alien religion and civilization" (*ibid.*: 213), while Cordova in the region is curiously enough described as "in a sense … the intellectual center of the western world" (*ibid.*: 186). The crusades, from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, are often seen as conflicts between two civilization – "the West" and the Muslims (see Bailkey *et al.* 1962: 185–98) – and have helped forge notions of common cultural identity (McCormick 1999: 34).

One of the more famous names in debates regarding the West in the last twenty years or so is Samuel P. Huntington. He regards civilization[6] – identified "both by common objective elements, such as language history, religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people" – as the broadest "cultural entity" humans can belong to (Huntington 1993: 24–5; 1998: 43). Huntington stresses this point by asserting that the European Union is based on cultural commonality (Huntington 1998: 28), and this is why Turkey is not accepted into the union (*ibid.*: 144). Due to Turkey being Muslim and not Christian, it is not regarded as sharing the "cultural heritage" of the West/Europe (McCormick 1999: 42; see also Casanova 2006: 71–4). According to Huntington (1998: 42), religion is among the most significant objective elements that define civilizations. Western civilization is then "what used to be called Western Christendom" (*ibid.*: 46), and "Europe ends where Western Christianity ends and Islam and Orthodoxy begin" (*ibid.*: 158). It does not help that Huntington's views and understanding of religion are very simplistic, with Western Christianity, Orthodoxy, Islam, Hinduism and so on, viewed as more or less monolithic entities within which no significant internal variation exists.

A result of Huntington's background in political science/security studies is that he tends to conceptualize civilizations according to political alignment. In the 1920s the world is divided into regions "Ruled by the West" and "Actually or Nominally Independent of the West", in the 1960s we have the "Free World",[7] the "Communist Bloc" and "Unaligned Nations",[8] and after 1990 a more multiplexed situation with Western, Latin American, African, Islamic, Sinic, Hindu, Orthodox, Buddhist and Japanese civilizations (*ibid.*: 22–7). In the late twentieth century then, Western civilization consists of Europe and North America, joined by Australia and New Zealand (*ibid.*: 46). This demonstrates how "the West" is defined in a dialectic to that which is *not* Western, and consequently relates to issues of power. As has been shown earlier, "Western" often relates to numerous positive characteristics which are purportedly absent in the "non-Western".

A different conceptualization is presented by Colin Campbell in his thesis on the "easternization" of the West (Campbell 2007; see also 1998, 1999). Drawing on Max Weber's ideal typical description of the characteristics of Western and

Eastern religion (see Weber 1963: 169–83), Campbell presents "East" and "West" as the two major, contrasting, types of civilization (Campbell 2007: 4–9, 43–4). The Western-type civilization is characterized by "materialistic dualism", where the divine is personal, transcendent, and separated from the natural, the worldview linear, the view of the human being dualistic in a distinction between body and soul, and the religious ethos dogmatic and authoritarian (*ibid*.: 61–2). The Eastern-type civilization is characterized by "metaphysical monism", with an impersonal all-permeating divine force, a cyclical worldview, and the overarching religious goal of experiencing the divine and becoming one with it – with a corresponding suspicion towards rationalism and analysis (*ibid*.: 64–6). The Easternization thesis is based on singularizing and simplistic and misleading stereotypes of both "Eastern" (in essence Indian) and "Western" societies and religion (Hamilton 2002; Partridge 2004: 106–12; Granholm 2010). In essence, if going by Campbell's Easternization thesis the majority of esotericism in the West would by necessity need to be regarded "Eastern".

As we can see there are many problems and much vagueness in trying to demarcate "the West". "The West" is not a "natural" category; it is historically, ideologically, politically (and so on) determined and demarcated, and its borders and characteristics are therefore never stable and finitely set.[9] It can be a geographical region or a cultural sphere and these two understandings are difficult to separate. Vague notions of "shared cultural history and values" through "buildings, art, literature, and philosophy" are simply not enough if "Western" is to be a defining element in the study of esotericism. Discussions such as this singularize both "the Western" and the "non-Western" and present them as monolithic and homogenous totalities. While scholars such as Huntington seem to assert that there exists some kind of essential quality that unites Spain and Sweden and makes them both "Western", it is extremely difficult to find such a thing. What is the essential "Western nature" that both Spain and Sweden share but Turkey does not? Projecting "Western" as a cultural sphere neglects the often very significant differences between various countries and regions. Faivre's notion of "the vast Greco-Roman ensemble" and Huntington's assertion that while the border between the "Western" and "non-Western" is unclear it nonetheless is very real (Huntington 1993: 24) are not sufficient if we need to distinguish "Western" from "non-Western".

ESOTERICISM AND POSITIVE ORIENTALISM

Scholars such as Kocku von Stuckrad (e.g. 2005a: 86–7) and Wouter Hanegraaff (2007, 2012) have noted the importance of othering in regard to esotericism. However, the focus has been more on how the esoteric has been othered and not sufficiently on othering as an integral element of esoteric discourse itself. The creation of and focus on a positive other is such a common feature in eso-

teric discourse that it can be regarded a central element. This romanticizing of the exotic other is, while not unheard of (see King 2005: 281–2), contrary to more common expressions of orientalism. Orientalism (see Saïd 1979; King 2005) and the creation of "exotic others" through which self-understandings and self-identities can be constructed are commonplace in European contexts (and its eventual offshoots in e.g. North America) (Waever 1995: 203; see also Huntington 1998: 20, who sees it more as a universal factor in human identity construction), and this would appear to have been the case at least since antiquity. In Europe, these processes exist alongside the construction of Europe as based on inherent values such as reason and rationality (Waever 1995: 209). As said, while standard orientalism creates an exotic other which is contrasted to "inherent European values" the construction of the *esoteric* other is primarily positive. The exotic others might not be regarded as ideals to emulate in terms of society, politics, morality or lifestyle, but they are nonetheless though to possess some form of higher knowledge which is, at least presently, absent in "the West".

We see numerous examples of this in the history of Western esotericism. Dylan Burns (2006) and Wouter Hanegraaff (2009, 2012) have both discussed the concept of Platonic Orientalism – the notion that Plato's philosophy represented "Eastern wisdom" which was central to some Renaissance thinkers. Eventually, with the growing familiarity with Plato, the focus was shifted to Egypt as the cradle of esoteric knowledge. Still later this was no longer enough and India and the "mystic orient" became home of "the true religion". Imaginary esoteric centres such as Agharti and Shangri-La and the lost continents of Atlantis and Lemuria also represent the exotic esoteric other. In the twentieth century various indigenous and pre-Christian pagan religions, arguably representing even more exotic and esoteric subjects, have become more and more important. While it might seem odd to suggest that the appeal of European pre-Christian religion is an expression of "positive Orientalism", and while Orientalism is perhaps not the most suitable word here, it does express the same fascination with that which is far away and exotic. The difference to the other forms of esoteric othering is that we are here dealing with the far away in time rather than in space.

To some degree, however, this positive orientalism was interrupted in eighteenth-century occultism. Helena Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society outright embraced esotericist positive orientialism in a never-before-seen degree of admiration of non-Western culture and religion, specifically with a focus on India. This involved asserting the supremacy of Indian mysticism over European resemblances, and even a move to India. Furthermore, the impact of the Society on the Indian independence movement and self-perceptions of Hindus should not be neglected. At the same time, however, this apparent abandoning of all things Western caused a backlash, or alternatively created a space for new actors on the esoteric/occult field. Movements such as Anna

Kingsford's and Edward Maitland's Hermetic Society (1884–7), the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor (*c.*1884–5), and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (founded 1888) were created partly as responses to the "Eastern" focus of the Theosophical Society. These movements expounded a specifically "Western occult tradition" in their opposition to the Theosophical Society. The question of whether this polemic was primarily an opposition to the "Eastern" focus of Theosophy, or if it simply used to stake out new territory on the esoteric marketplace is unimportant in the present context. What matters is that this is where the division of "Eastern" and "Western" esotericism is originally made, as Marco Pasi has expertly discussed (Pasi 2010: 155). While the inclusion of the term "Western" in the academic study of Western esotericism can primarily be attributed to attempts to curb religionist fantasies of an inner core common to all religions, the influence of the occultist projection of a specifically Western occult tradition cannot be dismissed (*ibid.*: 152–3). Taking this "turn to the West" to mean that the long esotericist tradition of positive orientalism was *passé* is, however, a misjudgement. First off, many fractions in eighteenth-century and later esotericism and occultism did still "turn to the East" in their search for higher knowledge. The example of Traditionalism (see Sedgwick 2004) is a good one. Here, thinkers such as René Guenon, writing in early-twentieth-century France, presented modernity and the modern West as spiritually dead and the focus was shifted to "authentic traditions" such as Islam (and its esoteric practice of Sufism) and Orthodox Christianity. The amorphous contemporary esoteric milieu which many scholars (problematically, see Granholm 2008a, 2013b) term the New Age movement is another good example. Here we find numerous examples of perceptions of "Eastern wisdom" still playing an important role. Second, the "westward turn" still turned to exotic examples in its search for "native" higher knowledge. The turning to pre-Christian mythology and religion (discussed above) is one example. The other is the re-ignited fascination with Egypt. Although Egypt was, in some ways, seen as a cradle of the West – primarily as the origin of "the Western mystery tradition" – it was not the West here and now. It was a long-ago, far-away, mystical West which certainly applies to the notion of positive orientalism and the exoticization of the foreign subject. It did not deal with finding the higher knowledge in the near and mundane, but turned to sources that could be regarded as exotic and at the same time positioned in contrast to the "East" of the Theosophical Society. Thus, developments in eighteenth-century occultism point even more forcefully to the significance and appeal of the exotic other in esoteric discourse. All these factors suggest that it is more useful to regard "Western" as component inherent to esoteric discourse – something to be studied – than to employ it as an etic scholarly term to be used in an analytical capacity.

LATE-MODERN SOCIETAL CHANGE

If the definition and extent of the West are problematic issues in research on the esoteric in earlier periods, they are even more problematic in research on contemporary phenomena – in what many sociologist term late modernity. Modernity, in a sociological sense, should be distinguished from "the modern period" in a historical sense. Rather than outright denoting a historical period, the sociological term describes a new social order with large-scale global implications (Giddens 1990: 4; 1997: 55). Starting in Western Europe around the seventeenth century, modernity arose from "processes of industrialization, urbanization and political upheaval" (Wittrock 2001: 49). Among the most distinguishing features of modernity are the processes of differentiation through which societal institutions such as religion, education and politics grow increasingly independent from each other (Crook *et al*. 1992: 18–19). Modernity was informed by modern*ism*,[10] based on enlightenment ideals of reason and rationality, and processes of modernization were informed by cultural and intellectual shifts in Western Europe positing a modern, man-made rather than divine, societal order as preferable to traditional society (see Wittrock 2001: 54). Although modernity started as a West European project and has spread more or less globally it does not entail a simple homogenization or Westernization of the world. Instead, we have multiple modernities (see Eisenstadt 2003a, 2003b) with modernization taking different routes in different cultural contexts (see Ben-Rafael & Sternberg 2002: 4–7; Hefner 2008: 153) – and this applies to different European regions as well.

Modernity is not static. The current phase of modernity is often termed late, high or accentuated, and is characterized by an ambivalent attitude towards the institutions and taken-for-granted "truths" of modernity (Giddens 1991: 27–8).[11] The disillusionment with the modern grand narrative of progress has led to a general rejection of the absolute authoritative status of the modern institutions of science, medicine and moral jurisprudence (see Bauman 1992: viii–x, xvii–xxii). The modern processes of fragmentation progress to the level of de-differentiation, where cultural forms are combined in new and theoretically unlimited ways. With these factors in mind, Zygmunt Bauman prefers to use the term *Liquid Modernity* to describe the current phase of modernity (Bauman 2000). Bauman used the metaphor of liquids to describe the current phase of modernity. Liquids "cannot easily hold their shape", "are constantly ready (and prone) to change [shape]", are characterized by their mobility, and "'flow', 'spill', 'run out', 'splash', 'pour over', 'leak', 'flood', 'spray', 'drip', 'seep', 'ooze'" into each other (*ibid*.: 2). In the same way cultural forms and societal institutions flow into each other in the current phase of modernity. Earlier modernity, then, fostered this state by "liquefying" earlier solids – that is, stable cultural forms and societal institutions – in order to create better and more stable solids out of them. An important difference between early

modernity and late modernity is then not only the shapes of these institutions, but more significantly the meanings and ideological content people codify in these shapes.

In the context of the present chapter, globalization emerges as one of the most significant aspects of modernity. This process entails the "compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (Robertson 1992: 8; see also Waters 1995: 3; Friedman 1995: 70), or put slightly differently "increasing globe-wide connectivity (or interconnectedness) and increasing global awareness" (Robertson 2008: 451–2). While "globe-wide connectivity" is significant, it is the "global awareness", or "globality", which is of particular interest in an examination of religion and globalization. Religious actors "embody a global orientation in their styles of language and physical deportment" (Beckford 2003: 108–9), in effect a preparedness to comprehend and approach the world as one single place and the readiness to see the whole world as the arena of operation. While scholars disagree on whether globalization is a distinctly modern phenomenon or not, and consequently on its time frame (see Giddens 1990: 53; Pieterse 1995: 46–7; Robertson 1995: 30), there is general consensus on globalization having accelerated in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Waters 1995: 4; Martikainen 2004: 41). This is to a large degree due to advances in communication technologies (e.g. mobile phones, the Internet and online communication) and transportation (e.g. faster and more affordable travel and transportation of goods) (Friedman 1995: 70; Waters 1995: 33–6). The focus on the global commonly comes at the expense of focus on the national. This, in turn, increases the significance of the regional, as in the saying "think globally, act locally".

Roland Robertson presents the "universalization of particularism" and the "particularization of universalism" as two interconnected processes in globalization (Robertson 1992: 100–105; see Friedman 1995: 72). The former relates to "the idea of the universal being given global-human concreteness" and the latter "involves the extensive diffusion of the idea that there is virtually no limit to particularity, to uniqueness, to difference, and to otherness" (Robertson 1992: 102). An example given by Robertson is the idea of nationalism, "which can develop *only* in tandem with internationalism" (*ibid*.: 103). In Robertson's use this relates primarily to identity-construction, and relates to processes where for example the idea of the nation-state (the particular) is projected as the "natural order of things" in a global (universal) context (the universalization of particularism), and the creation of specifically national variants of global phenomena – "the appropriation of the universal in local contexts" (Friedman 1995: 72) – such as in the creation of regionally specific modernities and expressions of "world religions" (the particularization of universalism). This relates to what Robertson describes as glocalization, based on the Japanese business term *dochakuka*, roughly meaning global localization (Robertson 1992: 173; 1995). The term refers to the fact that instead of a homogenous global world-culture,

we have a mass of heterogeneous interconnected localities, not necessarily but possibly disembedded from their original localities of conception.

Transnationality is another central term in sociological theorizing on contemporary social relations. Ulf Hannerz is critical of what he regards as the use of globalization for "just about any processes or relationships that somehow cross state boundaries" (Hannerz 1996: 6; see also Smith 2001: 3–5). Instead he suggests the term transnational in reference to social relations and connections that are not necessarily global in context, but nonetheless transcend the boundaries of individual nation states. A benefit of choosing the term transnational over global is that the former highlights the locality of social relations, something which is often not sufficiently treated in theories on globalization (Smith 2001: 2–3). Theories of globalization often dichotomize the global and the local in ways that make the two appear essentially separate (*ibid*.: 157). The concept translocality is used to denote the connections between various localities in transnational networks (*ibid*.: 169), where the different localities in a transnational network affect and are affected by all other localities.

A further aspect which affects religious life in late (or liquid) modernity is pluralism, which can be described as "a complex, but clear, form of social, cultural, and religious coexistence" and should be distinguished from plurality – the coexistence of "a multiplicity of cultural, social, religious, or other groupings, each with its own history, its own norms and evidences" (Welker 2007: 1461; see also von Stuckrad 2005a: 86; 2005b: 8 on pluralism as the "*organisation of difference*"). The maintenance of difference is significant, as plurality would otherwise shift towards homogeneity. The existence and awareness of other religious traditions forms the basis of European processes of self-identity, which is – as discussed earlier – commonly defined through contrast with "the other" (see von Stuckrad 2005a: 86–7). Pluralism can also be taken to signify an ideology where the condition of plurality, and the process of pluralization, is deemed beneficial and desirable. Kocku von Stuckrad argues that pluralism on the religious and cultural field of Europe is nothing new. It is a "structural element of the European history of culture" and has actually been the dominant context of Europe since at least antiquity, although pluralism has increased in modernity (von Stuckrad 2005a: 86–7; 2005b: 8). Both plurality and pluralism have accentuated to the degree that "institutionalized pluralism" can be regarded a central feature of late modernity (Bauman 1992: 187).

The developments described above foster an atmosphere of detraditionalization, processes where religious actors are increasingly detached from their reliance on outside authorities and instead rely on their own individual interpretations of religious source material (Heelas 1996: 2). What Heelas calls "radical theorizing" on detraditionalization (*ibid*.: 3–7) – the idea that traditional society, characterized by closed social systems, fate-based worldviews, epistemological certainty and so on, is being replaced by its polar opposite – is problematic. For one thing, it easily portrays "traditional society" in a simplistic

way and as more "traditional" than it necessarily was. "Coexistence theorizing" (*ibid*.: 7–11), however, is more nuanced. Here detraditionalizing processes are regarded to exist alongside processes of tradition-maintenance, tradition-invention and retraditionalization (*ibid*.: 7; Heelas & Woodhead 2000: 347). Detraditionalization is accentuated by multiculturalism and the pluralization and the fragmentation of worldviews and values it brings, as well as by the commodification of culture and religion in "late capitalism" (Heelas 1996: 4–5). The multitude of possible outlooks serves to diminish the power of exclusivistic and hegemonistic claims to truth (although they by no means disappear). Diversity reduces the cohesiveness, in a religious and cultural sense, of late modern societies, and one common response is the "search for a national identity that will simultaneously acknowledge *both diversity and sameness*" (Robertson 2008: 454, with an example focused on the UK).

While not of primary significance in the present context, the issue of secularization nevertheless needs to be addressed briefly. Secularization refers to the disappearance or loss of societal impact of religion and was posited as the unavoidable consequence of modernity in earlier sociology (see Hefner 2008: 152). While there is a multitude of approaches to secularization (Bruce 2002: 2; see also Dobelaere 2008: 599) and the issue is by no means clear-cut, all accounts include the notion of religion's gradual loss of societal influence and visibility. The notion of secularization can be regarded a post-Enlightenment hegemonic discourse – informed by the ideology of secular*ism* – which effectively creates the situation it tries to describe. Sociology, of course, is in itself firmly embedded in the Enlightenment project of progress (cf. Morozov 2008: 40 on European secularism as a "social and anthropological project"). Thus, the "secularization paradigm" can itself be regarded as an expression of this discourse of rationality, reason and scientific progress – rather than an impartial description of what is/was occurring in the West. The at least partial breaking up of the hegemony of this discourse, and consequent critiques of it, take the form of *post-secular* discourses which are themselves heavily indebted to an awareness of the earlier hegemonic discourse of secularization. Charles Taylor describes "the post-secular age" as one "in which the hegemony of the mainstream master narrative of secularization will be more and more challenged" (Taylor 2007: 534), and it naturally involves attempts to "re-sacralize" or "re-enchant" the experiential world. These post-secular discourses, in turn, prepare people, scholars and non-scholars alike, to perceive religion on arenas and in ways not earlier considered (on secularization and the post-secular in relation to esotericism, see Granholm 2013a).

THE OCCULT IN LATE/LIQUID MODERNITY

The societal changes discussed above affect the esoteric in a number of ways which introduce further problems in describing it as essentially Western. The

late modern differentiation to the degree of de-differentiation is conductive for the merging of a plurality of different explanatory models. For example, scientific and religious worldviews and explanatory models are regarded as different but not necessarily incompatible models of explanation, and are both employed in order to achieve what is considered a full picture of the existence. This applies to cultural forms as well. We get a mixing of "Western" and "non-Western" in ways that make it increasingly difficult to separate the two, not a simple introduction of "non-Western" terminology into a "Western frame of mind".

Similarly, globalization and transnationalism introduce major problems for arguing for the essential "Westernness" of contemporary Western esotericism and occultism. An effect of the ease of communication provided by the Internet and other advanced communication technologies is that the formation of transnational networks which operate over vast geographically distances is made possible. Relatively small groups can have their limited membership spread throughout the world, while still being able to communicate effectively and even meet in person fairly easily due to the affordability of travel. Contemporary magic orders, for example, often maintain members-only intranets that contain extensive amounts of material in electronic format and include the possibility to engage with others through web-forums. In addition to more organized communities, several non-organization specific forums and communities exist on the Internet. Many neopagan groups, particularly of the Wiccan variant, operate solely over the Internet (see Arthur 2002; Lövheim 2003). It is near impossible, and seldom in the interest of esoteric communities, to limit themselves to North American or western European memberships, and the spread of the esoteric is further made easier through the increasing adoption of English as the international language for transnational communication. In these transnational networks, then, different localities affect each other. Local groups develop specific regional expressions of general themes in the transnational network, an example of the particularization of the universal. At the same time, distinctly local themes can be brought to general treatment in the whole network, and thus the "non-Western" can easily influence the "Western" (see Granholm 2007). In addition, "globality" – or "global awareness" – involves a shift of focus away from dichotomies such as Eastern and Western. Similarly to the "liquefying of solids" in late modern processes of fragmentation, this preparedness leads to the mixing of "Western" and "non-Western".

Western Europe is becoming increasingly multicultural, partly due to the common pluralistic ethos (evident even with, and arguably through, the wave of anti-immigration populism in Europe in the 2000s) and the increased ease and affordability of travel. This creates a situation where people are nowadays confronted by a cultural and religious diversity that far surpasses that of earlier periods. "The West" is no longer characterized as dominantly as earlier by only "Western" religions, which increased diversity and erodes the meaningfulness of rigid distinctions between "Western" and "non-Western".

Detraditionalization is apparent in many forms of esotericism since at least the late nineteenth century. For example, the appropriation of Indian religious concepts by the Theosophical Society and the inclusion of Egyptian themes in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn included dis-embedding of the source material and re-embedding it in new contexts. In the late twentieth century the eclecticism and pluralistic ethos of occultism is taken to new levels. Detraditionalization goes hand in hand with processes of re-traditionalization and tradition-invention, in which new cultural forms and "traditions" are constructed by mixing "Western" and "non-Western" elements. Building on the work of scholars such as Helmut von Glasenapp and Jörg Wichmann, Wouter Hanegraaff (1996: 455) holds that Theosophy "was not only rooted in western esotericism, but has remained an essentially western movement". While it certainly is true that the Society's use of Indian concepts such karma and chakras were in many ways very different from their use in Indian contexts, the claim of the univocal Westernness of the movement is exaggerated. The appropriation was not simply about giving Indian names to already existing European concepts; in appropriating Indian terminology and teachings the Theosophical Society was changed as well. What we see is a mixing of, for example, Paracelsian and Indian cosmology in a way that gives birth to something new. We are dealing with a sort of "Easternization" of the "Western" in which the borders between "Eastern" and "Western" become more and more vague. With the broad contemporary esoteric milieu that many scholars term "the New Age movement" this blurring of the borders has continued, to the degree where claiming something as essentially "Western" in character can be about as little as the phenomenon in question simply being based in "the West".

While secularism has certainly affected the esoteric, Hanegraaff's notion of occultism as "secularized esotericism" (Hanegraaff 1996) is problematic (see Partridge 2004: 40 for a critique). According to him, secularization does not entail the disappearance or a marginalization but "a profound *transformation* of religion" (Hanegraaff 2003: 358), and thus "secularized religion" is both religious and secularized, and "the only thing it is not is 'traditional', in the sense of resting on presuppositions which are unaffected by secularization" (Hanegraaff 1996: 409). Strictly speaking, theories of secularization deal with the secularization of *societal institutions* and its subsequent effects on the societal role of religion, not on the secularization of religion itself. Hanegraaff's assertion that "the term 'secularisation' does not stand for a theory but for a historical fact" (Hanegraaff 2003: 358) is even more problematic, particularly from a discursive perspective where secularization itself is seen as an expression of hegemonic post-Enlightenment ideology. In the present day the influence of post-secular discourses is readily observable in the world of the esoteric. Re-enchantment in post-secular esotericism can be regarded as an active effort to acknowledge, embrace and seek affective and analogical thinking and action, while at the same time underscoring the insufficiency of rationality (see Granholm 2008b).

The "re-enchantment" of the late modern world is in many respects effectuated, and demonstrated, in and through popular culture. Here we find the increasing presence and popularity of esoteric elements, evident in television series such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997–2003) and *Battlestar Galactica* (2003, 2004–9), movies such as *Avatar* (2009), comic books such as *Hellblazer* (1988–2013) and *Lucifer* (2000–2006), and popular literature such Phillip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* series (1995, 1997, 2000) and Dan Brown's *The DaVinci Code* (2003) and *The Lost Symbol* (2009). This relates to Christopher Partridge's (2004, 2005, 2013) term *Occulture* – "the spiritual/mythic/paranormal background knowledge that informs the plausibility structures of Westerners" (Partridge 2004: 187), which "includes those often *hidden*, *rejected* and *oppositional* beliefs and practices associated with esotericism, theosophy, mysticism, New Age, Paganism, and a range of other subcultural beliefs and practices" (*ibid*.: 68). This occulture functions as a "cultural reservoir" from which material can be drawn in the construction of identities, beliefs and practices. Looking at the esoteric, or occulture, as a "cultural reservoir" from which material can be drawn facilitates a scholarly understanding of the large variety and wide-spreadedness of esoteric discourse in contemporary society.

The other late modern processes discussed also help popularize the esoteric. As "rejected knowledge" the esoteric lacks the authoritative structures of institutionalized religion and science (as well as occupying a space in between the two), making it possible to formulate personalized approaches, which fits late modern sensibilities focused on individualism and fluidity well. Multiculturalism and pluralism, along with the "shrinking of the world" in globalization, create a situation where previously "deviant" religious alternatives are increasingly regarded as legitimate. The popularization of the esoteric, then, creates more diversity in the milieu, which in turn complicates distinctions between "Western" and "non-Western".

CONCLUSION

This chapter has dealt with the problems with the term "Western" in Western esotericism. I have discussed how the term is problematic and vague throughout the history of Europe, how the appeal of the exotic other is an integral element of esoteric discourse and has often involved a "turn to the East", how the term "Western" in the study of esotericism is directly derived from emic occultist discourse, and how late-modern societal processes of globalization, detraditionalization, increased pluralism and post-secular re-enchantment further complicate the already problematic issue of what is to be placed under the banner "Western". Until we can operationalize and qualify the term "Western", and I do not believe that we ever will – nor should for that matter – we should forgo the use of it in the central role it has in the field today. It is better to

recognize the term "Western" as one that has more meaning as an internal category within esotericism, and instead focus on more specific localities and the connections between these. We would then be dealing with, for example, Florentine esotericism in the fifteenth century and its subsequent influence upon other localities, but not *Western* esotericism per se. While the use of the term "the West" in a general way is acceptable, it needs to be kept in mind that actual borders and distinctions are largely imaginary. A view of the West, as well as Europe, must take into notion that it is in fact a conscious project, not an expression of "natural" identity or culture (Waever 1995: 206). We do not really need the notion of a "Pan-European tradition" to motivate solid historical research. By focusing on more specific localities we are better able to pay attention to the complex interrelations and historical transformations that have occurred and continue to occur in the esoteric milieu.

NOTES

1. In recent times this has, however, started to change. I discussed this issue at the second ESSWE conference in Strasbourg, France, in July 2009, and a panel which, among other things, dealt with the issue was organized at the 2010 International Association for the History of Religions' Quinquennial World Congress in Toronto, Canada, in August 2010.
2. For example: Friedrich Naumann's ideas of "Mitteleuropa" – a unified central Europe, under "natural German supremacy"; T. G. Masaryk's "New Europe" – a zone of small nations between Germany and Russia; and Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi's "Paneuropa" – a federal Europe, in the image of the United States of America.
3. A good example of the "one Europe" discourse is Samuel Huntington's (1998: 144) description of the Second World War as "West's civil war".
4. There were, however, ideas of what "non-Europe" consisted of – namely the Soviet Union. The author Milan Kundera (Prague), for example, made this distinction and considered the "*political* frontier" to have been "wrongly placed" after the Second World War (Waever 1995: 179–80).
5. "We like to think that western civilization is something we have inherited from the ancient Greeks, the Romans and the Christian Church via the Renaissance, the scientific revolution and the enlightenment. Its spirit is embodied in beautiful buildings – Ionian temples, Gothic cathedrals, Art Deco skyscrapers – and in wonderful paintings, in the plays of Sophocles and Shakespeare, the novels of Cervantes and Tolstoy and the work of Galileo and Einstein. We sense that civilization is not *Hamlet* or Mont St Victoire or the Chrysler Building, it is not even Shakespeare or Cézanne or William van Alen; it is something to do with the spirit that inspired them and the society that allowed this spirit to manifest itself. This spirit is hard to pin down, but we believe there is some relationship between the cultural icons of the west and the values of western society, so that together they embody western civilization" (Osborne 2006: 2).
6. The expression "La civilization européenne" (European civilization) first appears in 1766, in North America (de Boer 1995: 64).
7. Worth noting is that South Africa is situated in this "free world" in Huntington's world map of the 1960s, which is rather ironic considering the South African apartheid in this period.
8. A logical, though potentially offensive (if the West is conceived to be the pinnacle of reason and rationality) conclusion of the distinctions is that Finland, Sweden and Austria – due to

their unaligned status – are not considered parts of the West (the "Free World") during the Cold War (Huntington 1998: 126).

9. See Huntington (1993: 24): "People can and do redefine their identities and, as a result, the composition and boundaries of civilizations change".
10. When it comes to terms such as modern-, secular- and plural-, a distinction needs to be made between -ism, an ideology; -ity, a condition; and -ization, a process (cf. Boettcher & Harmon 2009: 12). The base-form of a particular word implies a quality, something that is modern, secular etc. Thus, modern*ism* signifies the ideology and drive towards the modern, modern*ity* the social condition of the modern, and modern*ization* the process through which the ideology moves towards the condition.
11. Some scholars, in the wake of Jean-Francois Lyotard (1984), describe the current societal condition of the West as postmodern (see Giddens 1990: 2; 1997: 528–9). While it certainly is valid to propose that modernity has changed, it has not changed sufficiently to be termed *post*-modernity. This would entail far more radical transformations of society and its institutions. What we certainly have, however, is postmodern*ism* as an ideology, which in itself does transform modernity.

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CHAPTER 3

THE MAGICAL ORDER OF THE FRATERNITAS SATURNI

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The Fraternitas Saturni (FS) is not only the most important secret magical lodge of twentieth-century Germany, but one of the most important of all modern magical lodges. The sheer volume of occult texts produced by its masters and leading members surpasses nearly everything written by other magical groups. This includes the Golden Dawn in the English-speaking world and France, the Group of Ur and the orders associated with Giuliano Kremmerz (Ciro Formisano, 1861–1930) in Italy, as well as the more magically oriented organizations associated with Papus (Gérard Encausse, 1865–1916) and Stanislas de Guaita (1861–97) in France. The only orders that can lay claim to more material are those associated with Aleister Crowley (1875–1947), notably the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO) and Argenteum Astrum (A.˙.A.˙.) with their countless affiliations in various countries. The order journal of the FS, the *Blätter für angewandte okkulte Lebenskunst* ("Papers for an Applied Occult Art of Life", 1950–63; henceforth *BaoL*), comprising 3,600 large-format pages, without doubt rivals in size Aleister Crowley's original ten volumes of *The Equinox* (1909–13). Yet compared with the almost global spread of the OTO in recent decades and the resultant body of writing the FS is no peer at all. Except for a few individual attempts to establish foreign-language branches, such as in Toronto, the FS has remained within the German-speaking world. Even in Austria, a permanent branch has only existed since 1985, and in Switzerland since 1986.[1]

The *BaoL* are not the only study materials published by the FS. There is a further imposing corpus of magical teachings, theoretical tracts and practical exercises. This includes five beautifully designed folio volumes of *Saturngnosis* (1928–30), fourteen volumes of lodge school lectures from the late 1920s, and periodicals such as *Vita Gnosis, Saturn Gnosis* and *Magischer Weg* ("Magical Path"). There are also five special editions of magical documents from the end

of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, as well as newsletters from individual Saturnian offshoots. Particularly impressive is the fifteen-part *Documenta et Ritualia Fraternitatis Saturni* (1975–7), collected and published by Adolf Hemberger in seventeen hectographed A4-size volumes. Despite some questions regarding their authenticity, these chronicle the vigorous inner life of the order with its organizational structures and magical workings. Finally there are the many books of the FS Grand Master Eugen Grosche (1888–1964, order name Gregor A. Gregorius) and Karl Spiesberger (1904–92, order name Fra[ter] Eratus).

While the German OTO under the leadership of Theodor Reuss is accorded greater international significance due to its very early texts on sexual magic, and especially for its connection with Aleister Crowley, the FS seems to embrace a wider variety of esoteric approaches, at least in theory.[2] Yet it has not even had much influence in Germany, and has attracted almost no international interest.[3] One reason is its strongly anti-bourgeois orientation; another, the simple fact that very few original FS texts have been translated into English.

HISTORY OF THE ORDER TO THE PRESENT

In contrast to most secret occult groups, the FS has no internal legend claiming a long chain of tradition.[4] Around the beginning of the nineteenth century a "Brotherhood of Saturn" allegedly existed in Denmark and Sweden, as did a "Saturn Brotherhood" in Warsaw under the direction of Jean-Marie Hoené-Wronski (1776–1853). Conceptually the FS also refers to the ancient Roman Saturnalia, during which common ideas were turned upside down and class differences were suspended.

The FS gives its official founding date as Easter of 1928, but the *de facto* founding of the order by the bookseller and occultist Eugen Grosche[5] and four "*fratres*" occurred on 8 May 1926 in Berlin. It was created out of the Pansophical Lodge of the "Light Seeking Brethren of the Orient–Berlin". Grosche had also set up this earlier group, although he only served in it as secretary, at the request of Grand Master Heinrich Tränker (1880–1956, order names Recnartus, Master Garuda and Henkelkreuzman). Tränker was an antiquarian bookseller in Berlin and a theosophist who had been Grand Master of the OTO in Germany from 1921, although he had never met Reuss. The Pansophical Lodge, which saw itself as the last "true" Rosicrucian lodge in the German-speaking world, had a goal of uniting Rosicrucian wisdom with the body of Thelemic thought. This purpose was primarily served by the so-called *Liber I – Das Buch der Nullstunde* (Liber I – The Book of the Zero Hour)[6] that appeared under the imprimatur of Albin Grau (1884–1971, order name Master Pacitius).[7] Grau was a significant painter and set designer for films, who also worked as production designer for F. W. Murnau's famous 1922 vampire film *Nosferatu*.

In 1925, after being expelled from France and Belgium, Aleister Crowley was invited by Heinrich Tränker to his home near Weida in Thuringia, Germany. At the so-called Weida Conference which then took place, Crowley wanted to be proclaimed as World Saviour (*Weltenheiland*), and demanded that all of the German esoteric societies under Tränker's control should subordinate themselves to the Crowleyan world lodge A.˙.A.˙. – a proposal that Tränker utterly rejected.[8] As part of the attempt to achieve his goals, Crowley also put pressure on Albin Grau, who demanded that Tränker step down as Grand Master of the Pansophical Lodge. The conflict escalated, and a majority of the members (minus Tränker) joined the newly founded Fraternitas Saturni. The FS adopted Crowley's so-called Law of Thelema governing the "new aeon", but slightly altered its form: "*Tue was Du willst, ist das ganze Gesetz. Liebe ist das Gesetz, Liebe unter Willen. Mitleidlose Liebe.*" This translates as: "Do what thou wilt, *is* [*shall be* in Crowley] the whole of the Law. Love is the law, love under will. Compassionless love." The final phrase "*Mitleidlose Liebe*" was specifically added by the FS to emphasize its severe, Saturnian character.

The leader of the FS, Eugen Grosche, informed Aleister Crowley of this development in two letters (1926 and 1927).[9] He also sent him the order's statutes, which made it clear that the Fraternitas did not wish to recognize any kind of spiritual master (hence not Crowley).[10] Grosche nevertheless emphasized in an accompanying text that the FS was the only lodge in Germany that had adopted Crowley's Law of Thelema. The FS had further contact with Crowley, but remained completely independent from an organizational standpoint. At present the FS has no official contact with any OTO groups, and therefore the Law of Thelema provides the only *de facto* link between the FS and Crowley.[11]

As a means of recruiting members for the FS, Grosche established a "Society for Esoteric Studies" in Berlin. With this he could select suitable people for the order through lectures and book recommendations.[12] The lectures were even attended by such notables as the Countess Klinckowstroem and the Prince of Saxony-Coburg-Gotha (Hemberger 1971: 36). There were also "Magic Experimental Evenings" featuring experiments in hypnosis, séances and attempts at levitation. Some of the lectures were later published by the society under the collective title *Logenschulvorträge – Geheimwissenschaftliche Studien* ("Lodge School Lectures – Studies in the Secret Sciences"). More anodyne topics such as "Karma and Astrology" or "The Symbolism of the Tao and the Pentagram" appeared alongside clearly magical ones such as "Magic of the Mirror and Crystal" and "Practical Preparations for Magic". These early writings use a neutral, almost scientific writing style, presenting knowledge gained through experimental research rather than any desire for "world improvement". In stark contrast to the many other esoteric journals of the day, which were either of a theosophical or anthroposophical orientation or belonged to the American "New Thought Movement" with its doctrines of "positive thinking", the FS writings treated of astral demons, drugs and sexuality. The main author

of the series was Eugen Grosche, using his order name Gregor A. Gregorius. Considering the rarity of these volumes on the antiquarian market, their original distribution cannot have been large. Seven of the lectures were reprinted as a separate book under the title *Magische Einweihung* ("Magical Initiation").

In the 1920s there appeared the ten-volume series *Magische Briefe* ("Magical Letters"; since reprinted), which provided explicit instruction in magic under the principal authorship of Eugen Grosche. The series included individual volumes on sexual magic and satanic magic, which was unusual for the period and contributed to the reputation of the FS as a "black magic" lodge. A drug scandal concerning Grosche even reached the daily papers.

In 1928 another group that was magically active and also worked with sexual magic, the "Order of Mental Architects" (founded in 1922 in Dresden by Wilhelm Quintscher, 1893–1945, order names Rah Omir and Ophias), disbanded, and Quintscher directed many of its members into the FS. From July 1928 until January 1930 Albin Grau was art director for one of the most elegant occult journals ever printed: *Saturn Gnosis,* officially published by Grosche. The journal's tipped-in plates, some of them in colour, and numerous mathematical diagrams printed in large format on heavy paper, possessed a powerful magical allure in themselves. This was heightened by the illustrations of demons, notably a Saturn demon painted by Br. Leonardo (about whom no further details are known) following a magical mirror experiment (*Saturn Gnosis* 2008: vol. 1, facing p. 36). An article by Crowley was translated into German for each of the first two volumes. Grosche again wrote most of the contributions, but Grau also appears several times. Beside authors from the FS milieu, *Saturn Gnosis* featured writings by a surprising number of academics, including Eugen Heinrich Schmitt (1861–1916), whose two-volume work *Die Gnosis* (Leipzig 1903–7) had received much recognition and posthumous praise. For the most part *Saturn Gnosis* articles are descriptive and do not deal with practical magic. At the end of each volume is a section dedicated to internal information about the lodge.

During the National Socialist era that began in 1933, all esoteric groups were generally forbidden, and the official history of the FS claims that it was banned in that year. In fact, the order continued until 20 July 1937, as appears from a document signed by Reichsführer-SS Reinhard Heydrich,[13] which would explain Grosche's surprisingly late emigration. Apparently he did not leave Germany until 1936 or 1937, going first to Ticino, Switzerland and then to northern Italy. He is said to have been deported in 1943 and forced to return to Germany.

After the war, Grosche attempted to reunite the former members of the FS. At first he lived in the Soviet Occupation Zone, where he became a member of the German Communist Party and a City Councillor for Cultural Affairs. His esoteric interests probably caused him difficulties (König 2001: 133), and in 1950 he resettled in West Berlin. In that year the lodge was legally registered with the Berlin authorities as an association, the Fraternitas Saturni e.V.[14] At

first Grosche tried to build up the FS as an umbrella organization for different esoteric groups in the German-speaking world. To this end, he made contact with Hermann Joseph Metzger (1918–90, order name Frater Paragranus) who had refounded the OTO and the Order of Illuminati in Switzerland, but the attempted collaboration soon foundered.

Grosche had been circulating important typewritten essays to the members from 1948 to 1950, and soon the FS was fully operational. In April 1950 there appeared the first issue of the long-running monthly lodge journal, the *Blätter für angewandte okkulte Lebenskunst*. The journal primarily conveyed the theoretical teachings of the FS, but also included a considerable amount of basic practical information.[15] As with previous FS publications, a sober tone prevailed. Authors usually signed articles with their order names. There were also guest contributors, such as the Viennese esoteric researcher Lambert Binder and the English occultist Kenneth Grant. The journal, printed in an edition of 200 copies, covered a very wide spectrum of topics ranging from magic, astrology and Kabbalah to the Mithraic mysteries, from *gnosis* to folk beliefs. During the 1950s the FS was the only magical lodge in the world with a significant membership (around 100) to maintain a monthly journal.[16]

On 18 March 1957 (the anniversary of the death of the last Grand Master of the Knights Templar) the FS declared itself the "Grand Lodge of the Fraternitas Saturni in Berlin" and was officially registered under this title. As the Grand Lodge it had branches known as *Vorhöfe* (outer courts) or *Oriente* in several German cities. Grosche was also appointed as Grand Master at this time. In 1960 an expanded degree system from 10° to 33° was introduced (see below), and Grosche was raised to the 33rd degree, that of Gradus Ordinis Templi Orientis Saturni (GOTOS). The ranks of the other masters were also raised within the framework of the new high-degree system.

In 1960 Grosche published a work that is somewhat shrouded in mystery. Entitled *Exorial – Der Roman eines dämonischen Wesens* (Exorial – the Novel of a Demonic Entity), it appeared in a private edition of 333 with each copy numbered and signed by Grosche himself. All of this seems to confirm the importance of the book, which – according to entirely plausible statements by Gregorius – was based on actual events.[17] The "demonic entity" in question was alleged to have had such a strong effect on the imagination of several lodge members that it caused intense states of possession. As a consequence, under the direction of Gregorius, masters had to "magically banish" the entity to prevent further damage to the lodge.[18]

In 1962 and 1963 internal conflicts and schisms arose, in the course of which some of the best known and most productive masters, such as Amenophis (reputed to be E. P. H. Barth) and Eratus (Karl Spiesberger), left the main lodge. The Orient Frankfurt under Master Immanuel (Johannes Maikowski, b. 1925) also seceded. In 1964 Eugen Grosche died of a heart attack, and power struggles became the order of the day. After his successor Margarete Berndt (1920–65,

order name Roxane) died the next year, a collegium of three men took over the leadership: Masters Arminius (Hermann Wagner), Fabian (Willi Hauser) and Giovanni (Karl Wedler, 1911–2006). At Easter 1966 Guido Wolther (1922–2001, order name Daniel) became the new Grand Master. In order to attain a higher level of magical work, Wolther founded a new secret society within the FS, called the AMOS (Ancient and Mystical Order of the Saturn Brotherhood) and limited to nine members. He implemented a strict "new training programme", according to which "knowledge degrees" had to be actually earned rather than simply received on an honorary basis. A new order journal called *Vita Gnosis* was also started, but only distributed according to the earned-degree level of members. The mood turned against Wolther, partly due to a lack of leadership, and in 1969 Walter Jantschik (b. 1939, order name Jananda) was elected Grand Master. The fact that he only held a low degree (8°) understandably led to discord, and he soon stepped down, not least because of unexplained financial disparities in the preceding administration. In the meantime his thinking turned towards an "Esoteric University" that would confer something akin to doctoral degrees. Later in 1969 a new member who had joined that same year and who had no experience with magic, S. W. Wicha (Master Andrzey), was elected Grand Master. As a consequence the brotherhood now concerned itself less with magic than with a general philosophy of life.

Not long after this, many internal papers of the FS were made public. Dr Adolf Hemberger (1929–91), Professor of Methodology and Scientific Theory at the University of Gießen in Germany, and himself a member of several occult groups,[19] privately published essential portions of the FS's secret documents (Hemberger 1971), including the lodge rules. This created a scandal, for it apparently involved an act of betrayal.[20] Suspicion fell upon Wolther, who denied any involvement, and Hemberger confirmed this position. The publication aroused public interest in the lodge, and it was not long before tabloid magazines, church representatives and journalists were denouncing the FS and everyone who seemed to be associated with it.[21] The attacks were focused on Guido Wolther, Adolf Hemberger and Johannes Göggelmann (Frater Saturnius) who had given expression to his demonic phantasmagoria in thousands of letters and drawings.[22] They also targeted the Abbey of Thelema in Stein, Switzerland, because its leader Hermann Joseph Metzger regarded his group as the mother order of all Thelemic movements.

From this point on, the history of the FS becomes increasingly confusing and the accounts left to us are contradictory.[23] In 1974 Andrzey stepped down as Grand Master, and the lodge work ceased for two years. After many years of absence, Johannes Maikowski (Master Immanuel) was readmitted into the lodge.[24] In 1980 the Grand Orient Bersenbrück led by Dieter Heikaus (Master Honorius, then Seth-Horus) split off from the FS, thenceforth operating under the name Ordo Saturni.[25] This split and the internal squabbles greatly weakened both lodges. In 1983 Johannes Maikowski was voted Grand Master of the FS in

a highly controversial election; it was declared invalid, and Maikowski left the order. He was not to remain without an organization, though, for in 1993 he founded the Communitas Saturni, out of which the Grand Lodge Gregorius A. Gregorius (G.A.G.) arose in 1997.

In the meantime, Ralph-Peter Trelle (Master Thot) became Grand Master of the (original?) FS in 1990. A quieter phase followed with only a few active members. In 1994, after many years during which nothing official was heard regarding the FS, an interview by Frater V.D. (Ralph Tegtmeier) with Grand Master Thot surprisingly appeared, with information about past events and future plans. A certain consolidation seemed to have taken place, for in 2003 the Fraternitas Saturni re-unified with the above-mentioned G.A.G. In 2008 the FS again appeared in the public eye[26] on the occasion of its eightieth anniversary (with a few interruptions). The journal *Saturn Gnosis* resumed publication, and Ralph-Peter Trelle (Grand Master Thot) received, forty years after Grosche (Gregorius), the special honour of the 33rd degree of GOTOS.

SELF-DESCRIPTION OF THE LODGE AND ORGANIZATION

According to the first sentence of its lodge rules,[27] the FS is a "lodge of knowledge with an occult-esoteric emphasis" (*Wissensloge in okkult-esoterischer Richtung*). It describes itself as "just, enlightened, perfect, secret, magical, and ritualistic" (*gerecht, erleuchtet, vollkommen, geheim, magisch und rituell*). The FS is "just" because new members are instructed to develop themselves to become *winkelgerecht* ("square, level" in the sense of correctly and evenly proportioned, that is, well-fitting) as members of human society and of the lodge. The FS is "enlightened" because its knowledge is suprarational; it is not gained through logical means but through direct experience in magical rituals. The FS is "secret" in the sense that proper names and titles are of no importance within the group. It is a "ritualistic" lodge because its services are celebrated with set rituals. The lodge can also be called "magical", but only when members are able, through special rituals, to "create centres of power out of which corresponding (energy) currents flow, by way of repercussion, to the whole group as well as to the individual" (Gregorius 1963).[28]

The FS describes itself as a brotherhood because the bonds forged between lodge members should remain valid beyond death. Anyone who has reached the age of twenty-one can become a member irrespective of race, nationality, religion, social standing, education or sex. The FS therefore accepts both women and men with equal rights. On account of her "moon powers", however, a female is considered to be the "bleeding wound of the cosmos" and a negative manifestation of Saturn. The task of a male is to overcome the resulting demonic momentum, just as it is the female's duty to spiritualize her demonic assets (Gregorius 1952a).

The organizational structure of the FS is a 33-degree system which is adapted from the AASR (Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite) and Droit Humain. It uses its own Latin nomenclature. The degrees were in part awarded (*Würdegrade* = honorary degrees) and in part earned (*Wissensgrade* = knowledge degrees). The Gradus Mercurii (8°) and the Gradus Solis (12°) in particular are knowledge degrees. "For the higher knowledge degrees there are secret special directives, which are bestowed individually by the Grand Master."[29] The preliminary or *Vorhof* degrees span from the 0° through the 11°. Degrees 1 through 7 correspond to the Masonic degree of Enterered Apprentice; 8° through 11° to that of Fellow Craft. Only upon attaining the 12°, Gradus Solis (which corresponds to the Master Mason degree of Freemasonry), is one considered a true member of the FS with a right to vote. The "Rosicrucian" section of degrees 12 through 20, which is further divided into three parts, is only so named for traditional reasons, since the FS is not a Rosicrucian organization. The following higher degrees and the Sanctuarium Gnosis of the 31° to the 33° are purely honorary and conferred as accolades. The Lodge Demon is the spiritual head of the lodge and is identified with the holder of the 33°, the Gradus Ordinis Templi Orientis Saturni, or GOTOS. The GOTOS is considered to be an egregore (a "subtle" entity consciously created by magical methods) existing in the spheres of Saturn; it is sustained through the power of the magical chain of the brothers (including sex magic), which the GOTOS magnetically attracts to himself. This GOTOS was compared to the "lodge demon" Baphomet of the Temple Order.[30]

The administration of the FS is organized into offices of the Grand Master, an advisory council (consisting of a Guardian of the Rite, Secretary and Archivist), regional masters and local masters. A sophisticated Lodge Rule regulates the internal legislation, admissions and resignations, disagreements, eventual changes of the rituals, and so forth.[31] The so-called Directives (*Verfügungen*) of the Grand Master are also authoritative for the administration of the lodge.[32]

The use of the mallet, level, square and plumb line attest to the influence of Freemasonry, though for the FS their significance is not only symbolic but magical. The trowel and the compass are absent, as are the pillars of Jachin and Boaz, and there is no organizational connection to regular Freemasonry. According to the order's Rule of 1928:

> The Fraternitas Saturni is a Pansophical society. It has the duty of accepting women and men who are interested in the Pansophical sciences (occultism, magic, yoga, mysticism, astrology, etc.), educating them in all areas of knowledge of Pansophy in theory and in practice, and serving them as helpers, guideposts, and leaders on the path to the divine light.[33]

THE TEACHINGS OF THE FRATERNITAS SATURNI

The teachings of the FS are gnostic and directed toward a "divine" knowledge, understood not as empirical or scientific, but rather in the sense of a "knowing vision". Through such knowledge, humans are capable of discovering their own inner divinity for themselves. This is therefore a path of self-salvation and not one dependent upon divine grace. The members of the FS do not strive to dissolve themselves into the cosmos: rather, they desire to create it. But this is not possible on the path of mysticism; it can only be achieved on the path of magic.

The teachings of the FS are held together by an overriding spiritual conception. This is the "mythology" of Saturn based upon astrological teachings and the glacial cosmology of Hanns Hörbiger (1860–1931), in which fire meets ice, moons crash down onto the planets, and the cosmos exists as an eternal battle of opposites. At the beginning of time, darkness was a more powerful primordial element, but the light was contained within it. In order for the light to begin to glow, a Logos was required. In our planetary system it was the Logos of the sun (Chrestos) that brought light and, along with it, life. But the great angel Lucifer, who originally sat at the side of God, grabbed the torch of light and as Light-bringer (Lucifer), and thus the bearer of divine secrets, adjourned to the farthest reaches of the spheres. His planetary form is therefore Saturn, which in ancient cosmology lies farthest from the sun. Lucifer represents Saturn's "higher octaves": "The sun is the centre out of which radiates the entire secret of life. Saturn is the periphery, the border of time and space" (Protagoras 1962). Saturn is the place where the last light passes over into darkness. He is therefore considered the Guardian of the Threshold who opens the door to transcendence and salvation, and who guards the realm of the dead, but definitely not the realm of "Evil". Saturn is also the great judge with sword and scales, entrusted with weights, measures and numbers.

Because light and dark, existing as polar opposites, are always at war with one another, Lucifer battles with the principle of Chrestos. This is also how death came into the world. The primary battlefield is our Earth, which beside its physical plane has a negative–astral dimension and a positive–mental sphere. The planets closest to the sun, such as Venus and Mercury, are on the side of the Chrestos principle, while those situated on the "other" side of the Earth, such as Mars, are the servants of the Saturn principle. In the same way that Lucifer represents the "higher octaves" of Saturn, Satan represents his "lower octaves".

According to the "Law of Polarity" the negative holds an equal value to the positive. Both principles are necessary for life, and indeed form its basic condition:

> Thus the negative Luciferian principle is not only of divine origin, but as an element of balance it is just as necessary as the Chrestos principle. For people who have a spiritual understanding of him, Lucifer, the great

> Light-bearer for mankind, who of his own will shattered the egocentric power of the sun's Logos, can function just as well as a figure of salvation as does the Chrestos principle of the sun … God has a bright and a dark face. (Gregorius 1953a: 6)

Among human beings, the cult of Saturn corresponds to a path of solitude, maturity, asceticism, difficulties and suffering – for it is only suffering that makes one mature and noble. But Saturn also means restraint and the throwing off of ballast (above all that of previous religious beliefs, as Grosche emphasizes) (Gregorius 1958a: 1). The adept of Saturn is further distinguished by austerity, concentration skills, critical faculties and Uranian abilities of intuition (Uranus is considered the astrological ruler of the "Age of Aquarius"). Secrecy and independence are likewise key words. Human openness is only possible within the chain of the brothers.

Human beings who express their striving toward god with austerity and not in an ecstatic mystical fervour, and who desire to base their path upon a crystal-clear awareness of the divine laws of harmony, will follow the demiurge of Saturn. Compassionless love remains their guiding principle: "Become hard like a crystal. For a crystal is only formed through hardness" (Gregorius 1952b: 1). The weight, the darkness, or the "lead" in Saturn must be transformed into "gold" by the magician in an alchemical process, a "polarity reversal of the lights". In this union of opposites Saturn finally becomes the sun, for the sun principle (the "Chrestos principle") was originally the innermost core of the Saturn principle. It is only the ignorant, therefore, who believe that Saturn is Satan. In serving Saturn, the wise initiate actually gives spiritual service to the Sun and contributes to the return of the "dark brother". This corresponds exactly to future astronomical events as seen by the FS: in far-distant aeons Saturn will approach the sun in ever smaller orbits, and eventually merge with it.

For the human being, the path from Saturn to the Sun corresponds to overcoming the five great obstacles: jealousy, hate, laziness, doubt and inconstancy. These must gradually be repolarized into longing, love, energy, faith and perseverance, in an admittedly difficult path that takes many years (Gregorius 1952b: 6).[34] "To follow a cult of Saturn thus means to comprehend the higher octaves of this demiurge, to recognize the Luciferian principle as a divine spiritual power, and to organize this consciously in the service of the sun's Logos" (Gregorius 1953a: 6).

In comparison to the OTO groups that mainly confine themselves to Crowley's teachings, the teachings of the FS are very eclectic. Grosche in particular drew influences from everywhere, as is evident in the *Blätter für angewandte okkulte Lebenskunst*. These publications contain ancient Egyptian wisdom and Buddhist teachings; an article about the ancient cult of Mithras and its mysteries; discussions of grimoires and witchcraft (especially with respect to plants and drugs); Masonic symbolism and even an essay on the mystic Jakob

Böhme. The FS employed parts of the Kabbalah as explicated by Agrippa von Nettesheim, and did not hesitate to incorporate teachings from more recent occult groups such as the Golden Dawn, the Adonistenbund (Gregorius 1958b), or modern magicians such as Franz Bardon (1909–58).

Often the material in the *Blätter* is only theoretical in nature, or relates to an author's specialist knowledge. But astrology is of central significance for everyone, because the integration of the self into cosmic contexts is a basic requirement for the regular members as well as for trained magicians. Ariosophic influences are also in evidence (especially in the early period), since the FS endeavoured to incorporate ancient Nordic mysticism, magic and folklore in a non-Christian type of wisdom teaching. Gregorius was good friends with the well-known Ariosophist Peryt Shou (Albert Schultz, 1873–1953), who apparently gave many original manuscripts to the lodge archives. Gregorius is said to have been familiar with Wilhelm Reich's ideas about orgone energy, and to have had an orgone accumulator in his study. This is on the authority of Johannes Maikowski, according to Peter-R. König.[35]

Eastern teachings also found a place in the FS. Under Grosche, at least, the order believed in reincarnation and karma, and considered the awakening of the chakras to be a prerequisite for spiritual ascent (Gregorius 1954a). The FS speaks of a new Age of Aquarius, but in contrast to the usual New Age view, it emphasizes that Saturn was the astrological ruler of Aquarius until the modern era. Only after the discovery of Uranus did the latter planet take over this rule. Accordingly, the New Age is defined by both planets: by the solitude and hardness of the purified Saturn, as well as by Uranus's power of intuition.

The FS considered spiritualistic practices not as a harmless game or a form of popular entertainment, but for serious researchers only. This is because in spiritualism the will of the individual must be surrendered, and it is also an area teeming with charlatans: "In its common form, spiritualism is the worst sort of superstition and can even degenerate into a popular spiritual plague" (Gregorius 1958c: 1). Interestingly, the FS teachings barely mention the tarot.

The FS lodge rituals were mostly adopted from the organization that preceded it, Heinrich Tränker's Pansophical Lodge. The basic rite is the Rituale Missae Fraternitatis Saturni, comparable in structure to a regular Masonic ritual (see Haack 1977: 131–9). It is unclear which rituals were in fact celebrated within the lodge; König believes that there are only two different ones. Grade rituals apparently were not celebrated.[36]

THE MAGIC OF THE FRATERNITAS SATURNI

Naturally the main focus of the FS teachings is magic. Adolf Hemberger even describes the FS as "the magical lodge *par excellence*" (Hemberger 1971: 243). Walter Jantschik (lodge name Aythos), former Grand Master of the FS and

acting Grand Master of the Ordo Templi Baphometis, notes that "A lodge like the FS has to and *must* occupy itself with 'total magic' if it would describe itself as a magical lodge" (Aythos 1979: 33). But if one examines the list of the fourteen magical areas that Jantschik presents for the FS, the question remains as to what was theoretical and what was actually practised.

The FS characteristically makes no distinction between "white" and "black" magic. Nevertheless, Gregorius emphasizes that practical magic requires "a certain ethic" (Gregorius 1950: 1). For instance, someone who uses magical abilities to subjugate another and deprive the victim of free will must be described as a "black magus". On the other hand, "black" magical experiments are permitted for occult-scientific reasons, for example to verify individual knowledge or ancient traditions. Incidentally, the order's rules forbid practising "black magic" in the above sense; thus, if these rules were strictly adhered to, esoteric workings would be sharply curtailed. In order to get around this, so-called study circles were established. These also served to indemnify the lodge, should the black magical workings of the members create legal problems, such as with ritual animal sacrifice violating animal protection laws. The participants in the study circles take responsibility for themselves according to the basic principle that there are no boundaries for the initiate, and that everyone is accountable for his or her own karma. Nonetheless, these study circles are obliged to provide information to the lodge, which then benefits in terms of knowledge.

In the field of magic, the invocation of so-called elemental and planetary spirits was part of the instruction. Several entire issues of the *Blätter* are devoted to the invocation of the planets, while emphasizing that the type of invocation carried out was the individual's own responsibility (see Gregorius 1952c: 1). For the most part, however, the specifics of FS magic are limited to astrological information, magical correspondences, and traditions extracted from such sources as the Fourth Book of Agrippa von Nettesheim or early modern grimoires.

The magical ring worn in the FS holds great significance. Every detail of it is discussed in terms of magic and symbolism, and there is a special ritual for bestowing it (Hemberger 1971: 134). The ring is subject to a multitude of variations depending upon the wearer, hence is not merely a sign of membership. Most notably, its wearer gains a "magical channel of communication" with access to the sphere of Saturn at any time; hence the ring should always be worn.

It is difficult to determine to what extent practical magic was actually performed in the FS. Certainly only a small number ever engaged in it, while most of the members simply read the teachings and, at most, took part in the lodge rituals in honour of Saturn. Nor can one generalize about the FS's eighty-year history, for even if the basic tenets of a certain "Saturnian" worldview remained in place, the FS has always been influenced by exceptional personalities who

implement their own forms of magical expression, ranging from satanic magic to contemporary "Ice Magic".

Surviving reports concerning the evocations of individual planetary spirits, such as those written by Guido Wolther (Daniel), could hardly have occurred in the manner described. These texts seem to have been written for commercial purposes. There have always been people interested in this kind of recondite material, who buy copies of such manuscripts and invocation texts. On the other hand, workings with the magical mirror, under the influence of drugs, and with so-called astral entities would have been regularly performed, at least during Grosche's lifetime. According to FS teaching, the existence of astral entities can be "verified" with a pendulum or dowsing rod. The order also valued the so-called talismanic magic of gems, amulets and talismans (Gregorius 1953b), and used pendulum magic as an aid for decision-making.

In recent times it seems that magical workings have returned to the forefront,[37] thanks to the leadership of Ralph-Peter Trelle (Master Thot) and Ralph Tegtmeier (Frater Scorpio), who indubitably possess the relevant expertise. What actually occurs in consciousness, in the subconscious, or in the so-called astral realm during such magical workings is a metaphysical question that must go unanswered. It is only essential that the inner being of the practitioner is transformed through his work and experience.

Sexual magic also falls within the purview of the FS. Despite the differences that may exist between the FS and the OTO, the latter's influence in this area is undeniable. But contrary to a prevalent prejudice, the FS is not exclusively a sexual magic lodge, but rather a lodge whose practices include sexual magic.[38] As Peter-R. König writes: "Sexual magic plays a secondary role in the Saturn order [FS] and is only a component of the 18th to the 33rd degrees" (Hüttl & König 2007: 235). Although recently there was – and probably still is – a study circle for sexual magic within the order, König asserts that this was only concerned with preparatory exercises, yoga and astrological constellations. König further states: "The normal Saturn member, regardless of degree, was never fully aware of the sexual-symbolic background of the order's sexual orientation" (*ibid*.: 235).

This is the external situation. The internal situation within the sphere of the masters is much different: "Fundamentally the workings always concern the materialization of some sort of entity with the aid of blood and sperm. Always." And this is not only the case in recent years; it was also true during the time of Gregorius.[39]

Generally speaking, the FS affirms the essential polarity between man and woman, and bases its sexual symbolism upon this. The phallus is seen as the earthly manifestation of the divine power of will and imagination; the female *kteis* (Ancient Greek for "female sexual organ") is the symbol of "chaos" as the primordial source of creation. In contrast to the OTO, which considers male semen to be a vehicle of the divine spirit, in the FS sperm has much

less significance than the sexual energies that arise through intercourse. Nevertheless, it is precisely in the sexual realm that the primacy of the man over the woman is seen as natural.

Gregorius expressly warned against practising sexual magic without many years of prior training. For the priest-magician, specifically, it should be a matter of course that "he no longer succumbs spiritually or physically to the power sphere of the moon, and thus of the woman" (Gregorius 1927: 83). His goal should be "to break through the astral plane to higher mental planes" (*ibid*.) in order to perform magical workings there. In theory, an ejaculation in the vagina is only allowed for magical purposes and not for the satisfaction of base urges.[40]

One of the main applications of sexual magic (for initiated masters) involves the use of the female partner as a medium for workings on the astral plane. In order to be absolutely certain of results on this illusory plane, the woman must be entirely subordinate to the magus. If she is not, there is a danger that the images received by the medium on the astral plane may have been falsified by her own psyche.

Another purpose of sexual magic is to create astral entities which can serve as helping spirits for magical workings. Here the magus's sperm is mixed with the fluid secretions of the woman during sexual union, the mixture is removed from the vagina, and a parchment inscribed with a symbol or Kabbalistic name is saturated with the secretions. The astral entity created by the imagination is then bound to this saturated symbol or name and can be evoked with it again at a later time. The operation is considered to be very dangerous since, according to the teachings, countless vampires need the sexual secretions as "food". It is necessary to create a particularly meticulous magical circle, protecting both the magus and the medium, in order to keep them from becoming possessed. Grosche also recommended the use of drugs such as hashish to increase the powers of the imagination during the creation of the entity.

Sexual magic was further applied in the development of the chakras,[41] using certain runic or yoga postures. There is mention of a "Five M Rite", which according to the tantric model includes the consumption of the "five Ms" (*mansa* "meat", *matsya* "fish", *mudra* "grain", *madya* "wine" and *maithuna* "sexual intercourse"). In the rite, odic energy is culled from the chakras of the woman for special magical operations. This odic energy must however be given back to her later on. For all of these rites, a great emphasis was placed upon precise astrological factors.

It remains unclear to what extent the sexual magical rituals which came under public scrutiny were actually engaged in, or if they were merely a product of the imagination – a more likely possibility. The alleged ritual for the attainment of the 18th degree of the FS hierarchy (Gradus Pentalphae) has caused a particular stir. Very explicit drawings accompany the text, which is equally explicit.[42] In the course of the ritual a live black rooster is beheaded during an act of sexual intercourse by the priestly couple. Although recent photos

allegedly exist showing participants celebrating the ritual, this calls for scepticism. The ritual may simply have been composed and written down to be sold at a certain price. The original manuscript, which Adolf Hemberger owned, is in the handwriting of Guido Wolther, who was known to have had financial woes. While there seems to be no shortage of people who would find such a ritual especially titillating and would attempt to re-enact it, to describe it as sexual magic is probably misleading.

The teachings of the FS also include tantric practices intended to lead to a transformation of procreative energy into spiritual energy. A chastity period of up to 180 days was originally required before important rituals. For the higher degrees, total abstinence was even (theoretically) obligatory. It is unknown to me whether or not these protocols are still adhered to. In any event, as former Grand Master Walter Jantschik wrote: "The great sexual mysterium is the following – man must reconfigure his semen so that it becomes 'Ojas' (great spiritual power)" (Aythos 1979: 42).[43]

With its anti-Christian stance and its reputation for sexual magic, it is not surprising that the FS provoked opposition from the Church and media. Additionally there was the Grand Masters' reputation of being mainly interested in sex and drugs. But the FS never indulged in public displays of theatrical satanism, after the fashion of the American Church of Satan. Although the FS recruited members through occult publications, they never addressed the general public because they always saw themselves as an elite group. Despite a financial need for membership fees, the FS only wanted to attract those prepared for severity, solitude and the endurance of adversities, conformably to the character of Saturn. Even at the best of times it never had more than 200 members, and in recent years Peter-R. König estimates the number of Saturnists to be only about fifty (Hüttl & König 2007: 260). But on account of its comprehensive and thoroughly original body of writings, the FS has secured an important place for itself in the history of modern magical and occult groups. The fact that it has lasted for eighty years reveals an inherent vitality that seems to renew itself time and again. This alone shows that the FS teaches and offers people something in accordance with their needs.[44]

NOTES

1. There may have also been some brothers in foreign countries. See *BaoL* 79 (October 1956): 21: general announcements on the last page, no author given and no title.
2. This opinion is incidentally shared by Peter-R. König, one of the most important experts on the history of the OTO and the FS. As he confirmed in an e-mail (2 June 2010) to the author, the OTO is more sex-centred, whereas more areas of magic are dealt with in the FS.
3. One such exception is Flowers (1990).
4. There is ample material available about the history of the lodge, even if some of it is subjective. For a brief summary, see König (n.d.), Hakl (2005) and Bonisagus (2008). Far more detailed, but unfortunately more confusing and less systematic, are the three books that Peter-R. König

compiled from his extensive collection of FS internal documents. These are particularly remarkable because König gained access to private as well as internal order correspondence, thanks to his longstanding contact with high-ranking FS members. Very significant is his regular contact with Johannes Maikowski (Master Immanuel), colleague in the 1950s with Master Gregorius and the last living witness to a much earlier stage of the FS. Even if one may disagree with some of König's evaluations and judgements (for example his assessment of Johannes Göggelmann [Fr Saturnius] or Adolf Hemberger in *In Nomine Demiurgi Saturni*, 6–13), his collection of materials is of enormous documentary value. No researcher can write a history of the FS without constantly borrowing from König and the sources he has compiled. His three books specifically on the FS are *In Nomine Demiurgi Saturni*, *In Nomine Demiurgi Nosferati* and *In Nomine Demiurgi Homunculi*. The actual names of the individual brothers and masters, who were always referred to in internal FS matters by their order names, are also identified in these books. König is presently working on revisions of them.

5. For more about Grosche, see Popiol and Schrader (2007), although this book is inadequately researched and does not provide its sources. Grosche served in the First World War as a medic. After the war he joined the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD), which organized the Communist Spartacist uprising in Germany together with the Communist Party of Germany (KPD). Details in König (2001: 28f.).
6. The book was republished several times, most recently in *Saturn Gnosis* (45–58).
7. For more on Albin Grau, see Popiol and Schrader (2007: 24f).
8. Crowley vented his disappointment in his extremely negative evaluation of Heinrich Tränker, in a letter from 1925 reprinted in an appendix to Aythos (1979). König (1998a: 52f.) also includes this letter. The preceding pages of this book contain further contemporary documents such as a letter from Crowley to Tränker as well as the English translation of a text by Crowley's student Karl Germer (1885–1962). Germer may have financed the Pansophical publications.
9. Copies of both letters also appear in the appendix to Aythos (1979).
10. Regarding the statutes, see "Published Aims of the Lodge" in König (1998a: 30–32).
11. Grosche explained in *BaoL* 84 (March 1957): 19, that "the secret order of the 'O.T.O.' is not an umbrella organization for the Fraternitas Saturni." In *BaoL* 93 (December 1957): 21, Grosche wrote that "the brothers of the lodge Fraternitas Saturni are not Thelemites". See also V.D. Frater, "Die Fraternitas Saturni heute", 28f. König provides a synopsis of the relationship between the FS and the OTO in König (2001: 142f.).
12. An evocative portrait of this period with a (fabricated?) ritual and insight into the life of the lodge appears in Karl Spiesberger's novel *Auf dunklem Pfad zum Licht,* which is allegedly based on actual events.
13. Neuberger (1980: 330). The FS is specifically named in this document, which is reproduced here verbatim.
14. *Saturn Gnosis* (25). The abbreviation *e.V.* stands for *eingetragener Verein,* an incorporated association, society or club.
15. An exact listing of these lessons, which antedate many essays in the later *BaoL*, appears in Lehmberg (1980: n.p.).
16. Adolf Hemberger (1971: 35) wrote that there are currently around 200 members "in the magical energy field of Saturn" and of these "about 50 can be called active members".
17. Walter Englert (Frater Ptahhotep) confirmed Grosche's statement in a letter to the author dated 24 July 1970.
18. In 2006 Ralph-Peter Trelle (Grand Master Thot) "liberated" the entity "Exorial" from its banishment by attempting to incorporate the astral entity in a woman; this raised many hackles due to the possible new threat it posed to the lodge (König 2010: 113f, 410).
19. For a short introduction to Hemberger's accomplishments, his "magical" collection and his biography, see Hakl (2001: 50, 51).

20. Internal information about the FS appeared for the first time in several locations in Dr Klingsor (pseudonym of Dr Adolf Hemberger), *Experimentalmagie* (e.g. Klingsor 1967: 128, 159, 181).
21. As an example see Knaut (1973). In journalist Rainer Fromm's book *Satanismus in Deutschland*, the Fraternitas Saturni is likewise counted as a "neo-satanic" organization. In their informative book *Satan – Jünger, Jäger und Justiz*, Leipzig lawyer Andreas Hüttl and Peter-R. König trace the accusations of satanism against contemporary magical orders in Germany back to their real (and surprisingly small) origins and take stock of police and court investigations in this area. The FS and its spin-off groups are also considered.
22. See some examples in König (1998b: 377ff.).
23. In this regard, see König (2010: 385), where the individual spin-offs and lines of succession are depicted graphically. The history here is drawn from Bonisagus (2008: 27f.), and the much more detailed (and often contradicting of Bonisagus) information in König's *In Nomine Domine Demiurgi Homunculi* and his English overview "Fraternitas Saturni: History and Protagonists". Interesting details also appear in Ordo Saturni, *60 Jahre Saturn-Loge*. This small book appeared as a Festschrift for the 100th anniversary of the birth of Gregor A. Gregorius.
24. For more about the controversies connected to this, see König (2010: 70f.). Long passages of the book are dedicated to the very eventful life of Johannes Maikowski.
25. König (1999: 277) reproduces the statutes of this order as well as numerous documents.
26. In August 2000 the FS, under Trelle's leadership, appeared with its own website (e-mail from Peter-R. König, 28 July 2010).
27. From the version of 18 March 1957.
28. All the definitions here also derive from this declaration, which was personally presented in the Orient Berlin by the Grand Master at the end of 1962. In it Grosche emphasized that the lodge leadership would confer internal degrees to a greater extent than it had previously, as recognition for the service and spiritual maturity of members.
29. FS Directive no. 7 of 23 October 1957, in Haack (1977: 53f.).
30. See König (2010: 111), where he writes about rituals for the evocation of the GOTOS. See also Hüttl and König (2007: 230f.).
31. See also the lodge rules of the Grossloge Fraternitas Saturni e.V. of 16 February 1957 and the revisions of 28 June 1968 and 18 August 1969.
32. Directives 1–23 and 26, as well as numerous memos that served the lodge administration, can be found in Haack (1977).
33. Quote from the anonymously written brochure *Fraternitas Saturni. Sinn, Zweck, Ziel*, 3.
34. Gregorius (1954b: 1–24) presents his "cosmosophic" speculations in more detail.
35. E-mail to the author of 16 June 2010.
36. E-mail of 31 May 2010 from Peter-R. König to the author.
37. See, for example, the mirror experiment for making contact with the entity "Aratron" in 2005 as described by König (2010: 114).
38. For a detailed overview of sexual magic in the FS, see Hakl (2008: 445–50).
39. E-mail exchange of 30–31 May 2010 with Peter-R. König.
40. It is apparent from a wide range of sources and from interviews with contemporaries that Eugen Grosche had a great interest in cultivating a sex life that was as varied as possible. In this regard, see Gregorius (1952d: esp. 2, 5). See also the letter of 17 November 1950 from Crowley's student Karl Germer to the Thelemite Carl Heinz Petersen, cited by König (2001: 130), where Germer writes, "As I was a co-founder of 'Pansophia' in 1922, I know of course all about Fraternitas Saturni and the people back of it. Grosche was a sex-maniac, dabbled in hypnosis and drugs – one of the lowest type of occultists I ever met."
41. These exercises can be traced back to Eugen Grosche and were developed further by Johannes Maikowski. A corresponding essay was published in Cara-Lashtal (2005). Immanuel's essay

"Sexualmagie" also appears there. Cara-Lashtal (Alice Höllein) was a student of Johannes Maikowski.

42. A reduced facsimile of the ritual text can be found in König (1999: 108–27).
43. *Ojas* is a Sanskrit term meaning "vitality, life force".
44. The present chapter was translated by Annabel and Michael Moynihan, and is based on currently available documentation about the FS. There is now a book in preparation about Heinrich Tränker (Master Recnartus) by two experts in the field, Volker Lechler and Wolfgang Kistemann, based on years of research in numerous archives. Their findings will definitely impact the history of occult and magical groups in Germany in the first part of the twentieth century, and consequently shed new light on the early history of the FS. Publication is expected in the next few years, until which point the new documentation is unavailable.

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CHAPTER 4

"IN COMMUNICATION WITH THE POWERS OF DARKNESS"

Satanism in turn-of-the-century Denmark, and its use as a legitimating device in present-day esotericism

Per Faxneld

It is often claimed there were no systematic attempts at creating a satanic ideology before Anton LaVey founded the Church of Satan in 1966. However, as I have shown in my book *Mörkrets apostlar* (2006), several such examples can in fact be found, most of them in non-English-speaking countries. This is probably an important reason why they have remained largely neglected by later satanists, since the post-war satanic milieu has been dominated by anglophone ideologists. Scholars have also tended to focus almost exclusively on Anglo-Saxon satanism.

Here I will shine some light on one of these pioneering early satanists, the Danish dairy salesman, alchemist and Luciferian Freemason Ben Kadosh (1872–1936), who published a pamphlet propagating satanism in 1906. The chapter commences with some biographical facts concerning Kadosh, with special attention given to his interactions with men of letters and fellow esotericists (the latter also being discussed further on in the text).[1] It then attempts an encapsulation and contextualization of his system of thought, demonstrating how many of his seemingly idiosyncratic ideas are in fact comfortably embedded in contemporary discourses of various types, but also pointing out the highly original elements present. Lastly, I will discuss how the teachings of Kadosh have undergone a somewhat unexpected renaissance in the satanic milieu of today, functioning as a tool for legitimation in a Luciferian esoteric group fond of geneaologies and pedigrees.

A DAIRY SALESMAN OF SINISTER REPUTATION: BEN KADOSH

Kadosh, whose real name was Carl William Hansen, was born in Copenhagen in 1872, and came from a poor working-class background. His mother started receiving welfare payments when her son was nine years old, and was continuously on welfare from 1898 until her death in 1917. For her funeral, the state paid the burial fee of 30 Danish crowns. All the same, her son apparently managed to acquire a certain level of education and in his late twenties secured a job as a bookkeeper (De tre søjler 1949: 7; Pedersen & Madsen 2006: 3–4). A few years later, he was initiated into the esoteric group *L'Ordre Martiniste*, the first of a vast number of such societies he would join in his life (Lomholt 1931: 113–14).[2]

Perhaps the richest source of information regarding Kadosh as a person is a lengthy memorial article by a friend of his, the writer Aage Welblund, published in the Danish newspaper *Socialdemokraten* in 1946. Among other things, he tells the story of how Kadosh tried to persuade the Danish section of the Society for Psychical Research to assist him in summoning a salamander (fire elemental), and delineates the many interesting personal contacts Kadosh had.

One of his acquaintances by correspondence was the renowned Swedish author August Strindberg (1849–1912). Unfortunately, the letters they exchanged have all been lost, but there is documentation of their discussions in other letters Strindberg wrote. In a letter addressed to Kadosh's esoteric mentor, the Finnish nobleman August Walleen-Borneman, Strindberg complains that the secrecy surrounding Kadosh's pleading for monetary assistance for his experiments with making gold smacks of humbug and charlatanism (Strindberg 1976: 185). The main point of disagreement between Strindberg and Kadosh would seem to be the latter's insistence on keeping alchemy firmly grounded in classic esoteric–mystical speculation, whereas the Swede propagated a gold-making process entirely based on methods gleaned from contemporary natural science (albeit severely misunderstood). On the last page of his 1906 Luciferian pamphlet – more of which presently – Kadosh explains that the alchemical gold is in fact Lucifer, or is at the very least closely tied to him.[3] Therefore, the alchemical striving to create gold must in Kadosh's mind have been the equivalent of struggling towards or evoking Lucifer, or embarking on a Faustian quest for Luciferian enlightenment. Such a view of things was naturally far removed from Strindberg's.[4]

Kadosh does not appear to have gotten any money from Strindberg, but a Danish nobleman in deep financial trouble, grasping for straws, bankrolled his experiments for a while, and let him use a huge oven in the basement of his estate suitable for such proceedings. When the hoped-for results failed to appear, the alchemist was kicked out. According to him, this happened right on the brink of a major breakthrough that would have solved the age-old riddle (Welblund 1946). Even so, whether or not this breakthrough would have

resulted in something that would have helped his financer to pay off his debts is another matter, Luciferian enlightenment not being a popular currency with most creditors.

Another famous author Kadosh corresponded with was the Austrian Gustav Meyrink (1868–1932), whose novel *Golem* (1914) remains a classic of gothic and fantastic fiction. Sadly, none of these letters are preserved either. Authors were not the only celebrities Kadosh came into contact with. When Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) – the founder of anthroposophy – visited Copenhagen, Kadosh paid a visit to his hotel room to discuss esoteric matters. Steiner is supposed to later have said that "surrounding Kadosh's person there was an aura, that fully revealed that he was in communication with the powers of darkness".[5] Sinister stories also circulated about Kadosh being able to magically attack his enemies regardless of distance, and it would seem he himself did nothing to quench these rumours, since he actually rather enjoyed them. Welblund confirms there was indeed a dark streak in Kadosh's personality:

> Something demonic could occasionally come over his person and especially showed itself in his oral laying out of people's horoscopes, where he revealed a very sharp eye for people's weak sides, which perhaps was connected to his predilection for the dark and disharmonic side of things.[6]

Further nefarious streaks appear in another source, which makes passing mention of "psychic experiments" performed by Kadosh, where the intervention of other parties was necessary to avoid a murder and a suicide (De tre søjler 1949: 9). Kadosh was somewhat infamous in his own time due to his pamphlet, the many rumours about him and writings like Carl Kohl's article in a daily newspaper, entitled "Er der satanister i København?" ("Are There Satanists in Copenhagen?"). Welblund quotes from the article, where we get to learn how a Luciferian celebrates Christmas:

> I can certify that there are also those here at home, who in the deepest earnestness have summoned and conjured, and who believe to have seen and worshipped, the Church's Satan, Baphomet, who is the black god of Kabbalah. While I write these lines I have before me a letter from a Danish Satanist and in it I read amongst others the following lines: "While Europe celebrates Christmas for the 'white Christ', I celebrate it as a feast for the highest one, the buck's head … I celebrate it as a feast for Baphomet, the hidden divinity, who I worship and worship again".[7]

Such Christmas-time celebrations of Baphomet would have been conducted in a rather prosaic home environment (if they took place in the family home, that

is). Kadosh's wife ran a small dairy store in the house where they lived, earning the family's upkeep. Her husband devoted his time to occult activities and chemical experiments of a secular nature, for instance unsuccessfully attempting to manufacture colour bands for typewriters (De tre søjler 1949: 7–8).

PROCLAIMING A LUCIFERIAN DAWN: KADOSH'S 1906 PAMPHLET

Kadosh was quite open with his faith: in a national census of 1906, he stated his religious affiliation to be "Luciferian". The rest of his family, his wife and two children, answered "Lutheran" to this question.[8] In the same year as the census, Kadosh published the small 30-page pamphlet *Den ny morgens gry: verdensbygmesterens genkomst* ("The Dawn of a New Morning: The Return of the World's Master Builder"). This unstructured and highly eccentric text presents a type of satanism that remains both original and confusing to this day. Most commentators agree that Kadosh was being deliberately obscure. Welblund's characterization of the work is typical: "It is written in a rather muddled language, and when the author in addition evidently has tried to give his words an abstruse oracular disguise, one understands that for the non-'illuminated', i.e. the non-initiated, it is difficult to comprehend."[9] The syntax of the text is odd, to say the least, and the risk of misinterpretation thus becomes grave. Therefore, the following 'exegesis' must be read with these particular difficulties in mind.

The purpose of the pamphlet is stated to be the spreading of the cult of Satan/Lucifer (the names are used interchangeably), hopefully leading to "the formation of a closed circle, almost in the shape of a new *esoteric* Order of Freemasons, which should be fully dedicated to a cult similar to that of the ancients".[10] Kadosh explains that Satan and Lucifer are "totally alien to the Christian teaching", and have been misunderstood by exoteric Christianity since they "both belong exclusively to an esoteric cult and magic". What, then, is this entity in fact? Lucifer, Kadosh lays down, "is the 'Sum' – or Ego – of the material nature, the creating Logon and Force!", and both "personal and impersonal", "a true physical reality, though of a semi-material nature" and "the potency of the forces in living matter, in an individually personified form". Kadosh further announces that "If one is in possession of the necessary keys or knowledge", it is possible to evoke or call him forth. Those interested in these keys are encouraged to call on Kadosh personally in his home, on Hjørringgade 29.[11]

Later in the pamphlet, Kadosh quotes a long passage verbatim from Carl Kohl's book *Satan og hans kultus i vor tid* ("Satan and His Cult in Our Time"), a popularly written overview of ideas about Satan and satanism (Kadosh 1906: 17; Kohl 1902: 3–4). With reference to Kohl's description of Gnosticism, Kadosh states that his goat-god is a demiurge, the Father and Creator of this world. Then he makes a bold leap, identifying Satan with the Grand Architect Hiram

from Masonic lore (Kadosh 1906: 19). Such a correspondence is certainly not traditional in the Masonic context, and is a novel invention of Kadosh's, perhaps with some inspiration from an infamous French prankster (more of which shortly). According to Masonic legend, Hiram was the master builder who erected the temple of Solomon, and was in possession of a secret word, or the secret correct pronunciation of God's name. Early Masons made a rhetorical jump and identified Hiram with God, the latter metaphorically being the "master builder" of the universe. The correspondence with Lucifer, however, is entirely unknown among real-life Masons.[12] In the realm of fantasy and satire, though, it had been heard of before. There is a possibility that the idea of Satan and Hiram being connected comes from Kohl's recapitulation of the practical joker Leo Taxil's first book, one of many he wrote to make fun of Catholic gullibility in general and their paranoia towards Freemasons in particular, where Hiram is crowned by Satan (Kohl 1902: 32). It is peculiar that Kadosh appears to have taken up some of Taxil's fantasies about Masonic Luciferianism, in spite of the fact that Kohl details the big scam and prank it all turned out to be (*ibid*.: 35–6). Another passage in Kohl's book that might have influenced Kadosh is the summary of Jules Bois's description of a satanic temple, where a picture of Lucifer, designated "the world's builder" ("Verdensbygmesteren"), hangs above the altar. This is followed by a footnote quoting a Catholic Abbé's assertion that the Masonic Grand Architect is in fact the demiurge of the old Gnostics, Satan (*ibid*.: 81–2).

Kadosh's Lucifer is hardly a character one would recognize from any real, practised esoteric system of his time. Nor would any of the antique Gnostics have viewed the demiurge as a type of helping deity, but rather as an evil pseudo-God, or ignorant hinderer. The idea of a benevolent demiurge is a contradiction in terms in a Gnostic context. Most forms of Satanism that are heavily inspired by Gnostic ideas tend to regard the demiurge as identical with the Christian god, whose enemy Satan is.[13] The Lucifer-demiurge of *Den ny morgens gry* is thus an entirely original and odd figure, uniquely the creation – or rather, creative amalgamation – of the eccentric Dane. When Kadosh stresses that the serpent in the Garden of Eden was a benign bringer of wisdom, we are on the other hand in more familiar territory. This was the view taken by Gnostic groups like the Ophites, and later adopted in a pro-Satanic context by H. P. Blavatsky in her vastly influential *The Secret Doctrine* (1888) – a book most esotericists in Kadosh's time would have been familiar with.[14] In accordance with this interpretation of the serpent, Lucifer is portrayed by Kadosh as a sort of rebellious initiator active in all ages, who gives man access to mysteries that the Christian church has tried to keep hidden. He is, according to Kadosh, a phallic and expansive personification of energy, which is why he is the nemesis of all attempts to confine and limit (Kadosh 1906: 27).

The focus on such an energy links him to Eliphas Lévi's Baphomet, who the French occultist identified with the "astral light", a sort of cosmic energy that

flows through the entire universe. It could also be considered part of the time's broader interest in vitalism, a notion of all living things being animated by an energy beyond the purely physical. This view has roots stretching back to antiquity, but had gained new currency through the ideas formulated by Franz Mesmer and Carl Reichenbach. According to Kadosh, the source of all life is Lucifer's father, "that which language does not have any understandable pronounceable word for". Lucifer himself is "the expression of the unpronounceable", that is, his father, and the Luciferian cult should be viewed as centred on "the worship and adoration of [an] eternal, hidden, mighty or omnipotent force in nature".[15] Satan, in other words, is the vehicle of the hidden, unknowable God, and constitutes the appropriate path for man to approach this mystery beyond words. God can only be known through his vessel, Lucifer. The fact that the latter is maligned by Christianity is therefore a tragedy that Kadosh sought to undo. In another section of the text, it is emphasized that Lucifer is not the ugly creature of man's imagination, but "in fact he is beautiful in his dark apparent obscenity".[16] The whitewashing of Satan is not taken all the way, and no attempt is made to separate him completely from the dark and sinister connotations attached to the figure in Christian mythology. This is in evidence also for example in Kadosh's assertions about Lucifer's connection to poisons, substances which, he asserts, if we gradually get used to them will contribute to our well-being rather than hurt us (Kadosh 1906: 28). The point seems to be that the dark and negative – for example, Satan or poisons – holds positive potential for the true initiate.

THE RETURN OF THE GOAT GOD: PAN AS SATAN

Before the actual text of the pamphlet commences, there is a quotation from an Orphic Hymn, where Pan is invoked (Kadosh 1906: 7). Throughout, Lucifer/Satan is equated with Pan, and the resurrection of the "no longer dead" great god Pan is a key theme (*ibid*.: 9, *passim)*. The description of Pan contains characteristics – for instance, wings on his back – which clearly signal that this is not simply the Greek god Pan, but a mixture between this deity and the Devil of Christian lore, which also incorporates features of the Baphomet figure as conceived by Eliphas Lévi (Kadosh 1906: 14).[17]

Equating Pan with Satan is nothing new. The Greek shepherd god, being half man and half goat, is often considered the origin of the goatlike features of the Devil in Christian iconography (Russell [1977] 1987: 125–6). A view of Pan as a demon can be found already in the writings of Eusebius (d. 340 CE), and in Jean Bodin's famous *De la démonomanie des sorciers* ("On the Demon-Mania of Witches", 1580) he is named prince of the so-called *incubi*, male sexual demons. Henry More, in his *Praeexistency of the Soul* (*c*. 1647), connected Pan

to the goatlike Devil presiding over the witches' sabbath (Merivale 1969: 13–14, 27–31, 163, 238, 246; Rudwin 1931: 79). Pan is identified with Satan also in Jules Michelet's *La Sorcière* ("The Witch", 1862) and Stanislaw Przybyszewski's *Die Synagoge des Satan* ("The Synagogue of Satan", published as a series of magazine articles in 1897, collected as a book in 1900), both of which Kadosh may very well have read.[18] Eliphas Lévi in turn claimed that the goat god worshipped by the citizens of the Egyptian city of Mendes, according to the account of Herodotus (who stated that this god was equated by the locals with the god Pan of his own country), was in fact the mysterious Baphomet supposedly adored by the Knight's Templar. A connection between Pan and Baphomet was thus established (Faxneld 2006: 105–6).

Pan was immensely popular as a motif in poetry and prose around the time when *Den ny morgens gry* was written, especially in Great Britain and USA. Keats and Shelley had written about him back in their day, and around the turn of the century Swinburne (in three of his late poems) and Wilde were hymning him. Occultists like Aleister Crowley were also writing paeans to Pan, and practised an actual cult of the god (Merivale 1969: vii–viii, 118, 122–3, 133, 266). In short, Kadosh's passion for Pan was something fairly typical for his time and the ample literary heritage concerning the figure seems a likely influence. He probably knew texts like Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* (1817), where Pan is designated a mysterious god representing "intelligence blended with a darker power, deeper, mightier, and more universal than the conscious intellect of man" (Coleridge 1983: 117), a phrasing strikingly similar to some that can be found in Kadosh's text.

Various Scandinavian writers also employed the motif frequently. In Sweden, Pan was used in symbolic attacks on Christianity by socialists. For example, in an essay in the Christmas 1895 issue of *Loke*, a radical leftist publication named after the morally ambiguous trickster god in ancient Norse mythology, Fritjof Lidén contrasted the "unnatural" and ascetic teachings of Christ and his disciples with the life-affirming Pan.[19] Swedish decadent poet Emil Kléen – who knew Strindberg – wrote the poem "Pans fest" ("The Feast of Pan", in the collection volume *Vildvin och vallmo*, "Woodbine and Poppy", 1895) and this is a text Kadosh could no doubt have been familiar with. Here Pan is held up as a god of nature who brings joy and carnal pleasure to man, and who exclaims: "You call me *Sathanas* – / *That* name I am proud to bear."[20] As in Kadosh's system, Kléen's satanic Pan is further described in vitalistic terms as an animating force in nature, "the life force in the seed".[21] This interpretation had been current in some form for a long time. Through an antique misunderstanding of the etymology of the word Pan, the god's name was early on understood to be derived from the Greek word for "all", and thus Pan came to be perceived as the soul of the world (Merivale 1969: 9–11). Such a view lived on past antiquity, and has clearly had an impact on Kadosh.

CIRCLES, LODGES AND ORDERS: KADOSH AND ORGANIZED ESOTERICISM

Kadosh was not a very productive writer. As far as we know, he published nothing further until 1928, when he issued another pamphlet, *Rosea-Crucis: Rosen-Korset: Ars-Sapiens-Philosophia-Vita* ("Rosea-Crucis: The Rose Cross: Art-Thinking-Philosophy-Life"), stating the author simply as "en Frater" ("a brother"). Here there are no satanic references, and the imagery is instead Christian for the most part. The wordings regarding God – for instance the exhortation to "direct the flame within you towards God"[22] – are, however, non-specific enough to be interpreted as referring to the master builder Lucifer of the previous pamphlet. And indeed this last published writing ends with the Latin words "Per tenebres ad lumen!" ("Through darkness towards light!") ("en Frater" 1928: 17), which tie in nicely with his older ideas about the dark entity Satan as a way to reach the true God.

His lacking productivity publication-wise notwithstanding, Kadosh seems to have been a tenacious networker who associated with many groups and individuals in both the Danish and European esoteric milieux. In Hartmann's *Who's Who in Occultism, New Thought, Psychism and Spiritualism*, Kadosh is listed as:

> Chemist, Author, Kabbalist, Astrologer, Patriarch and Primas, Naassenic Gnostic Synode (Scandinavia), Grand Master General, Grand Orient of Denmark, President Alchemical Society of Denmark; General Delegate and Hon. Member, Società Alchemica Italiana; President, Kabbalistic Order (Denmark); Grand Master and General Delegate, Martinist Order, etc., etc. (Hartmann 1927: 62)[23]

It is interesting to note that Kadosh was also a member of Theodor Reuss's OTO (Ordo Templi Orientis), before the position as OHO (Outer Head of the Order) was taken over by Aleister Crowley, and he eventually became its leader in Denmark. Neither under his leadership nor under his successor did it however become Crowleyan.[24]

Unfortunately, it is difficult to find detailed documentation concerning the practical consequences of Kadosh's involvement with the OTO and the groups mentioned in Hartmann's book. For the time being, this aspect of his activities remains more or less veiled in obscurity due to a lack of available source material. It does not appear unlikely, however, that further archival investigations will sooner or later yield more correspondence or other relevant materials pertaining to the matter. At the moment, we will have to make do with ascertaining that he was well connected in esoteric circles, and had many international contacts. A detailed comparison discussing a possible influence on Kadosh from ideas propagated in these orders is beyond the scope of the present chapter, but is something that ought to be treated in future scholarship.

There is no direct indication that any of the many other orders Kadosh was involved with had Luciferian leanings, except perhaps for the Naasenic Gnostic Synod. The antique Naasene Gnostics considered, if we are to believe the descriptions we have of them, the serpent in the Garden of Eden a messenger of the true god, sent to help mankind break free from the illusions and lies of the demiurge. In other words, they had a positive view of a biblical figure considered by mainstream Christian tradition to be the Devil. Since the neo-Gnostic group that Kadosh led as "Patriarch & Primas" took their inspiration from the Naasenes it is not a wild assumption that there might have existed certain receptivity in this context for his Luciferian ideas. However, how many members Kadosh's group had is not known, and it may very well have been a minuscule synod consisting of one or two persons, with no actual "church" to rule over (the term synod usually denotes the ruling body of a church). A manuscript from one of Kadosh's Masonic lodges states, in a passage regarding the Luciferian pamphlet, that "His goal was to establish a Luciferian-Gnostic 'congregation' with himself as 'patriarch', but he naturally never managed to."[25]

There is a slight possibility that this statement may not be entirely true, if we consider the small occult cabal Kadosh launched together with two other men: the Swedish shoemaker N. A. Wessmann, who was attempting to build a *perpetuum mobile*, and the student of astrology Vilhelm Jespersen. They were later joined by the illustrator Niels Wivel, famed for his humorous drawings (Welblund 1946; De tre søjler 1949: 9). Whether or not this little group were heeding the call from *Den ny morgens gry*, to create a Luciferian "closed circle, almost under the form of a new *esoteric* Order of Freemasons"[26], and were in effect a satanist clique, is not possible to tell from Welblund's account. In a very interesting recent archival find, Swedish filmmaker Peter Padrón Hérnández has discovered a series of drawings by Wivel, which depict motifs close to the concerns displayed in Kadosh's esoteric system: inverted pentagrams, Baphomet, Lilith, women with serpent hair or reptilian bodies and so on. Perhaps most fascinating are the images of a serpent with the head of a wizened old man wearing a crown giving the forbidden fruit to Eve.[27] This could be taken as evidence that Wivel was very deeply involved with the teaching, and that the circle was indeed satanic in orientation.

During the 1920s, Kadosh was also engaged in the founding of a number of Masonic lodges and orders in Copenhagen, none of them Luciferian as far as we know.[28] In December 1930 he was, due to his continued peddling of irregular Masonic charters, expelled from several of them.[29] The following year he wrote a letter, in dubious English, to Harvey Spencer Lewis, the founder of the Rosicrucian order AMORC, proclaiming: "I am no more interested in great Orders & Societies, and no more I am fascinated by the many Seals and more."[30] He mentions his early schooling in the French occultism of Papus, Stanislas de Guaita, Jean Bricaud and others, but concludes that he is now "only Rosicrucian, Astrolog [*sic*], Alchemist and high learned semitic Cabbaliste."

Somewhat despondently, he then remarks: "yes, many titles, charges and patents I have (but only: few penni in the purse)" (Clymer 1935: 347). The tragic dimension is also emphasized in a description of his life, written by a Masonic brother, as being rich when it came to fantasy, but poor in material goods and (non-imaginary) friends (De tre søjler 1949: 9).

WIELDERS OF SHIBULAH: FICTIONAL PORTRAYALS AND A LUCIFERIAN RENAISSANCE

As mentioned, Kadosh corresponded with famous authors in other countries. He was also portrayed several times in literary works by countrymen of his. His first appearance was in J. I. Kronstrøm's novel *Den gyldne kunst* ("The Golden Art", 1918), followed by J. Anker Larsen's *De vises sten* ("The Philosopher's Stone", 1923). Two decades later, one of Denmark's most famous authors, Hans Scherfig, immortalized Kadosh by depicting him in his two novels *Idealister* ("Idealists", 1944) and *Frydenholm* (1962).[31] In *Idealister* we can read about how Kadosh gets carried away by his esoteric rituals, conducted in an attic room above the family's dairy store, wildly swinging a little sword made out of cardboard and wearing a hat fashioned from an old margarine container, decorated with pentagrams and magical characters. His loud incantations sometimes disturb the customers who come to buy dairy products, and his wife tries to persuade him to calm himself – but to no avail, as her husband keeps struggling with the invisible powers and swinging his cardboard sword, which he pompously refers to as "Shibulah".[32]

Welblund states that much of the novel's depiction of Kadosh is based on real facts, but of course it is after all a literary text first and foremost. This goes for the portrayals by Kronstrøm and Larsen as well. The portraits have all the same become part of the legend surrounding Kadosh, and he emerges as an uncommonly ridiculous guru that you would think it unlikely anyone would want to revere as his or her esoteric master.

Reading Kadosh's pamphlets further strengthens the impression that this person was, to put it bluntly, a somewhat laughable eccentric. His writing style is decidedly obscure and incompetent, the ideas bizarre (or very original, depending on your point of view) and his way of reasoning often difficult to follow (or very mystical and profound, again depending on your perspective). A number of people in our own time have chosen to adopt the positive stance in this question, and a small group of esotericists – the American Michael Bertiaux and Danes Bjarne Salling Pedersen and I. M. Berg – formed The Neo-Luciferian Church (hereafter the NLC) on Candlemass 2005. On the NLC website, it is stated that in certain circles there had been a wish ever since the 1970s "to re-establish a Danish Luciferian Church and carry on the magical current from Carl William Hansen".[33] Bertiaux is an author who is well-known

in the Thelemic and Left-Hand Path sections of today's esoteric milieu, and who is head of a staggering number of interrelated organizations (not entirely unlike Kadosh, in this respect). There are Luciferian elements to be found in his teachings, and some of these may have their origins in the nineteenth-century context from which Kadosh's ideas sprung forth.[34] However, for reasons of space a more detailed discussion of the highly complex system presented in Bertiaux's writings – where Vodou is blended with Thelema, Martinism and many other traditions – will have to wait until another occasion.

One of the NLC founders, Pedersen, had earlier translated *Den ny morgens gry* into English, and the text was published in Swedish Satanist Carl Abrahamsson's journal *The Fenris Wolf* (Fr. GCLO 1993: 72–97). This was the first translation of it, and as we have seen, it is safe to assume Kadosh's Luciferian teachings had not gained many followers during his own lifetime and almost certainly none outside of Denmark and Sweden. Things appear not to have got off to a flying start immediately back in 1993 either, though Kadosh's name did at least begin to become better known through the *Fenris Wolf* re-publication, especially among Scandinavian esotericists. Thus, the ground was to some extent prepared for starting an organization based on his creed. In 2006 a new Danish-language edition of *Den ny morgens gry* was published, and a Swedish translation is presently in preparation. The NLC has managed to attract a handful of members in Denmark since it first started, and subsequently established a Swedish congregation as well. In total, the number of members is around 12–20. Membership is by invitation only, and most members are people in their thirties and forties, typically with an education in the humanities at university level.[35]

It is interesting to note how strong the cult of Kadosh's person appears to be, and also how this necessitates an ironical approach from his followers – he is after all a rather ludicrous character.[36] The Church sells coffee mugs and notebooks with a photo of Kadosh on them, stating that the first of these items is intended for "the occult geek".[37] Humour permeates other areas of the Church as well, and certainly not every satanic order would have a quote like "Come join the dark side / we've got cookies" on their homepage.[38] At the same time, the NLC is paying for the upkeep of Kadosh's grave, and seems to take his ideas deeply seriously. Neither is there anything particularly humorous about their Luciferian creed, which is written in a typically bombastic satanic style.[39]

DIABOLIC SUCCESSION: STRATEGIES OF LEGITIMATION WITHIN THE NEO-LUCIFERIAN CHURCH

What, then, can be gained from having a guru who died way back in 1936? For one thing, we have to remember that satanism as a systematic teaching cannot really be found prior to the ideas presented by Stanislaw Przybyszewski around the year 1900, and no-one has yet really tried to appropriate him as a prominent

predecessor. Therefore, having a holy writ published as early as 1906 makes a satanic group remarkably and uniquely grounded in tradition and history. Kadosh's pamphlet could even reasonably be said to be the very first consistently satanic *esoteric* text (Przybyszewski's Satanism was of a more philosophical type, and Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine* was not satanic in its entirety).[40] Many satanists, such as the ONA (Order of the Nine Angles), claim to be the custodians of an ancient tradition. But in fact, none of them have solid evidence to back these claims. The NLC actually do have a canonical writing that is over 100 years old. In a way, they could thereby be said to be the 'most traditional' satanist group in the world, since they have a (relatively speaking) genuinely old satanic teaching as their basis. However, we are of course not dealing with an unbroken line of transmission, but rather the revival of an esoteric heritage that had lain dormant for a couple of generations. The oldest satanist group, if we count age in terms of unbroken well-documented tradition, still remains the Church of Satan, founded in 1966.[41]

The NLC recommends "all members and applicants to start a general study in the Western Occult Tradition", naming authors like Eliphas Lévi, Michael Bertiaux, Dion Fortune, S. MacGregor Mathers, Israel Regardie, Aleister Crowley, Francis King, Kenneth Grant and Austin Osman Spare as suitable reading.[42] Crowley in particular seems to be of great importance, since twenty of his texts can be found translated into Danish on the NLC homepage. Also, Crowley's most famous dictum ("Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. Love is the law, love under will.") is displayed on the front page of the website, which is also decorated with the Crowleyan unicursal hexagram.[43] This is one of the many modifications and additions to the teachings of Kadosh that we can observe. It is obvious that he is certainly not the sole source of inspiration for his present-day heirs. This would naturally be a bit difficult, given that his writings total no more than forty-nine small pages (counting both pamphlets), a rather slim canon for any religious group to make do with.

Somewhat surprisingly, there are few explicit references to Kadosh's writings on the website (the only one is in fact a quotation from *Den ny morgens gry* at the top of "The Neo-Luciferian Manifesto"),[44] but quite a few to Aleister Crowley, as well as scattered references to the writings of authors like the Mason Albert Pike, the amateur folklorist Charles G. Leland and Eliphas Lévi. It is possible to find some parts of the actual ideology that seem to be vaguely inspired by Kadosh, though. In "The Neo-Luciferian Manifesto" the fifth item ("Lucifer is a primeval force") talks of Lucifer as "a personified, as well as abstract, reality", echoing what Kadosh writes in his pamphlet.[45] In "The Neo-Luciferian Creed" (note 6) it is stated that: "Lucifer is the deity of freedom and a natural enemy towards them that enslaves man and beast. Lucifer has some element of rebellion and anarchy, a kind of civil disobedience against claimed authorities."[46] This is similar to Kadosh's words about Lucifer as the opponent of those, for instance the Christian church, who want to keep people in ignorance, but it is also a

phrasing of such a general nature that it does not necessarily point towards an influence from him.[47] It would therefore seem that the function of Kadosh, at least judging by the material on display for the non-initiated, is mostly as a link to history, one of many strategic tools employed to underline the authenticity, legitimacy and high age of the spiritual current represented by the NLC.

The NLC claims to be the successor to a number of different churches, some of the gnostic–magical variety and some belonging to traditional Christianity. Twenty-one such churches are listed on their website, among them the Vintrasian Carmelite Church, the Boullanian Carmelite Church, the Liberal Catholic Church and, surely to the surprise of some, the Russian Orthodox Church and the Syrian Orthodox Church. The twenty-one succession lines are meticulously documented on the website, with a detailed separate PDF document available for each of them.[48] This underscores the great importance attached within the NLC to tradition and ancient lineages as a means to create legitimacy, something that is in fact rather typical of the esoteric milieu in general.[49] It is mainly as yet another such instrument that Kadosh seems to be utilized.

In his book *Legitimating New Religions*, the first full-length study of the topic, James R. Lewis draws on Weber, and groups legitimation strategies into charismatic appeals, rational appeals and traditional appeals (Lewis 2003: 13–14). To some extent, Kadosh, even if he is a historical figure and long since dead, could be said to possess charisma as a visionary. Rationality is not invoked overtly much by the NLC, but tradition decidedly is, as we have seen. Lewis does not underscore continuity as an essential element of tradition, but the NLC seems to attach great importance to this, considering their preoccupation with succession lines. On the other hand, they freely admit to having revived a dormant tradition when they elevated Kadosh as one of their most important gurus. The comparatively (in the context of satanism) high age of his teachings makes him important for reasons thay may be, in Lewis's words, "based on a deep pattern in the human psyche that tends to regard ancient origins as particularly sacred" (*ibid*.: 80).[50] Other satanist groups have tried to bolster their teachings with references to archaic religions from ancient cultures (Egypt, Sumeria, etc.). But as far as actual satanism (understood as an esoteric system celebrating the Devil) goes, Ben Kadosh is as ancient as it gets.

When Anton LaVey wrote *The Satanic Bible*, he partly spurned older esoteric thinkers and instead constructed his legitimacy mainly by basing his religion in a rational secularist worldview underpinned by natural science. This was coupled with suggestions about mysterious forces that today may seem like magic, but will eventually be scientifically comprehended. In the development of the Church of Satan after LaVey's death, tradition gained importance and the writings of LaVey have acquired a status as quasi-scripture.[51] The NLC uses Kadosh in a considerably more free manner, and no member is ever likely to bash someone over the head with a copy of *Den ny morgens gry* in a debate. But even if the NLC stresses its undogmatic and unhierarchic nature, for instance

describing its creed as "a work-thesis rather than a dogmatic comprehension of reality",[52] it is worth keeping in mind Olav Hammer's words that "the construction of tradition is indeed a question of taking the right to speak authoritatively". Hammer further explicates that when "a spokesperson uses a discursive strategy", such as tradition, "rather than a more formal demonstration to support the claim that his or her interpretations should be a valid grid through which others could or should interpret reality, this is an ideological maneuver" (Hammer 2004: 501). This applies even when this grid of interpretations is soft as silk and applied without much force.

In his book about discursive strategies in esotericism, Hammer states that many movement texts attempt to construct a historical lineage, but goes on to demonstrate that following developments after the very first period of Blavatsky's Theosophical Society, the direct references to older generations of specific esoteric writers as predecessors have decreased somewhat in importance (Hammer 2004: 86). This does not hold true for the section of the contemporary esoteric milieu where figures like for instance Bertiaux or Kenneth Grant belong, and the latter builds much of his legitimacy on his direct links to Aleister Crowley. The NLC, firmly planted in the same section, also take a more "old-fashioned" approach. Still, tradition is by no means the only strategy of legitimation employed by them. Some references, mostly vague, to the other two strategies discussed by Hammer – (narratives about) experience, appeals to rationality and science – are also present. Still, the appeal to tradition is by far the most prominent strategy visible to an outsider. Worth noting in this context is also the references to Secret Chiefs or Hidden Masters in the Neo-Luciferian creed: "Thus, from time to time, Prophets arise on earth, claiming to have had contact with these Secret Chiefs or Hidden Masters, and with their results and success, render probable that they have had access to non-human intelligence and insight."[53] However, a discussion of this interesting motif, well-known from theosophy and several later groups, goes beyond the goals of the present chapter, which focuses specifically on the legitimation strategies related to Ben Kadosh (even if he, of course, implicitly can be assumed to be one of the prophets mentioned in the quote).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that, contrary to what is often stated, there existed systematic attempts to formulate a satanic teaching long before the Church of Satan was founded in 1966. It is plain, however, that such early satanisms had extremely limited long-term influence, and clearly Ben Kadosh did not create a satanism anywhere near as influential as LaVey's.

As has often been the case with satanism, authors of fiction have played an important part in nourishing and preserving the legend of Kadosh. He himself

seems to have drawn on fictional accounts of satanism, in his likely borrowings from Taxil's books (mediated through Kohl's *Satan og hans kultus*) and literary depictions of Pan. Kadosh's satanism is, as has been demonstrated, very much a product of its time, with components lifted from vitalism, Masonic lore, and the contemporary enthusiasm for Gnosticism and the Greek god Pan. In spite of most building blocks being clearly recognizable, the resulting conglomerate is highly idiosyncratic, obscure and difficult to grasp – even for an esoteric system. In part, this is caused by an exceptionally odd writing style.

It is surprising to note that Kadosh appears not to have been universally scorned and rejected by his peers in spite of being a fairly outspoken satanist. This indicates an unexpected potential openness to such ideas in the esoteric milieu of his era and suggests a certain likelihood that systematic satanism may have deeper and wider historical roots than is commonly assumed. Perhaps Denmark was also for some reason a more fertile ground for such seeds of darkness than continental Europe, but in order to properly evaluate this more research on turn-of-the-century Danish esotericism is needed.

Ultimately, as far as Kadosh is concerned, it should still be stressed that he was a local eccentric, whose ideas did not, it seems, during his lifetime spread much further than his hometown. His specifically satanic ideas perhaps didn't attract any followers at all in a formal sense, though at least Wivel seems to have been quite heavily affected on some level. We cannot completely rule out that the Luciferian circle got off the ground properly and engaged in some sort of activities on a regular basis, but there is really no evidence to indicate it. More broadly speaking, it is also decidedly possible to imagine there may have been others like him elsewhere around the same time. As satanists continue to search for their historical roots, and scholars with an interest in older forms of satanism could be said to be assisting them, it appears probable that more rare specimens of the Kadosh variety will eventually be found. Hereby, unprecedented possibilities will be created for satanists to look backwards in history for inspiration, in a more tangible way than making vague references to secret (previously unheard of and in all likelihood imaginary) hereditary traditions or broadening the definition of satanism to include radical individualists and ruthless entrepeneurs of all kinds (LaVey's primary strategy of choice).[54]

Judging from what we can observe in the case of the NLC, such more or less newly unearthed predecessors need not have an ideology that is fully synchronized with the esoteric currents of our time in order to be useful as a strategic tool for satanic legitimation. It is fully sufficient that they were praisers of Satan and had at least *some* ideas that are now deemed appropriate.

As for instance Lewis's study of the Church of Satan after the demise of LaVey shows, tradition provides legitimacy in the satanic milieu just like in most other contexts. Such legitimation strategies are always closely bound up with issues of power, even in the case of a non-hierarchical and undogmatic group like the NLC. This should not be misconstrued as a claim that this group's leadership

are exceedingly hungry for power and want to gain uncritical followers bowing to their word. Rather, an appeal to tradition is a completely natural part of an emerging religious group's endeavours to establish the legitimacy needed to solidify their position and emphasize what makes them (more) valid and worthwhile in comparison to their competitors in the field.

NOTES

1. It would have been interesting to more thoroughly situate Kadosh in the context of turn-of-the-century Danish esotericism, especially the varieties of Freemasonry that were flourishing, but I have not been able to find literature or sources to enable me to do this in a fully satisfying manner. At present, such detailed comparisons will have to remain a suggestion for further research.
2. As Lomholt points out, it is perhaps doubtful if Kadosh received all of the initiations personally and in the cities he himself stated (Lyon, Berlin, Vienna, etc.), as it would most likely have been too expensive for him to travel so extensively. Lomholt directs several snide remarks towards Kadosh, making fun of his collection of Masonic patents and charters, and relates how he once asked Kadosh if he could acquire a Chinese Masonic patent as well, something the latter deemed not unthinkable. Nothing more was then heard of it, and Lomholt wryly comments that perhaps the language barrier hindered correspondence with the Chinese Masons (Lomholt 1931: 61–2).
3. Kadosh writes, among other things, that Lucifer is the "original principle" ("Urprincip") of gold (Kadosh 1906: 29).
4. Strindberg did show some sympathy for the Devil in the mystery play incorporated in *Mäster Olof* (1878) and *Inferno* (1897), and actually stated at one point that he used to be a satanist (though this did not really entail what one would think), but his alchemical practice bears no mark of these ideas. On Strindberg and satanism, see Faxneld (2006: 134–40).
5. "omkring Kadosh person stod en aura, der til fulde afslørede at han havde forbindelse med mørkets magter" (Welblund 1946). All translations from Danish are my own.
6. "Noget dæmonisk kunne lejlighedsvis komme over hans person og kom i særlig grad frem i hans mundtlige udlægninger af folks horoskoper, hvor han afslørede et meget skarpt blik for menneskers svage sider, hvad der måske hang sammen med hans forkærlighed for tingenes mørke og disharmoniske side" (Welblund 1946).
7. "At der også findes dem herhjemme, der I deres sjæls dybeste alvor har påkaldt og besværget, og som tror at have set og tilbedt den kirkens Satan, Baphomet, der er kabbala's sorte gud det kan jeg bevidne. Mens jeg skriver disse linjer har jeg foran mig liggende et brev til mig fra en dansk Satanist og deri læser jeg bl a følgende linjer: 'Mens Europa fejre julen for den "hvide Crist", fejer jeg den som en højtid for den højeste ene, bukkehovedet …. Jeg højtideligholder julen som en fest for Baphomet, den formummede guddom, som jeg tilbeder og atter tilbeder'" (Welblund 1946). I have not been able to trace Kohl's original article.
8. Folketællingen, 1906, available online at http://www.arkivalieronline.dk/Folketaelling/default.aspx. Most of the archival background material on Kadosh was originally unearthed by Peder Byberg Madsen and Bjarne Salling Pedersen, and is thus not my own discovery. I wish to thank Madsen and Pedersen for generously sharing photocopies of it. Their findings are presented in their introduction to the 2006 edition of *Den ny morgens gry* (Pedersen & Madsen 2006). However, some slight inaccuracies can be found there; for instance they claim (8–9) that the national census where Kadosh stated that he was a "Luciferian" took place in 1921, the correct year in fact being 1906 (as I found out when I checked the records myself).

9. Welblund (1946): "Den er affattet i et temmelig knudret Sprog, og naar hertil kommer, at Forfatteren bevidst har forsøgt at give sine Ord en dunkel orakelmæssig forklædning, forstaar man, at den for de ikke 'illuminerede', d.v.s. de ikke indviede, er vanskelig at fatte". In a manuscript from the Masonic lodge De tre søjler, it is described as being authored in "an incredibly affected and partly incomprehensible language" ("et usandsynligt forskruet og delvis uforstaaeligt Sprog"), while his other pamphlet is said to be written in "unreadable and hopelessly incorrect language" ("ulaeseligt og haabløst ukorrekt Sprog") (De tre søjler 1949: 8, 10).
10. "Dannelsen af en lukket Cirkel, nærmest i Form af en ny *esoterisk* Frimurer-Orden, der helt vilde hellige sig en Kultus i Lighed med de Gamles" (Kadosh 1906: 5).
11. "ganske uhjemlige i den kristelige Laere", "De høre begge ene esoterisk Kultus og Magi til", "er den materielle Naturs 'Sum' – eller Jeg – den skabende Logon og Kraft!", "personelig og upersonelig", "en sand, fysisk Virkelighed, omend af halvmateriel Natur", "Potensen af den levende Materies Kraefter i individuel, personificeret Form", "Er man i Besiddelse af fornødne Nøgler eller Kundskaber" (Kadosh 1906: 4–5).
12. On Hiram in the Masonic context, see Bogdan (2003: 119, 125–7).
13. Interestingly, a partly parallel view of Satan as a *benevolent* (if somewhat harsh) *demiurge*, can later be found in the writings of German esotericist Gregor A Gregorius (Eugen Grosche, 1888–1964). It is unlikely, but not impossible, that Gregorius was aware of Kadosh's ideas. It would, however, appear more plausible that they could have a mutual source in some obscure neo-Gnostic esoteric tradition, or that they came up with these thoughts independently of one another. On Gregorius, see Faxneld (2006: 177–88) and Chapter 3 of this book.
14. Blavatsky's Gnostic–Satanic counter-reading of Genesis – where a benign Satan in the shape of the serpent in the Garden of Eden helps mankind to become free of the oppression exerted by an evil demiurge – is somewhat more predictable than Kadosh's use of Gnostic concepts. For a discussion of the pro-satanic content in *The Secret Doctrine*, see Faxneld (2012a).
15. "den som Sproget ikke ejer noget forstaaeligt udtaleligt Ord for", "det uudtaleliges Udtryk", "Dyrkelsen og Tilbedelsen af evig, forborgen, maegtig eller alt formaaende Naturkraft" (Kadosh 1906: 13).
16. "i Virkeligheden er han skøn i sin mørke tilsyneladende Obskønitet" (Kadosh 1906: 25).
17. On Lévi's Baphomet, see Faxneld (2006: 103–7).
18. Michelet ([1862] 1878: 153–5, 301); Przybyszewski ([1897] 1979: 32–3). On Przybyszewski and his satanic system, see Faxneld (2006: 140–49; 2012b). Kadosh peppered *Den ny morgens gry* with expressions in French and German (sometimes misspelled and with bad grammar), so it appears he may have been able to read these languages. *La Sorcière* was also available in an English translation.
19. Lidén (1895). On Swedish socialist use of mythological figures – specifically Satan – to undermine the authority of Christianity, see Faxneld (forthcoming).
20. "Du *Satanas* mig nämner – / *det* namnet stolt jag bär" (Kléen 1895: 28).
21. "lifsens kraft i fröet" (Kléen 1895: 29).
22. "ret Flammen indenfor Dig mod Gud" ("en Frater" 1928: 13).
23. Hartmann (1927: 62). There is also a separate listing for "The Naassenic (Ophitic) Gnostic Synode", whose Patriarch & Primas is Kadosh (Hartmann 1927: 91).
24. See www.parareligion.ch/sunrise/hansen.htm.
25. "Hans Maal var at faa oprettet en luciferiansk-gnostisk 'Menighed' med sig selv som 'Patriark', men det lykkedes ham naturligvis aldrig" (De tre søjler 1949: 8). It appears he might occasionally have tried to sneak some Luciferian elements into the more conventional Masonic groups, like when he was allowed to invoke the high Demiurge ("Høje Demiurg") – in Kadosh's worldview of course meaning Lucifer – at an opening and closing of the lodge De tre søjler in 1926 (*ibid.*: 23).
26. "lukket Cirkel, nærmest i Form af en ny *esoterisk* Frimurer-Orden" (Kadosh 1906: 5).

27. E-mail to the author from Peter Padrón Hérnández, 25 May 2012 (containing the images mentioned). The old man casts a shadow shaped like a classical horned devil-figure.
28. Lomholt (1931: 113–22, 174–6, 275). Lomholt's hostile retelling of events should perhaps be taken *cum grano salis*, but even if Kadosh would appear to have been a sincere mystic in many respects, there is also doubtless some truth to Lomholt's description of him as an opportunistic peddler of irregular Masonic patents. Concerning Lomholt's vitriolic attacks on (according to him) irregular Masonic groups in Denmark, launched mainly through the evening press, and the eventual outcome of his actions, see De tre søjler (1949: 20).
29. Circular letter addressed to all Danish Masonic lodges, 1930. Kept in the archives of Frimurerlauget, Smallegade, Copenhagen. I wish to thank Peder Byberg Madsen for sharing this document with me.
30. Quoted in Clymer (1935: 346). Clymer's italics removed in the quote.
31. According to the blurb on the cover of the Swedish edition of *Frydenholm*, he is even the best-selling Danish author of all time.
32. Scherfig (1944: 172–7). In *Idealister*, Kadosh is one of the main characters. In *Frydenholm*, on the other hand, Kadosh's appearance is limited to a single page (Scherfig 1978: 361).
33. See www.neoluciferianchurch.org/church/church.html.
34. Lewis (2001: 179–80). Bertiaux is a fascinating and original (some would say bizarre) writer, who is yet to receive any real attention from academics. Lewis's brief mention of him is one of very few in scholarly literature.
35. E-mail to the author from Bjarne Salling Pedersen, 25 October 2009. Rev. Proprophegge estimates the number of members to be around 10–15 (e-mail to the author from Rev. Proprophegge, 24 October 2009).
36. This is the impression one gets when perusing the material, though it is worth noting that Pedersen, when I asked him what role Kadosh plays, answered: "Kadosh plays no role as a special 'saint' or anything similar. We're equally inspired by such people as Herman Hesse, Bulwer-Lytton, Aleister Crowley or Eliphas Levi + dozens more" (e-mail to the author from Bjarne Salling Pedersen, 25 October 2009). Another member, Rev. Proprophegge, answered: "He is seen as one of our 'fathers' and respected as a founder, albeit more in spirit/ideology than in actual succession" (e-mail to the author from Rev. Proprophegge, 24 October 2009). It may seem inappropriate for a historian of religion to label an object of study a "ludicrous character" (even if this fact is fairly evident and uncontroversial, and he was considered so by many of his contemporary peers), but I do so here to make a rhethorical point: that the (obvious) tragicomical aspects of Kadosh's person necessitate a special approach when he is appropriated by today's esotericists.
37. See www.cafepress.co.uk/nlcmarket, where it is also possible to buy things like a "Satanic BBQ Apron – for the true gourmet" (could do double duty as a Masonic apron, perhaps?), a "Neo-Luciferian Cap of Invisibility" and "Anti-Christian Boxer Shorts – f*cking sexy". Even if Pedersen underscores that Hesse, Crowley and others are just as important to the NLC, things like the merchandise on offer make it clear that Kadosh *does* have a special position.
38. See www.neoluciferianchurch.org/members/members.html.
39. See www.neoluciferianchurch.org/text/creed-english.pdf.
40. Though there are sympathies for the Devil in the writings of Blavatsky and to some extent Lévi, neither of them develops this into a major theme. On Lévi, see Faxneld (2006: 101–7). On Blavatsky, see Faxneld (2006, 108–17; 2012a). On Przybyszewski, see Faxneld (2006: 140–49; 2012b).
41. That is, unless one would want to categorize Fraternitas Saturni as still being satanists (if, indeed, one agrees they should be designated thus at any point of their history). It would seem, though, that they have distanced themselves from such ideas since the death of Gregor A. Gregorius, who was probably largely responsible for the strongly satanic content of some early texts and ritual practices (Faxneld 2006: 177–88).

42. See www.neoluciferianchurch.org/members/members.html.
43. See www.neoluciferianchurch.org/text/text.html, www.neoluciferianchurch.org/. As mentioned, Kadosh was a member of the pre-Crowleyan OTO, but never became associated with the later Crowleyan version of the order.
44. See www.neoluciferianchurch.org/manifest/nl-manifest-uk.pdf.
45. See www.neoluciferianchurch.org/manifest/nl-manifest-uk.pdf.
46. See www.neoluciferianchurch.org/text/creed-english.pdf.
47. Pedersen is of course right, however, when he writes (in response to a question from me regarding to what extent the ideology of the NLC is inspired by Kadosh): "to be looking for Kadosh in the written material of the NLC is like looking for a ghost – not least because Kadosh's work ain't exactly filled [with] plain statements suited for quotation" (e-mail to the author from Bjarne Salling Pedersen, 25 October 2009). Rev. Proprophegge answered the same question by stating that "Kadosh's writings have influenced us I would say primarily through the luciferian ideology, which we have translated into our rites and rituals, ceremonies and consecrations. This can be seen e.g. in our statement of faith" (e-mail to the author from Rev. Proprophegge, 24 October 2009).
48. See www.neoluciferianchurch.org/church/church.html.
49. Rev. Proprophegge underscores that "even here we have divergence among the members of the church, where some have a preference for the gnostic illumination per se and say that the lineages are of lesser value to the personal illumination, there are others that put a value in the apostolic and gnostic consecrations as means of boosting the personal illumination (a kind of initiation, or perhaps more correctly a 'consecration'), and see a value in being a link in the chain of wandering bishops in order to continue moving the light through the ages for current and future generations (a kind of 'illuminator custodian' if you will)" (e-mail to the author from Rev. Proprophegge, 24 October 2009).
50. Lewis (2003: 80). Note that "a pattern in the human psyche" should here be taken to mean a culturally transmitted pattern, not something inherited in a Jungian sense.
51. Lewis (2003: 105–6, 118–22). As I have demonstrated in a recent book chapter, LaVey's own seeming rejection of tradition can however be problematized and there is a playful and intentional ambiguity in his approach to older esoteric systems and thinkers. See Faxneld (2013).
52. See www.neoluciferianchurch.org/text/creed-english.pdf.
53. See www.neoluciferianchurch.org/text/creed-english.pdf.
54. On the role of tradition in LaVey's writings, and his recruitment of various historical figures as "de facto Satanists", see Faxneld (2013).

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CHAPTER 5

HIDDEN WISDOM IN THE ILL-ORDERED HOUSE

A short survey of occultism in former Yugoslavia

Gordan Djurdjevic

Yugoslavia, founded in 1918, existed as a political unit for a relatively short span of time.[1] In 1991 Slovenia and Croatia ceded from the federation, followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992. The process of the dissolution continued by the split between Serbia and Montenegro in 2006, and finally by the proclamation of the independence of Kosovo in 2008. A complex web of influences and relationships with its neighbouring countries marked the cultural life of people in this region, before, during and after the Yugoslav era. Centuries of domination by various occupying forces, aside from their obvious negative effects, also brought the aspects of social and cultural life characteristic of the respective zones of influence, be it Ottoman Turkey or the Austro-Hungarian Empire, to mention two of the most pertinent cases. Occultism, as a major current within the larger category of esotericism, is a cultural phenomenon that is characterized by diversity and openness to various influences (what Antoine Faivre described as a "practice of concordance"). In the case of occultism in former Yugoslavia,[2] a diverse amalgam was produced by the intersection of various European and global streams of influence that created a superstructure over the already present foundation consisting of the traditional forms of folk-magic,[3] which are currently gaining popularity within certain trends of contemporary neopaganism, Balkan witchcraft[4] and attempts at the revival of the old Slavic religion.[5] My intention with this chapter is to present a short survey of some of the more interesting and important manifestations of occult activities in the area of former Yugoslavia, not necessarily in their historical unfolding but rather by highlighting their thematic content and significance. I do not treat the material comprehensively (a much more elaborate study would be required for that) but rather selectively. A great deal of further research on the subject remains to be done.

The "occult boom" in this area effectively started in the 1970s, amidst the loosening of the grip that the Communist Party had over the intellectual life of the populace, with the commencement of the publications of numerous writings by Živorad Mihajlović Slavinski, who is still active and influential and to whom we shall return in due course. But Slavinski did not appear out of nowhere. The interest in hidden dimensions of reality is arguably a universal human tendency and Yugoslavia is not an exception in this regard. Perhaps due to the more adverse position adopted by the normative science with respect to the "rejected knowledge",[6] it was often the case, here as elsewhere, that artists of various calibre were more than any other social group inclined towards entertaining the pursuit of alternative models of thinking and ways of being. The occult motifs play a significant though not prominent role in the literary opus of a number of writers and poets from this region, and the same remark may be applied to representatives of other artistic groups. The general inference is that the occult is not necessarily and by itself a domain of the irrational pursued by the *demimonde* as a popular misconception would have it, but is in fact an active and contributing ingredient of the intellectual and artistic lifestyle, just as the presence of alternative forms of religious life is a healthy sign of an at least relatively liberal social system.[7] Taken with a substantial grain of salt, it could be argued that the more popular forms of occultism are distinguished by a strong emphasis on the utilitarian value of their practices, which they privilege over the theoretical superstructure ("a gram of theory and a ton of practice" was a constant leitmotif in Slavinski's books), while the writers and artists show a greater tendency to incorporate conceptual elements of the occultic worldview, the "occult philosophy", into their work.

In a recent study, Nemanja Radulović (2009) traces the literary history of what he calls the "underground current", in other words the presence of esotericism and the occult, in Serbian literature.[8] (This study is also not a comprehensive history of the subject but a collection of case studies.) The thematic clusters treated in the book are represented by esoteric and initiatic views on Egyptology, Martinism, Kabbalah, Mesmerism, Freemasonry, spiritualism, anthroposophy and related topics. It is of some significance that already the first Serbian novel, *Kandor ili Otkrovenie Egipetskih Tainih* (*Kandor, or a Revelation of Egyptian Mysteries*, 1800) by Atanasije Stojković (1773–1832) reflects in its main plot the elements of the eighteenth-century Egyptomania in its Freemasonic mode of conception and expression. The prominent themes in the novel concern the journey to the East (Egypt), the symbolism of the temple, the concept of the genealogy of the hidden wisdom (i.e. *theologia prisca*) and the teaching about the human immortality. Radulović (2009: 34) ascribes the novel to the genre of initiatic story and situates it as such within the context of the larger esoteric tradition in Europe that was, in his estimation, not confined to a transmission within closed circles but was in fact "part of the culture of the period and, moreover, popular and in vogue in many salons". Other chapters in the study

treat the role of Masonic symbolism in the poetry of Sima Milutinović Sarajlija (1791–1847), who may also have had some connections with the Bektashi Sufis; the Martinist and Mesmerist motifs in *Luča Microcosma* (*The Ray of Microcosm*) by the Montenegrin Prince-Bishop, and one of the most influential poets in the region, Petar II Petrović Njegoš (1813–51); the influence of the *Sefer Yetzirah* on the poetry of Đorđe Marković Koder (1806–91); the theosophical ideas, spiritualism, and the romantic revalorization of the role of Lucifer as the bestower of wisdom in the poetic opus of Dragutin Ilić (1858–1926); the occult influences present in the work of the pioneer of the science-fiction literature in Serbia, Lazar Komarčić (1839–1909); the esoteric ideas about the "invisible Church" and the preexistence of souls entertained by Ljudevit Vuličević (1839–1916), who was also distinguished by being a Protestant priest in a predominantly Orthodox Christian country; Isidora Sekulić's (1877–1958) views on Rudolph Steiner and anthroposophy; and the ideological universe of the "forerunner" of the New Age movement, Dimitrije Mitrinović (1887–1953). The implied suggestion behind Radulović's study is that Serbia was and is an integral part of the European culture not only by virtue of participating in literary activities and artistic and intellectual trends common on the Continent, but also by sharing an active interest in philosophical and spiritual pursuits dominated by esoteric and occult ideas and forms of knowledge.

MEDIALA

Some of the regional post-Second World War avant-garde artists similarly incorporate occult and esoteric motifs and influences into their opus. In an earlier work, I have explored the presence and importance of the occult imagery and ideas in the work of the Slovenian art collective, the Neue Slowenische Kunst.[9] An interest in similar forms of alternative knowledge and in particular in the possibilities of extending the capabilities of the human body in order to achieve what may be provisionally termed a kind of gnosis is similarly present as a constant underlining motif in the work of Marina Abramović (b. 1946). A relatively recent video *Balkan Erotic Epic*, written and directed by Abramović (2005), combines performance, dance, singing and animation in its exploration of traditional Balkan erotic magic as preserved in various folk customs, rituals and songs. Abramović is often referred to as the "grandmother" of performance art, which by its very nature – by focusing on the bodily endurance of pain, exposure to the risk, and entering the trance states – displays significant similarity with shamanism, and is closely related to ritual. "You can start with any object and create an energy field around it again and again through ritual … because repetition of the same thing over and over generates enormous power" (Abramović, quoted in Richards 2010: 122). And while both shamanism and performance art rely on the human body as the medium of transcendence, it

may also be argued that avant-garde art in general, in its attempt to shock and go beyond the conventions associated with both traditional art and the conventional morality, similarly and often consciously approximate and assimilate methods and motifs of the occult, which occupies a similar transgressive place in relation to established religion. It is thus, perhaps, no surprise that in 1966 in Split, Croatia, a small group of artists known as the Red Peristyle (Crveni Peristil), found inspiration for their activities, aimed at provocation and anarchic individual emancipation, not only in the work of Marcel Duchamp but also in the ideas of Aleister Crowley, as they "mixed into their work underground tactics, hippy behavior, free sexuality, magic, beatnik behavior, drug taking, and a Fluxus-like drawing of attention from the works of art to action and the act" (Šuvaković 2003: 220, 223).

Earlier still, in 1957, in the capital city of Belgrade, a group of artists and writers formed *Baltazar*, soon afterwards renamed *Mediala*, an art collective that attempted to revitalize not only some of the notions inherent in medieval and renaissance esthetics but also the philosophical concept of the *medium* or the middle point between opposites (or rather their reconciliation), as this was propounded in the work of Nicolas Cusanus (1401–64) and his famous doctrine of the *coincidentia oppositorum*, which had important implications for esoteric thought (Counet 2006), and which some members of the group believed Cusanus conceived of while staying in Belgrade on his way to Constantinople. Other ideas with esoteric flavour encapsulated in the name Mediala as understood by the group concern the concept of the "Omega Point" in the work of Teilhard de Chardin and the kabbalistic "Aleph" from the eponymous story by Jorge Luis Borges, which refers to an atomic point in space reflecting and containing within itself the totality of the universe. Dragoš Kalajić (1946–2005), an artist and writer known *inter alia* for his right-wing tendencies in the tradition of Julius Evola, explains the esoteric underpinnings of the concept of the middle or centre by on one hand gesturing away from the perceived profanation of this concept in the Masonic gnosis, a prime example of which he sees in the symbolism of the American one-dollar bill (Kalajić 1977: 54), while on the other hand by invoking instances in the Indian tradition where the "cosmic sovereign" *cakravartin*, the "wheel-turning" king, rules the world from the centre as an unmoved mover, and where the initiate in certain tantric rituals enters the *mandala* representing the centre of the Earth, just as the very entry into it signals the transition from the secular into the sacral dimension of existence (*ibid*.: 55).

Perhaps the most mystically inclined member of the group was the visual artist and writer Miro Glavurtić (b. 1932), the author of, among other work, rather anachronistic studies that display an almost medieval sensibility, *Satana: Uvod u Demonologiju* (*Satan: An Introduction to Demonology*, 1978) and *Pakao* (*Hell*, 1986). In his confessional essay "Prilog za Povjest Mediale" ("A Contribution to the History of Mediala"), he elaborates on the metaphysical

background of the group by highlighting its artistic alertness to what he calls the "sleep of reason" of European intellectuals:

> Omega point, Omega-rooms, domes, initiations, tactile *regresus ad uterus* [*sic*]; all of these are elements of certain grotesque neo-gnosis, which dominates European parallel spirituality in most diverse manifestations but which appears in the context of Mediala spontaneously, irrationally, in a mediumistic manner. For one whole world is in the state of lethargy: modern art is a from of magic in many of its expressions, and as such it is oneiric, lunatic, nocturnal, irrational; it turns consciousness to sleep instead of waking it up. Whatever the hermeticists of the "waking states", such as Meyrink, Abellio, or the Caucasian magus Gurdjieff, may think about it, behind all the efforts to awake a West-European intellectual by magical and initiatic procedures, by bizarre and bloody rituals, symbols, or mysteries of constant Egyptomania, what really goes on is an attempt to foster his sleep even more. (Glavurtić 1977: 44)

Glavurtić exhibits a curious and somewhat incongruous attitude towards the aforementioned "parallel spirituality". A fervent Catholic, born in the predominantly Orthodox Montenegro, like some Yugoslav Huysmans he appears almost morbidly attracted to satanism, which he otherwise and simultaneously abhors and sees at work almost everywhere in the world. The following statement (*ibid*.: 35) is indicative of his stance: "Three or four times I felt the terrible presence of the devil. The first time in early childhood. Exorcism. Last time, in Paris, in Rue Odessa, close to the 'Le Chat Blanc', frequented by Aleister Crowley and other sorcerers of the fatal disintegration of the European soul". Glavurtić (1977: 45) claimed that he formulated and expressed the notion of counter-initiation in his novel *Psine* (*Dogs*), published in 1982 but obviously written earlier, independently of René Guénon, who is otherwise well known for developing this particular idea, developed mostly in response to, and as a criticism of, Madame Blavatsky's theosophy, but with wider repercussions. Glavurtić perceives the world as dominated by infernal forces and it would seem that the specific role of the artist lies in raising an awareness about this fact and attempting to respond to it adequately: "to love something defective [or, diabolical, which is how Glavurtić, influenced by Baudelaire, sees the nature of modern art] in order to know the truth" (qtd. in Blagojević 1977: 79). But the paradox remains. He considers, for example, alchemy as "the most disgusting, most stupid, most diabolical myth of the new mythology" (Glavurtić 1977: 46); nevertheless, he admits that in a novel *Dnevnik o Slici* (*Diary of a Painting*) by Leonid Šejka, his friend and one of the leading artists in Mediala, he (Glavurtić) appears as an alchemist himself! His short historical account of the group underlines, although painted in rather dark colours, its occult

and esoteric aspects. This particular perception of the nature of the group is also shared, among others, by René de Solier, who in his study *Ljuba* (1971) emphasized this same spiritual component in the opus of Ljuba Popović, a well-known artist and an early member of Mediala. Occult and esoteric ideas clearly provided a significant element in the mental universe shared by the members of the group, whether they were attracted or repulsed by them, or both simultaneously, as seems to be the case with Glavurtić.

SLAVINSKI

In the period between the two world wars, the interest in the occult in the region was maintained by some of the activities of the Yugoslav Freemasons, theosophists,[10] anthroposophists[11] and spiritualists.[12] An interesting curiosity was the presence of Kalmyks, a Central Asian ethnic group, some of whom settled in Serbia in 1920s, escaping Communist Russia, and who founded the first Buddhist (Vajrayana) Temple in Europe in Belgrade in 1929. Nicholas Roerich sent a *thangka* from his Himalayan Institute and it was rumoured that Julius Evola visited the Temple in search of tantric teachings. There is similarly a rumour about the activities of the little-known Order of Polaires in the region: Joscelyn Godwin (1993: 91) notes that there were "sister groups [of the Order] in Geneva, New York, and Belgrade, all working under Mario Fille's direction", although he admits that the actual (as opposed to "hopeful fantasy") existence of the Belgrade group is highly conjectural.[13] Jean Bricaud (1938: 17) also makes a brief mention of a lodge of this high-degree Masonic rite with pronounced occult symbolism by the name "Vardar", founded in 1936 in the city of Skopje, in Yugoslav Macedonia. As may be expected, soon after the end of the Second World War and the establishment of Communist rule of the country, the activities of these groups ceased. We may just note in passing, as signs of exception to the ideological silence with respect to arcane subjects, the occasional publications of books such as Ismet Tabaković's *Okultne Znanosti u Svjetlu Nauke* (*Occult Arts in the Light of Science*, 1963) and *Okultizam u Teoriji i Praksi* (*Occultism in Theory and Practice*, 1965), and a very informative manual of astrology by Mile Dupor, *Ne Vjerujte: Provjerite!* (*Do Not Believe: Verify!*, 1970).

The first book by Živorad Mihajlović Slavinski (b. 1937) was a self-published slim volume, *Psihički Trening Indijskih Fakira i Jogija* (*The Psychic Training of Indian Fakirs and Yogis*, 1971). The book introduced basic elements of what may be loosely termed philosophy of Yoga and presented a number of exercises, focusing on the control of breath and mental concentration. Several typical characteristics are worthy of note when it comes to the manner of Slavinski's exposition of the subject matter. The title page announces that he is by profession a psychologist and the style of his discourse is consistently and

emphatically rational and commonsensical. He is effectively suggesting that there is something highly valuable to be learnt from the pursuit of Hermeticism (his preferred term) but that the path leading to the goal should be in accord with the scientific attitude and methods. On one hand, this may be seen as simply a legitimizing strategy,[14] observable in many alternative teachings, but simultaneously and on the other hand, this attitude is consonant with the historical fact that esoteric and occult systems do not reject but rather attempt to transcend the perceived limitations of reason and rationality (another matter is how successful and justified they are in this endeavour). It should also be pointed out that Slavinski had a rather pressing agenda to appear "scientific", bearing in mind the fact that he was living and writing in a communist country (although this was at the time much milder brand of Communism than the one observable in the contemporaneous Soviet block or China), where the official ideology was the Marxian dialectic materialism. Although in this as well as in his other books he was certainly endorsing a particular worldview, which may safely be termed esoteric and occultist, Slavinski's insistence on the supremacy of practice over theory in fact suggested that the experiential core of what he was promoting was adaptable to any ideology: in other words, one did not need to renounce Communism or ontological materialism in order to practice the breathing exercises and techniques of mental concentration that the book was describing – and the same principle was also applicable to his later works, where his attention turned more towards Western occult teachings and practices.

Already in the introductory part of the book, Slavinski (1971: 3–4) makes another important statement, typical of the occultist worldview and of esotericism in general (Faivre's "practice of concordance"): he argues that there is a similarity between Eastern and Western forms of occultism, emphasizing that "all the systems of practical philosophy of Far Eastern people, just as the systems of Western Hermetic tradition based on the TAROT, are nothing but the branches of the same tree. The common trunk from which they all grew is truth". In view of the fact that his subsequent books focused on Western occultism, it may be argued that this and similar statements were in fact and indeed instances of legitimizing strategy: foreign (exotic!) alternative teachings are more readily acceptable and in a sense Slavinski was preparing the ground, so to speak, for the introduction of what was and is culturally much more controversial, which is Western ritual magic and the occult in general. By inference, if Western Hermeticism and Eastern yoga are branches of the same tree, it follows that Hermetic and occult teachings are also systems of practical philosophy based on truth and there should be *ipso facto* nothing controversial in their pursuit.

Slavinski's next book was *Psihološka Studija Magije* (*The Psychological Study of Magic*, 1972), which in some editions carried an alternative title, *Ključevi Psihičke Magije* (*The Keys of Psychic Magic*). The significance of this book consists of the fact that this was the first practical manual of Western occultism

published in the region in a native language (Serbian). Slavinski introduced the fundamentals of the occult worldview: the law of analogy ("as above, so below"), the four worlds of Kabbalah, the Tree of Life, the value of symbols and so on, but more importantly he provided practical instructions: breathing exercises and techniques of relaxation, the methods of "vibrating" the magical formulae, the practical work with the Tree of Life including the important Middle Pillar Ritual, instructions about astral projection, and a detailed description of probably the most popular contemporary magical rite, the (lesser banishing) Ritual of Pentagram. Slavinski often does not credit his sources, but it is safe to conclude that the bulk of both the theoretical and practical information presented in his book has its origin in the teachings of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn as this was disseminated through numerous publications following the pioneering accounts given by Aleister Crowley in his review *The Equinox* and Israel Regardie in *The Golden Dawn*. Slavinski's short book, less than 140 pages in length, presented to its readership the whole world of theoretical and practical occultism in a succinct form and its influence on the subsequent development and popularity of esotericism in Yugoslavia was enormous, which statement is applicable to Slavinski's activities in general.

In addition to presenting the above summarized content, Slavinski in this book also continues with his legitimizing strategies. It is immediately noticeable from the title of the book that he interprets the occult, and in particular magic, as an area of human experience that is best understood and explained through the lenses of psychology. He defines magic as a method of causing changes to occur in one's consciousness in conformity with will, which is in its essence Dion Fortune's rephrasing of the earlier definition by Crowley – both Fortune and Slavinski differ from Crowley in emphasizing and delimiting the nature of the willed change to the subject's state of consciousness, while Crowley provides much more general definition according to which magic is identified as *any* change, as long as it is willed: "Magick is the Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will" (Crowley 1997: 126). Slavinski presents the subject matter throughout the book by employing rationalistic discourse, suggesting in effect that scientific approach to occult phenomena is a way to proceed (incidentally, this is in accord with Crowley's project of scientific Illuminism contained in the motto of *The Equinox*: "The method of science, the aim of religion"). The following statement is illustrative of Slavinski's stance:

> My firm conviction is that the dominant area of research in scientific psychology by the end of this [20th] century will be the area of extrasensory perception and occult experience. It is strange that only a few psychologists realize that the foundation of both the dynamic psychology as well as Hermeticism is the INSIGHT, that is, CONSECRATION (INITIATION). In the long run, it is obvious that insight also lies at the foundation of the exact sciences. There it concerns the realization of the

> new relations between objects and events. In the dynamic psychology and Hermeticism, insight is an understanding of one's own psychodynamics and relations with the external universe. (Slavinski 1972: 15)

Slavinski's next book was *Simboli Hermetizma* (*The Symbols of Hermeticism*, 1973), which again carried an expressive subtitle: *Parapsihološka Studija Upotrebne Vrednosti Mitova, Predanja i Hermetičkih Simbola* (*Parapsychological Study of the Practical Value of Myths, Traditions and Hermetic Symbols*). Thematically, it was a continuation of the material introduced in the previous book, which was now expanded to include chapters on sexual magic, tarot, astral projection through the use of tattva symbols (a method previously employed by the Golden Dawn in which simple geometric shapes in different colours, representing five elements, were used as the imagined doorways to the astral realm) and the like. Although the emphasis and focus was on Western occultism, one chapter also dealt with Jung's theory of synchronicity and its potential value as a theoretical and acausal explanation of the phenomena such as divination, while another section introduced the Chinese method of prognostication (which is much more than the simple method of divining future in its original context), the *I Ching*. There was also an account on some of the developments in contemporary experimental parapsychology, while one chapter presented an outline of the interpretation of ancient myths from the Hermetic perspective. In many respects, this was a more mature work than its predecessor: it presented the world of the occult as a comprehensive and coherent method of the engagement with the reality. Here also, Slavinski continues to approach the subject from the psychological point of view, explicitly arguing *inter alia* (Slavinski 1973: 51) that the goal of Western Hermeticism lies in the achievement of cosmic consciousness and union with one's true self. It should be apparent that this is also, broadly speaking, consonant with aspirations behind Eastern methods of self-realization and Slavinski's formulation is expressed in a rather Vedantic vocabulary. It is perhaps indicative that Slavinski (*ibid*.: 139) mentions the books of Swami Vivekananda as his first introduction to the world of Hermeticism. Be that as it may, it is his consistent position, as we have already seen, to regard Eastern and Western Hermeticism as the "branches of the same tree".

After publishing his *Short Encyclopedia of Parapsychology and Hermeticism* (1974), which contributed not only a fine albeit short overview of important concepts, persons and groups that were of interest to the students of occultism but also a substantial list of contemporary organizations, bookstores and magazines with contact addresses and related information, Slavinski published in 1976 another theoretical work, *Psihonauti Unutrašnjih Svetova* (*The Psychonauts of the Inner Worlds*). The book consisted of short biographies of seminal figures, as well as historical overviews of major movements, in modern occultism: H. P. Blavatsky and theosophy, Rudolph Steiner and anthroposophy, the Golden Dawn, Aleister Crowley, Dion Fortune, Israel Regardie, Gurdjieff,

American OTO groups, Scientology, the German cults and their influence on Nazism, and Carl Jung. As usual, one serious objection concerns the fact that Slavinski rarely credits his sources but there is no denying that the book itself is well written, in an accessible and occasionally passionate style. The most elaborate was the chapter on Crowley, who was also often mentioned in other parts of the book, but before turning to Slavinski's engagement with him and his system of Thelema, a few words on his general approach to the subject matter, as elucidated in the short introduction to the book, deserve to be said.

Consistent with his typical manner of exposition, Slavinski emphasizes the psychological aspects of occultism: already the opening sentence from his introduction announces that the book is concerned with "an attempt to illustrate the contemporary *cults of the unconscious* in the developed countries of Europe and North America" (Slavinski 1976: 7; emphasis added). He thereby suggests that the interest in the occult represents an equivalent of the Jungian quest for self-individuation, which as is well known demands an engagement with the forces of the unconscious as its primary *modus operandi*. Slavinski argues (*ibid*.: 7) that the "cults of the unconscious" are a response generated by the collective unconsciousness of humanity in order to fill in the gap left open by the insufficiently adequate theories and methods of normative science, which is unable to provide solutions to "the deepest questions of human existence". Slavinski claims that there are at least three important reasons why these cults deserve our attention. The first reason is that some of the speculative teachings concerning human spiritual evolution (as elaborated, for example, in Theosophical literature) provided a theoretical foundation for racial supremacist theories that led to such tragic consequences in Nazi Germany and that they therefore need to be better understood. The second reason concerns the introduction of Eastern teachings into the field of Western cultural awareness. In the process, the West has gained better familiarity with the East and this recognition of the value of Eastern wisdom traditions has also led to the awakening and affirmation of national consciousness in some Asian countries (India, Sri Lanka). The third reason for their importance Slavinski sees in the fact that these cults emphasize the value of altered states of consciousness and this, to him, suggest that the spiritual evolution of humankind may have its own laws that are not necessarily commensurate with scientific theories. This may or should lead to reformulation of scientific theories and methods.

Interestingly, Slavinski argues against what he perceives as a mistaken tendency to equate these Hermetic cults with religion. To substantiate his claim, he lists nine elements of distinction as observable among the occult groups (*ibid*.: 8–9): the tendency to use contemporary and scientific discourse even while acknowledging the shortcoming of orthodox science; eclecticism and syncretism between ancient teachings and modern science; a critical attitude towards established religions; optimism regarding the future; higher rate of educated and artistically inclined followers; emphasis on the value of ecstatic

and altered state of "cosmic" consciousness; importance of moral and psychological improvement in the here-and-now; belief in the forces beyond human, who control our destiny; and presence of leaders and/or teachers who either know or appear to know "a new formula of transformation of human consciousness" (*ibid*.: 9). Despite the fact that this list does reflect accurately some of the general tendencies observable among contemporary occult groups, it is highly debatable that these attributes constitute a mark of difference from the category of religion. It would be slightly more accurate to state that some of these tendencies distinguish the occult from *established* religions, as opposed to "religion" as such, but even that would be an arguable position that would depend on precise definition of employed terminology. Nevertheless, lists such as this do reflect a peculiar characteristic of the occult – and esotericism in general – which occupies a middle position between religion and science, and which has led some scholars to posit a theory about three major tendencies in Western culture, exemplified by faith (religion), reason (science) and gnosis (esotericism) as three dominant models of knowing reality.[15]

As already indicated, the longest chapter in *The Psychonauts of Inner Worlds* focuses on Aleister Crowley (*ibid*.: 56–86). It is noticeable that Slavinski's attitude towards Crowley gradually changed with each successive book. Initially mentioned as a black magician in his first book, in *The Psychonauts*, Crowley has been introduced, in the subtitle of the pertinent chapter, as "The King of the Royal Art". The chapter provided a short biographical account, and also introduced the basics of Crowley's system of magick and the religio-philosophical doctrine of Thelema. Despite his human flaws, Crowley was presented as a Prophet whose message carried an important message for the spiritual future of humankind. "In essence, his life was simple", wrote Slavinski of Crowley. "He was one person, whole and undivided, for in him harmoniously pulsated man, woman, and child; one faith – magick; one word – Thelema; one law – love" (*ibid*.: 87). The chapter is enthusiastically written, providing clear evidence that Slavinski was at that point taking both Crowley and Thelema very seriously. Despite the fact that Crowley was not completely unknown there at the time, the publication of this book effectively signalled his introduction among the general occult audience in Yugoslavia. This is significant because Crowley's Thelema will become one of the most vital trends in the occultist subculture in the region.

In the acknowledgments section of the book, Slavinski mentions that his deepest thanks go to Kenneth Grant, who is also introduced under his magical name of Aossic Aiwass 718. Slavinski (1976: 114) also mentions his visit to Grant's house in London and he also refers to Grant as the world-head of the OTO, an organization once presided by Crowley – a claim no longer maintained by Grant's successors. These and several other hints mentioned in the book suggested that Slavinski has joined Grant's group, although there was no explicit statement that would confirm this. At a later point, Slavinski contributed two

articles to a magazine, associated with Grant's Order, called *Starfire*; one of them on the subject of what he called "the gnostic intensive" and described succinctly as "the path of enlightenment for the modern man". In 1994 issue of *Starfire*, an "Appointment Notice" was published – a document confirming that on 21 June 1990, Slavinski was appointed the "Tenth and Highest Degree" in Grant's Order, assuming thereby "the Sole Right to That Degree in and for Yugoslavia". Grant also dedicated three chapters on Slavinski and his associates in the penultimate book of his "Typhonian Trilogies", *Beyond the Mauve Zone* (Grant 1999: 235–93). What is involved here concerns a fusion between several elements that include connections to Crowley's legacy of Thelema, Grant's Typhonian Order (at the time, he still used the designation OTO), Charles Berner's technique of "enlightenment intensive", and Slavinski's own contributions, for the most part credited under the aegis of the activities of his group called "Ecclesia Gnostica Alba" ("White Gnostic Church"). In order to clarify the matter further, an elaboration is in order.

The enlightenment intensive is a technique developed by Charles Berner (1929–2007) that combines elements of Zen Buddhist s*esshin* (meditational retreat) and the interpersonal communication skills. Typically a three-day affair, the format of the intensive involves working groups of two persons, the *dyads*, in which one person asks the questions while the other responds, after which the roles are switched. The most common question is "Who am I?", or rather, in dialogical mode, "Tell me who you are". Berner argued that enlightenment experiences occur rather frequently during the traditional retreats but that their effects dissipate because they are often not immediately communicated. Slavinski embraced the practice enthusiastically and in a short period of time he developed it further, changing its designation to "the gnostic intensive" and making it the central practice of his "White Gnostic Church". He also reduced the common length of the intensive from three days to a day and a half, claiming that the frequency of the experience of enlightenment with this new method increased significantly. A further development of the technique led to the creation of what he called the "Excalibur" method, which he described as "a Formula of mental alchemy: create and discreate, *coagula et solve*, entering into experience and withdrawing from it" (Slavinski 1996: 75). What is significant is that he and the members of his group claimed, as a result of these practices, to have made a contact with a spiritual entity called Lam – in fact, Lam is credited for the inception of the Excalibur technique itself. In occult literature, Lam was for the first time introduced in 1919, when Crowley published his "blue" *Equinox* (vol. III, no. 1), where a drawing of a strange figure with an oval head and without ears graced the frontispiece to his commentary on H. P. Blavatsky's "The Voice of Silence". This drawing was later reproduced in Grant's first book, *The Magical Revival* (1972). Grant and his followers developed a strong interest in Lam, suggesting that he may be identical with Aiwass, a praeterhuman intelligence who according to Crowley transmitted *The Book of the Law* to

him in 1904. Slavinski confirmed this identification and contributed further insights into the nature of Lam, while both Grant and the American occult writer Michael Bertiaux thought very highly of the activities of Yugoslav, largely Serbian, members of the White Gnostic Church. In the course of their occult activities, they also received a language called the Algolian, initially thought to relate to the actual star Algol as its source, and later understood as a reference to a state of consciousness rather than a physical locale.

In his long career, Slavinski published some twenty books, which in addition to his original non-fictional works include also translations of first two books of Kenneth Grant's "Typhonian Trilogies" – *Magijski Preporod* (*The Magical* Revival, 1997) and *Alister Krouli i Skriveni Bog* (*Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God*, 1997) – as well as an autobiographical novel, *Praskozorje Aivaza* (*The Dawn of Aiwass*, 2003). He organized and led numerous workshops in former Yugoslavia, Europe and throughout the world. His activities, since he has embraced and developed techniques of the gnostic intensive, have strayed somewhat from the recognizable and traditional discourse of western occultism, accruing in their outward features elements of New Age and even some aspects of Scientology (it should be kept in mind that Berner himself was an ex-Scientologist). In essence, he has remained true to his constant mantra, according to which a gram of practice is worthier than a ton of theory. However, this is not to say that there is no theoretical structure behind his written opus. What is most prominent in his worldview is a tendency to describe the enigma of human life and its perceived infinite potential in psychological terms. This tendency is, at the same time, a common feature of the secularizing inclination in contemporary occultism, and a sign of its penchant towards scientific discourse, in itself a distinguishing mark of both the occult and the New Age in the project of modernity.[16]

THELEMA AND OTO IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA AND THE WRITINGS OF JANEZ TROBENTAR

As already indicated, the reputation of Aleister Crowley in the region gradually increased with the successive publications of Slavinski's books, and in particular after his *Psychonauts of Inner Worlds.* This growing interest is reflected, *inter alia*, by the translation of a chapter from Crowley's *Confessions* that appeared in a literary magazine *Gradac*, in an issue thematically devoted to the subject of magic.[17] In a similar vein, Petar Vasiljević, a former associate of Slavinski and a military psychologist by profession, published his translations, with commentaries, of Crowley's *The Book of the Law* (1983) and *Liber Aleph* (1983), and also a book on Crowley's and Frieda Harris's Tarot, called *Tahutijeve Tajne* (*The Secrets of Tahuti*, 1982). It is indicative of Vasiljević's unusual position – a military officer writing books on alternative spirituality – that he attempted to

interpret the basic tenets of Thelema as commensurate with the Yugoslav official ideology of workers' self management by emphasizing the element of self-reliance that is indeed fundamental to both systems of thought, despite their many obvious differences. It is in the context of such receptivity to Crowley and Thelema that a representative of the Ordo Templi Orientis arrived in the country and performed introductory initiations to a small group of aspirants (see below). These events should be seen and understood within the wider background of the process of renewal of the OTO and they are significant because the Yugoslav OTO soon became the most populous branch of the Order in Europe and second in numbers only to the United States.[18]

Between March 1984 and February 1985, Oliver Legradić in Ljubljana, Slovenia, privately published twelve monthly issues of the magazine *Thoth,* dedicated to Thelemic subjects (in Serbo-Croatian). For the major part, the magazine consisted of translations, mostly from Crowley, but it did carry some original writings, reviews, artwork and announcements. The second issue (April 1984, 11–14) contained an article by one Ayo 777, carrying the title "Povodom Osamdesetogodišnjice Pisanja *Knjige Zakona*" ("Concerning the Eightieth Anniversary of the Writing of *The Book of the Law*"), which among other information disclosed that in 1982 and 1983 the representatives of the American OTO, including the international head of the Order, Grady McMurtry – known also by his magical name as Hymenaeus Alpha – performed initiations in Yugoslavia for local candidates, and it was obvious that the local OTO also stood behind the *Thoth* magazine. In addition to this, Yugoslav OTO started to publish three series of booklets ("A∴A∴ Library", "OTO Writings" and "Essays of Aleister Crowley"). Cheaply produced, utilizing an early computer font, these short publications consisted of a number of imperfectly executed translations that were plagued by nonprofessional standards of production and material constraints. In that sense, they were on the opposite end of what is sometimes described as "talismanic" book production, as far as that designation concerns the material aspects of the product.[19] But what these books lacked in their outward features, they compensated in enthusiasm and dedication of people who produced them. Their strong and continual presence, while it lasted, testified the stalwart commitment to the ideology of Thelema exhibited by the local OTO community.

The success of the OTO in Yugoslavia is somewhat puzzling and it would require a more elaborate and sophisticated sociological analysis to explain it fully, but it is in all likelihood a result of the convergence of several factors: the rapidly changing society moving away from its communist past and its associated materialistic philosophy, open to new models of constructing the nature of social and ideological reality on one hand, coupled with the influence of several charismatic leaders who were able to attract the already significantly prepared occultist subculture to Crowley's Thelema through personal example and robust publishing activities on the other. From among several persons who have been

actively engaged in this process, what follows will focus on the literary activities of the Slovenian author and translator, Janez Trobentar.

Having already published the translation (with his introduction) of Crowley's *Book of Lies* into Slovenian in 1985, in 1987 Trobentar contributed the text "Credo quia Absurdum: Esej o Religioznom Instinktu" ("Credo quia Absurdum: An Essay on Religious Instinct"), written in Serbo-Croatian, which served as an introduction to the first translation and publication of Crowley's "Gnostic Mass" in that language (there was an earlier translation into Slovenian; see also Trobentar 1987: 21, n. 25). He qualifies (*ibid*.: n. 26) the text of the Mass as "the artistic creation of the future, i.e. the Imaginary Tail of the TEXT. This is the text of the high, i.e. joyous culture" (the reader will recognize references to Barthes and Nietzsche). Trobentar's essay is relatively short, sixteen pages of text in small print, but his objective is no less than to present a thesis on the religion of the future, obviously Crowley's Thelema, through the rediscovery of gnosis. An important aspect of the argument consists of the proposal that Christianity, as an external or exoteric Order, has lost the connection with the inner or esoteric Order, the repository of gnosis. What are the reasons that would justify the contemporary study of gnosis generally and the publication of the canon of the Gnostic Mass specifically? Why even attempt to perform this ritual? According to Trobentar (1987: 10), the reason lies in the need to compensate for "the hopeless state that has befell all the meta-sciences of the postindustrial hyperesthetic society". His specific thesis is that the need for a religion based on the rediscovery of gnosis lies in the bankruptcy of materialism and rationalism, and his supporting argument is that the fall of reason and knowledge has in fact already happened (*ibid*.). "A man of today needs to transcend reason in the same manner that, towards the end of matriarchy, he was able to transcend matter" (*ibid*.). To summarize the argument of the essay, Thelema and its associated ecclesiastical rite, the Gnostic Mass, according to Trobentar, provide the solution to the pessimistic state of affairs characterized by the break up of traditional religion and scientific rationality, including the Marxist attempts to explain and better the society and the Freudian, equally failed, attempts to do the same at the individual level.

Early on in the essay, Trobentar explains that his choice of the title in no way signifies his preference to the concept of "credo" over either "dubito" or "cogito". In fact, he identifies these three intellectual positions with the "dogs of reason" mentioned in *The Book of the Law* and, extending his metaphor, suggests that they have been barking for a very long time, since the Christians equated the great god Pan with Satan, but who (i.e. Pan) should also be understood as the snake "that gives knowledge and delight and stirs the hearts of men with drunkenness" – another borrowing from *The Book of the Law*, representing the utterance of Hadit, the essential core of every human being. This method of engaging in "free associations" is characteristic of Trobentar's style, as of esoteric epistemology in general. This is an example of the practice of concordance,

interesting in itself, but which I bring forth in order to emphasize certain specific points. In his note to the text, Trobentar characterizes the above quote from *The Book of the Law* as a Manichean statement, but then he claims that this is also a tantric statement, and in order to qualify his position, he states that there is no essential difference between Eastern Tantra and Western Gnosis and that their basic common postulates are that the "existence is pure joy" (another quote from *The Book of the Law*) and what he terms as "anthroposophy", in other words, "the human ability to use Everything and to conquer Everything" (Trobentar 1987: 18, n. 1). What immediately strikes the reader familiar with the academic presentation of Gnosticism is a radically different qualification of its nature, for the movement is typically represented as pessimistic and otherworldly. Trobentar, obviously influenced by Crowley's interpretation of both Gnosticism and Tantra, writes with the confidence of a person who is basing his claims in alternative epistemology. This is an important outcome of the emerging occult subculture: placing the allegiance in different, unconventional models of constructing the image and nature of reality and human existence, based on the perception that traditional sciences, philosophy and religion have ultimately failed in their project despite their claims to the contrary.

"Credo quia Absurdum", despite its brevity, is a rather dense text, characterized by an associative style of writing, rich in literary allusions and references. It would be inappropriate to judge it in accordance with academic standards; rather, it is best to take it as a literary and speculative essay. As such, it is surprisingly original. It represents the voice of a new type of the European intellectual, the one that clearly perceives and feels the malaise and absurdity of the "postindustrial hyperaesthetic society" at the end of the millennium. Even more to the point, Trobentar wrote in the historical and political context of communist Yugoslavia, where his call to a new religion, based on the Thelemic rediscovery of gnosis, sounded a radically different note against the already rising sounds of the drums of nationalistic forces that would eventually lead to the civil wars in the 1990s and cause the break up of the country. There is a bitter irony in the fact that Trobentar (1987: 20, n. 17) defined religion as "an instinct of joining and dissolution with the masses through joy and transformation", given the subsequent history of the region, where different mechanisms of joining with the masses, but only of the same ethnicity, led to tragic and destructive ends.

The next Trobentar's project was the magazine *Nox: Revija Magike za Novu Kurtoaziju* (*Nox*: *A Review of Magick for the New Courtesy*). The planned publication was announced by a large-format folded flyer, considered "Zero" number (n.d.), which announced the intended thematic spectrum of the magazine. It was to have ten regular sections and twenty-two provisional: the obvious model for this structure was the Kabbalistic Tree of Life with its ten sephiroth associated with the numbers of the decimal system (plus zero) and twenty-two paths associated with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The regular sections would accordingly be dedicated to: 0, From the Silence (i.e. editorial introductions);

1, Commentarii Philosophici; 2, Grimorii Sanctissimi Magiki; 3, Gnosis; 4, Ritual; 5, Gymnosophy; 6, Elixir Vitae; 7, Ethics of the Child (based on the notion that the current age is the Aeon of the Child); 8, Kabbalah; 9, Sexual Magick; and 10, Anthropology. The magazine was to be issued by "Studio 176 for Alcybernetics" and the addresses of its two editors were supplied. This was of some consequence, not only for the reason of audacity in publicly stating one's residential address and phone number behind a publication with controversial content, but also because it added further specificity and weight to the editors' concluding "Public Oath", which stated that:

> With all our might, we will work so that every man and every woman may find in our 'Review of Magick for the New Courtesy' the Light of Truth so that they may attain the Knowledge and Conversation of their Holy Guardian Angel and in this way accomplish the Great Work and achieve the Summum Bonum, True Wisdom, and Perfect Happiness. So mote it be! AUMGN.

The first regular issue of *Nox* magazine was published on the Spring Equinox of 1994, by which time Yugoslavia had already disintegrated and Slovenia had become an independent country. Trobentar was now the sole editor of the magazine and, unlike the "zero" number, this and subsequent issues were in the Slovenian language (closely related but still significantly different from the Serbo-Croatian). In general, the bulk of the magazine consisted of translations, mostly from Crowley, but there were also original contributions from Trobentar. This first issue carried, as an "Alpha" appendix, his essay on the concept of alcybernetics. Trobentar understands this as an art of governing – cybernetics in its original meaning of "steering" – based on the principles of *The Book of the Law* (Liber AL). Inspired by Nietzsche, he defines it as the "Joyous Science" (Trobentar 1994: 110). Although oriented towards the future, "it is in fact as old as the world itself and its most primitive religion" (*ibid.*). The glyph of the concept, its visual representation and summary, consists of the eye in the triangle in the centre, out of which four rays issue in the form of a swastika (with no relation to its Nazi misappropriation). The central image, the eye in the triangle often encountered in Freemasonic symbolism, obviously refers to insight, the faculty of understanding and the related concepts, but Trobentar (*ibid.*) adds to its meaning also the notions of "a Phallus, Freud's unconscious, 'the eye that weeps' [this is an allusion to a chapter from Crowley's *Book of Lies*, which Trobentar translated into Slovenian] and the Rosy Cross of the alchemists". This is an entangled web of references but in simplified terms, Trobentar is suggesting that the alcybernetics, the notion of governing in accordance with the principles of Thelema, rests on an enlightened view based on either the concept of Will itself (symbolized by the Phallus), or more properly, it rests on the union of opposites, which produces Zero (Crowley's 0=2 formula, which

claims that the union of opposites, which make the world, amounts to zero). In addition, based on the Greek etymology of the word "theory", which means "looking, seeing" (just as in Sanskrit *darśana*, philosophy, also means "seeing"), Trobentar extends the meaning of the notion of the eye in the triangle by suggesting that from it emerge four ways of seeing, four types of theory, which are congenial to alcybernetics (the source of this fourfold division is the Kabbalistic formula of YHVH referring to the four levels/divisions of the world, as it is used in the occultist literature). These four are: theory of information; theory of governing; theory of system; and theory of game (*ibid*.). In effect, Trobentar combines elements of esoteric symbolism (the eye in the triangle, the YHVH formula) in order to present an outline of new humanistic discipline, alcybernetics, which he claims is alone able "to gather together all the children of the humanistic sciences, among which reigns so much misunderstanding and discord" (*ibid*.: 107). Here as throughout in his writings, Trobentar calls for the creation of a new form of culture based on the alternative traditions associated with esoteric and occult teachings, crowned by Crowley's Thelema.

The second number of *Nox* (1995) carried the first installment of Trobentar's "Tetragrammaton: Zgodovinska Freska v Štirih Dejanjih s Prologom, Interludijem in Epilogom: Samo za Otroke Izraela" ("Tetragrammaton: A Historical Fresco, a Play in Four Acts with Prologue and Epilogue: Only for the Children of Israel"). In this issue, "The Prologue" and first two acts were published. The third and final issue of *Nox* (2001) carried the "Interlude" and third act, while the fourth act and epilogue remained unpublished. The play was ambitious, set in two time periods, the contemporary and the medieval (the time of the Crusades). The theme of the play concerned the clash of civilizations and the recognition that the other is not an enemy, or, in religious terminology, not a heathen but simply a devotee who addresses the divine in a different manner. In this sense, the historical aspect of the play was based on the notion that in true religion there are no sects, a popular concept in esotericism. The contemporary segment of the play, with its three symbolic *dramatis personae* (man, woman, child) attempted to address the dialectical tension between three aeons and the respective responses and gender dynamic inherent in the idea that the current is the aeon of the child. Although unfinished, the play is of considerable literary value, highly original and in many respects avant-garde. This was the first time that explicitly occult and Thelemic subject matter was presented in a play in Slovenian (or any other South Slavic) language. However, due to its appearance in an obscure esoteric magazine, it was unnoticed by the general readership and provoked no critical response.

Janez Trobentar has been engaged in various literary activities associated with Crowley's Thelema and related alternative religious traditions for more than a quarter of a century: as an editor, translator, commentator, and the original writer. In addition to numerous translations, he has also written the first Slovenian biography of Aleister Crowley, *The Man, The Sphinx, The Beast*

(2006). His translations from Crowley, typically with his introductions and notes, include *The Book of Lies*, *The Book of the Law, The Holy Books of Thelema, The Vision and the Voice,* and Crowley's "translation" of *Tao The King*, aside from shorter essays published in *Nox* and elsewhere. But it is his own writings, albeit sparse, that deserve to be singled out. As a general statement, it could be argued that all the previous writers that dealt with occult subjects in the region were either primarily interested in them as a literary motif, or, alternatively, they were summarizing and transmitting ideas and practices developed elsewhere and by other authors. Although Trobentar, as a translator, has his own share in these efforts, in his original contributions he is the first creative writer in the area of former Yugoslavia that approaches Thelema and esotericism in general as both a living tradition and an intellectual field of inquiry, in which he participates from the perspective of what is arguably a deeply European tradition of humanism. It is a regrettable fact that he writes in a highly restricted subject area in a language with only about two million speakers of Slovenian. Virtually unknown aside from the small circle of Crowley aficionados, Trobentar's literary opus, albeit small, is studded with gems of insight and originality, and as such it merits wider recognition.

CONCLUSIONS

Due to a number of factors – relative lack of independence throughout history, the period of Communist rule, and the resurgence of conventional religious beliefs in the new countries succeeding the former Yugoslavia – the occult culture in the area was inevitably confined to minority groups and individual pursuits and it was mostly derivative in its nature. Bradford Verter (1997: 96) has argued that to "a degree far surpassing that of any other religious tradition, occultism is a literary culture" and in that respect, the occultism in the cultural area of former Yugoslavia to a large extent relied on literary translations. This is not meant to imply that there were no original works by the local authors, and some of them have been addressed in the preceding pages. It is significant that certain local activities and individuals transcended the boundaries imposed on them by the native conditions. The numerical strength of the local OTO in the 1980s and early 1990s is a case in point. The current international popularity of Slavinski is another. Earlier still, Slavinski's efforts in developing original magical methods earned him a respect of at least two major occult figures, Kenneth Grant and Michael Bertiaux, who in 1977 informed his Yugoslav pupil, "You are also my magical son" (quoted in Grant 1999: 244). Bertiaux was apparently similarly impressed by *Knjiga Gnoze* (*The Book of Gnosis*, 1989), privately published in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, by an author who went under the magical name of Master Leo. Bertiaux expressed his opinion that the book represents "truly new energy and expression of gnosis. I am

very much pleased by this book" (quoted in translation in Salihović, 1994: 44). (Incidentally, both Slavinski and Leo claimed successful establishment of communication with Aiwass and both claimed the identity between Aiwass and Lam, otherwise subject and focus of a great deal of attention among the Grant-inspired Typhonian brand of Thelema.) And in 1991, an international group of occultists (from Spain, USA, Australia, Africa and former Yugoslavia) performed jointly the so-called GRAIL (Great Ritual Abrahadabra-Aiwass in Infinity Level) ritual, composed by Master Leo. Among the performers were the Gnostic Bishops of Eclesia Gnostica Latina and Masters of the Ordo Templi Orientis Antiqua, and their joint participation in the ritual composed by an occultist from former Yugoslavia is an indication of the respected status of its composer, however minor the cultural space all these people occupy. The same remark applies to the place and value of occultism in the region under consideration in general: it is marginal, but if we have learnt anything in the last few decades of cultural studies, it is that the margins are important and deserving of our attention and understanding.

NOTES

1. Many friends, colleagues and correspondents contributed to this chapter by providing information, sending texts, answering my questions and generally being helpful in a variety of ways. In particular, I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to N. D., A. Jovanović, Z. Kovač, M. Leo, B. Mićić, M. Milenović, H. Osmić, M. Staley and J. Trobentar.
2. I am using this designation in an intentionally loose manner to refer to this cultural area irrespective of its current political and national boundaries.
3. Rich traditions of folk magic preserved in rituals, customs, stories and songs are the focus of significant scholarly interest in local ethnographic and anthropological societies and their numerous individual representatives. A classic in the field is Veselin Čajkanović (1984), *Magija i Religija*. An extensive historical study treating the local perceptions of witches, with a pronounced legal approach to the subject is Vladimir Bayer (1969), *Ugovor s Đavlom: Procesi Protiv Čarobnjaka u Evropi a napose u Hrvatskoj* (*The Pact with the Devil: Processes against Sorcerers in Europe and particularly in Croatia*). One of the most interesting and innovative recent essays is Suzana Marjanić (2006), "Witches' Zoonavigations and the Astral Broom in the Worlds of Croatian Legends as (Possible) Aspects of Shamanistic Techniques of Ecstasy (and Trance)".
4. See, for example, Radomir Ristić (2009).
5. For an illustration of some of these efforts, see *Veles: An Internet Magazine Dedicated to the Slavs* at www.starisloveni.com/CasopisVeles.html.
6. An early historical example of this position is apparent in a public lecture given by Sima Lozanić at the Belgrade Higher School, the predecessor of its current University, on the subject of "Sveta Veština i Alhemija" ("Sacred Art and Alchemy", 1889), in which alchemy was treated as an early form of chemistry plagued by scientific misconceptions.
7. One of the most eloquent treatments of the occult as an integral part of cultural and intellectual life is Alexis Owen (2004), *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern*.
8. I am not aware of a similarly comprehensive study that would address the occult themes in the literature of other former Yugoslav countries, but see the essays by the Hungarian scholar

István Lökös (2010, 2011) exploring these subjects in the work of the Croatian writer Ksaver Šandor Gjalski (1854–1935).

9. See Gordan Djurdjevic (2012).
10. The Yugoslav Theosophical Society was established in 1925 (although the first Lodge was founded a year earlier, in 1924, in Zagreb, Croatia) and it was closed in 1947. In 1938 it organized the congress of the European Federation of the Theosophical Societies. It issued the journal *Teozofija* ("Theosophy"), published in Zagreb.
11. See Rudolph Steiner (1990: 312).
12. A representative critical local study by a philosopher who viewed the phenomenon in a highly negative light is Branislav Petronijević (1922), *Spiritizam*.
13. E-mail to the author, 1 September 2010.
14. See the study by Olav Hammer (2001) for a discussion and analysis of various legitimizing discourses employed by alternative religious groups.
15. This particular classification was put forward by Gilles Quispell.
16. For a thesis on New Age as a secularized form of contemporary esotericism, see Wouter Hanegraaff (1998).
17. See Crowley (1985).
18. A recent book by James Wasserman (2012), *In the Center of the Fire: A Memoir of the Occult, 1966–1989*, traces the renewal of the OTO from a personal perspective and contextually contemporary with the introduction of the Order into the area of former Yugoslavia. The OTO demographics were regularly published in *Thelema Lodge Calendar*, for which see: http://billheidrick.com/tlcidx.htm. According to these demographics, in the February of 1991 (the year that the break up of the country commenced), there were 179 members of the OTO in Yugoslavia, followed by 69 members in England, 66 in Germany, 34 in Norway, 17 in France, 10 in Sweden, while in the other regions where the Order was present the membership was lower than 10 members per country. See http://billheidrick.com/tlc1991/tlc0491.htm#DEMO1991.
19. Aleister Crowley's books, in particular his early output, are often talismanic in this respect. For a discussion of the material and magical aspects of his book productions, see Timothy D'Arch Smith (1987).

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CHAPTER 6

OCCULTISM AND CHRISTIANITY IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY ITALY

Tommaso Palamidessi's Christian magic

Francesco Baroni

Tommaso Palamidessi (b. Pisa, 1915; d. Rome, 1983) is undoubtedly one of the most noteworthy figures of the twentieth-century Italian esoteric revival. In previous publications, I have sketched an outline of his life and work, giving a general survey of his doctrine.[1] Here I would to like to focus, more specifically, on the ritual and magical dimension of his Christian esotericism. Particular attention will be given to the broader framework of early twentieth-century Italian esoteric currents. This will enable us to evaluate the importance of Palamidessi's borrowings from the surrounding esoteric culture, as well as to assess the extent of his originality and inventiveness.

THE ESOTERIC RENEWAL IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY ITALY

The vogue of esotericism in early twentieth-century Italy is emblematically revealed by the reprinting, in 1922, of the successful handbooks by Armando Pappalardo, novelist and popularizer of "occult sciences", spiritualism and closely related subjects.[2] At that time the esoteric panorama was a motley one in Italy. The indigenous traditions of folk magic and, on a more sophisticated level, of Neapolitan Hermeticism and Egyptianism – with the outstanding figure of Ciro Formisano, *alias* Giuliano Kremmerz (1881–1930)[3] –had already been joined by new esoteric currents, all coming from beyond the Alps.[4] First of all, one has to mention spiritualism, although the incorporation of this movement to the Western esoteric corpus has been questioned by scholars (see e.g. Faivre 1992: 96). Preceded by the vogue of animal magnetism,[5] during the second half of the nineteenth century spiritualism spread quickly all over in Italy, first in Turin, then in Parma, Naples, Florence, Palermo and Rome, and

attracted to its cause many of the leading intellectuals and politicians of the country, such as Massimo D'Azeglio, Giuseppe Garibaldi, Cesare Lombroso and Luigi Capuana (Biondi 1988; Cigliana 2010). Second, one should not underestimate the impact of theosophy and anthroposophy on Italian culture during the first decades of the twentieth century.[6] Related to the Hermetic and "neo-pagan" currents mentioned above (basically a sub-category of these, but with very distinctive features) we have, then, the so-called "traditionalist Roman School", whose chief exponents were Arturo Reghini (1878–1946),[7] former Mason, Martinist and theosophist, and Julius Evola (1898–1974),[8] who edited the reviews *Ur* (1927–28) and *Krur* (1929).[9] Interestingly enough, Reghini and Evola, at least in one stage of their career, tried to prop up the fascist regime by lending it an esoteric ideology. Their idea was that Rome had been, in the ancient days, the cradle of a rich esoteric pagan (i.e. pre-Christian) lore, related to Pythagorean traditions, Neoplatonic philosophy, ancient mysteries and the myth of Saturn. In the spirit of the Group of Ur this "Roman tradition" was clearly meant to counter the democratic (word which sounded highly derogatory to Evola), "degenerated" spirituality of the Catholic Church, and to provide the fascist regime with a "virile", traditional religious option (Rossi 2010). It has to be noted, finally, that via the neo-pagan milieus of Roman traditionalism (and particularly through Evola), French esotericist René Guénon's (1886–1951) thought would soon reach the peninsula.[10] As it happened elsewhere in the same period, the spread of the Guénonian corpus in Italy fostered the interest for two major themes, the idea of a "primordial (esoteric and inter-religious) tradition" and that of a universal system of symbols, and nurtured a comparative and perennialist approach to religion. This intellectual climate was to inspire, a few years later, highly renowned academic scholars like Giuseppe Tucci (1894–1984) and Elémire Zolla (1926–2002) (see Hakl 2004; Bazàn 2002).

The major trends that we have just sketched out (animal magnetism and spiritualism, theosophy and anthroposophy, and Hermetic/neo-pagan groups, with their Roman and perennialist fringes) represent, therefore, the core of the esoteric revival of early twentieth-century Italy. They intermingled regularly, and were quite often (but not always) backed by a strong masonic support (Pasi 2010: 587–8).

NEO-PAGANISM, ANTI-CHRISTIANISM AND MAGIC

Two aspects of this revival are particularly relevant to my purpose. First of all one can note, in most of the aforementioned trends, some uneasiness with Christianity. As far as contemporary neo-pagan groups are concerned, this remark may seem quite obvious. In effect, these movements usually criticize Christianity, even though they do not necessarily reject it (especially those of the last decades of the twentieth century; Pearson 2005). In the particular case

of the Italian esoteric revival, however, not only do neo-pagan writers criticize Christianity, but they quite often display fierce anti-Christian feelings (see Rossi 2010).

A few examples may be helpful here. The first case in point is the Islamist, Orientalist and left-wing member of the parliament Leone Caetani (1869–1935), known to be one of the first figures of contemporary neo-paganism in Italy. In *La crisi morale dell'era presente* (1901) Caetani states quite categorically that Christianity is a cult "coming from the East", "incompatible with Western conscience", and claims to be "Pagan and admirer of Paganism" (Introvigne *et al.* 2001: 743). These statements were to be echoed by the most influential occultist Giuliano Kremmerz, founder of the "Therapeutic and Magic Brotherhood of Miriam". Quite unambiguously, Kremmerz depicted Christianity as "a plague coming from the East" (Introvigne 1990: 302).

Expressed in a similarly caustic way, these ideas will be shared by Arturo Reghini. In an article published in the review *Ur* in 1927 (Reghini 1971), Reghini criticizes the "denigration of Romanity" shown by several French occultists (Ragon, De Guaita, Papus), and tries to demonstrate two radical theses. To begin with, Christianity, in its origins and essence, is not a Western religion, but rather an Eastern one, for it displays several features of what Reghini sees as the "Asian spirituality": religious intolerance, dogmatism, combined with anarchism and democratic spirit. Second, the Western esoteric spirituality has nothing to do with Christianity, since it rests on the glorious heritage of ancient pagan traditions. Therefore, concludes Reghini, there is no connection at all between Christianity and Western esotericism (*quod erat demonstrandum*).

The most virulent approach to Christianity, however, is probably to be found in Julius Evola.[11] According to him, Christianity displays a total absence of esoteric elements, for it conceives God as a personal entity, altogether distinct from man. In other words, it lacks the notion of "supreme identity", typical of Vedanta and constituting the core of any true esotericism (Evola 1926: 295). Christianity is henceforth labelled "mystic religion", which for Evola is a highly disparaging definition, since in his language "mystic" describes, basically, a dualistic, sentimental and infantile approach to metaphysics. In *Imperialismo pagano* ([1928] 2004), written to encourage the fascist regime not to compromise with the Catholic Church, Evola's criticism is even harsher. Christianity is regarded as "a doctrine for losers" (*dottrina da falliti*), and the "Latin race" is exhorted to "strongly deny any descent from this obscure thing [i.e. Christianity] that came out of the Jewish slums to contaminate it" (Evola [1928] 2004: 146). In his *Rivolta contro il mondo moderno* ([1934] 1993), Evola presents Christianity, labelled as an "Asian cult", as the main thing responsible for the modern decadence of the West, and describes its spirituality as a "desperate" one, "levering on the irrational part of being" (Evola [1934] 1993: 342).

As pointed out by Laurant (2010: 670–71), this "frontal opposition" between the representatives of contemporary esoteric currents and the Church is a

distinctive Italian feature. In Italy, Christianity represented a hegemonic conservative power, both on a religious and on a political ground; a power that was strengthened by the absence (and subsequently by the fragility) of the Italian national State. Besides, the Holy See never showed any tolerance towards esoteric movements, often regarded as "sects", as was the case with Freemasonry[12] and later with theosophy. The latter is a significant case in point. Since 1907, theosophy was strongly contrasted by the Jesuit intelligentsia, which placed it in the range of contemporary heresies along with Freemasonry and spiritualism. In 1919, the Holy Office explicitly condemned theosophy as being incompatible with Christianity. This strongly contributed to the decline of the theosophical movement in Italy (Pasi 2010).

In fact, the only esoteric milieu in which it would have been possible to find a Christian inspiration (apart from the Christian branches of the Theosophical Society) is anthroposophy. What seems to have attracted the attention of the Italian public, however, is mainly Steiner's pedagogy, whereas his Christian esotericism, based on the idea of the coming of Christ as the axis of human evolution, and supported by a peculiar esoteric reading of the Bible, stayed mainly confined within the circle of his closest Italian disciples. Among them we find the baroness Emmelina De Renzis (1858–1944), the poet Arturo Onofri (1885–1928), the minister Giovanni Antonio Colonna di Cesarò (1878–1940) and the physician Giovanni Colazza (1877–1953) who were not, for that matter, very prolific writers.[13]

Within the esoteric movements of the first half of the twentieth century, therefore, the theme of the "true Christianity" was not the object of great interest. It appeared only, more or less prominently, in masonic and para-masonic movements. Among these, we have to mention the numerous Martinist groups (Ventura 1978; Brunelli 1980) and neo-Gnostic organizations of the second postwar period, such as the "Gnostic Church of Italy" founded by Mario De Conca, and Francesco Brunelli's "Italian Gnostic Church". It emerged also in neo-Templar orders such as the "Supernus Ordo Equester Templi" (Laurant 2010: 680–83). In none of these groups, however, the reflection about the history and the nature of Christian esotericism attained the level of originality that we find in Palamidessi's "Archeosophy"; nor did these movements manage to survive for a long time or to reach a wide public, as has been the case for Palamidessi and his association (see Baroni 2011).

The second aspect that I would like to stress concerns esoteric practices. On the whole, we can say that in early twentieth-century Italian esotericism (but we seem to have there a more general phenomenon, typical of contemporary esoteric movements) the category of "magic" becomes prominent, and tends to crowd out – or rather to swallow up – other neighbouring religious categories, such as "prayer". Especially in the neo-pagan area, indeed, prayer is often regarded as a relic of an old-fashioned, Christian-oriented spirituality, resting on the (supposedly wrong) idea that man and God belong to altogether different

realms, whereas Hermeticism and other esoteric traditions exalt the spiritual faculties of man and praise his innate power of self-transmutation.[14]

In this context, however, "magic" is usually understood as a very broad category. This is also the case in Italy, where magic is often identified with a sort of esoteric spiritual science, based on Hermetic and Neoplatonic doctrines as well on a vast range of occultist practices, whose goal is "personal spiritual development" (Hanegraaff 2005: 744). Hence the title of the collection of articles published in *Ur* and *Krur*, later re-issued as *Introduzione alla Magia quale scienza dell'Io* (*Introduction to Magic as a Science of the I*, 1971).

According to the specific case, nevertheless, in early-twentieth-century Italian esoteric movements the word "magic" can mean several, very distinct, things. The "science of the I" of the "Group of Ur", for instance, included also traditional techniques of ritual magic, for which Evola and Reghini had a definite taste. The aim of these ceremonies was to produce "spiritual entities"; the means were magic circles, ritual tools and appropriate invocations (Del Ponte 1994). Such ceremonies were occasionally held to give magical support to fascism (Del Ponte 2006).

But Evola (like P. B. Randolph, Theodor Reuss and Aleister Crowley before him) was equally involved in another kind of magic: sexual magic. Such practices, aiming at "self-transformation and integration into transcendent realms" (Hakl 2005: 347), were deeply influenced by tantrism. Sexual practices were of the utmost importance for Evola, since he "regarded sex as virtually the only practical possibility open to contemporary man to experience something of the higher transcendent world" (*ibid*.: 349).

As to Giuliano Kremmerz, he was rather interested in a form of "magic healing" resting on the (mesmeric) idea of "fluid". In this perspective, "putting together the power of several initiates in a magical brotherhood, as well as invoking angels, benevolent spirits and gods [was] regarded as essential if the fluid stolen by the dark forces [was] to be recovered" (Introvigne 2005: 672). But some branches of the Kremmerzian school also developed other magical techniques, with different aims: substituting one soul for another in the same human body ("Avatar magic"), and purifying the spirit ("solar bodies") by "a number of sex magic operations (centring on a whole system of spermatophagy) … performed at dates carefully selected according to an astrological chart and preceded by periods of strict fasting" (*ibid*.).[15]

The two trends of early twentieth-century Italian esotericism that I have just highlighted (neo-paganism and prominence of magic) appear to be tightly interrelated. Indeed, neo-paganism was a very engaging option for Italian esotericists, treated as dangerous plotters by the Catholic Church, and striving to connect with a more autochthonic tradition. However appealing ancient paganism might possibly be, though, it hardly contained the directives for a spiritual discipline that could accompany Hermetic, alchemical and Neoplatonic doctrines. The ancient category of "magic", duly reconstructed and enriched

with Oriental and occultist materials, became, then, the operational pendant of neo-paganism and grew more and more popular.

A radically Christian-oriented esoteric approach like Palamidessi's would introduce a new perspective, entailing two major consequences. First, the reappearance of the category of "prayer", reviewed in the light of theosophical and anthroposophical doctrines on man's "occult physiology", and developed together with the study of hesychasm, yoga and other Eastern spiritual techniques.[16] Second – and this is the point that we are going to deal with in the following pages – the evolution of traditional occultist "ritual magic" into a new form of "Christian theurgy", that is, a specifically Christian ritual framework set up to invoke the presence of God, with the goal of uniting with the divine and perfecting oneself.

TOMMASO PALAMIDESSI AND ARCHEOSOPHY

After a very intense occultist youth spent in Turin,[17] in 1953 Palamidessi moved to Rome with his wife Rosa Bordino (1916–99) and his daughter Silvestra (1948–96). He stopped publishing treatises on yoga and astrology, and after what he explicitly called a "conversion", he started off his work of reflection about Christian esotericism, inspired by the reading of perennialist authors such as Guénon and Schuon, and of the French collection of patristic texts "Sources Chrétiennes". He visited the Mount Athos monasteries (1957) and entered the Third Order of St Francis (1960). At the beginning of the 1960s, during a stay in Alexandria, he attained the certitude of having been Origen. In 1966, while visiting the site of the Golgotha, Palamidessi had a mystical vision of Christ, which strongly impressed him. All these events punctuate the long gestation period that precedes the creation of "Archeosophy" and of the "Archeosophical Society" in September 1968 (Baroni 2011: 97–102).

Depicted both as the "Science of the principles" and as the original "archaic wisdom" (ἀρχή = "principle", σοφία = "wisdom"), "Archeosophy" is constructed with theosophical, occultist and perennialist materials, embedded within a doctrinal framework that Palamidessi claims to be authentically Christian. Palamidessi's metaphysics, in effect, echoes the principles of Orthodox theology, enriched with a reflection about the Sophia (inspired by Böhme and modern Russian theologians such as Solovyov and Florensky) and with the Kabbalah of Isaac Luria. Archeosophical anthropology represents a development of the theosophical doctrines of "spiritual centres", "subtle bodies" (chakras) and reincarnation, with a strong emphasis on Palamidessi's own experiences of "astral projection" and memory of past lives (Baroni 2011).

The identification with Origen (see above) underlies the foundation of Archeosophy and explains many features of Palamidessi's doctrine. Convinced of the veracity of his memories of previous lives (that of Origen, but also that of

the sixteenth-century astrologer and mathematician Girolamo Cardano, 1501–76), Palamidessi believes that his historical mission is to revive the glorious tradition of Christian esotericism, identified with the teachings of the early Fathers. Among these teachings, according to Palamidessi, figured reincarnation, the doctrine of subtle bodies and of chakras and a refined ascetic discipline whose focal point was the "prayer of the heart", still in use in hesychasm. This reading of ancient Christianity has its roots in the writings of the major Christian theosophists (mainly Kinsgford, Besant and Leadbeater), but is developed by Palamidessi in a highly personal way.

Archeosophy, therefore, is presented as the most accurate interpretation of Christianity. According to its founder, it is the real Christian esotericism, fought by ecclesiastic hierarchies in Antiquity and brought back to life by Palamidessi himself, Origen *redivivus*. Taking into consideration these characteristics, it is clear that Archeosophy rightfully belongs to the category of "invented traditions" (see Hobsbawm 1995). As research has shown, this work of "construction" of traditions is typical of modernity, where "plenty of political institutions, ideological movements and groups were so unprecedented that even historic continuity had to be invented, for example by creating an ancient past beyond effective historical continuity" (*ibid*.: 7) and particularly of new religious movements, where "Tradition" becomes "a strategy used to give weight and credibility to the religion in question" (Hjelm 2005: 109; see also Lewis 2003).

PALAMIDESSI'S CHRISTIAN THEURGY: INITIATION AND ANGELIC MAGIC

The core of Archeosophy, as Palamidessi often repeats, is its ascetic programme. Archeosophical ascesis aims at developing the practitioner's spiritual faculties, to put him in contact with the spiritual dimensions, and to facilitate his ascent towards God by meditation and various spiritual exercises, whose authentic Christian-esoteric character is for Palamidessi beyond a shadow of a doubt. Most of these exercises are performed by the adept individually: in his booklets, Palamidessi illustrates the techniques for travelling in the astral and other spiritual realms, for gaining the memory of past lives, and explains in detail his own esoteric version of the "prayer of the heart".[18] Archeosophical discipline, however, includes also a ritual (and namely theurgical) dimension. Let us now examine some of its main features.

The "Loto-Crucian" initiatory order was originally founded in 1948, when Palamidessi was immersed in Tantra and various forms of occultism. After the mystical experiences happened to Palamidessi in the Holy Land in 1966, this order was "awakened" and integrated, so to speak, into the Archeosophical School in 1968. In this context advanced disciples receive the "horizontal

initiation" and prepare to practise theurgical asceticism (see below; and cf. Baroni 2009b: 308–14).

To understand the nature and the function of this initiatory order, it is necessary to locate this project within the broader framework of archeosophical doctrine, in particular within its theory of avatars. According to Palamidessi, the incarnations of God "leave Ekklesias, apostles, groups of people who teach, some in an external, popular line, others following a special esoteric way, according to the ability to understand of the converted and the awakened" (Palamidessi 1985–88: II, 94). Thus initiatory orders are formed, whose purpose is to spread the word of the Messiah in an esoteric manner.

Over time, many orders have arisen, but the Spirit has abandoned them because of their lack of enthusiasm. Palamidessi, who believes himself responsible to deliver the esoteric message of Christ, wants to remedy this deficiency, which is why he revives the Order "Loto-Croce", that he calls an "epicentre of initiation, born to give new zeal, new apostolic vigour to Christians" (*ibid*.: 96). Palamidessi attaches fundamental importance to the visions he had in the Holy Land in 1966: "These phenomena, and many others which we cannot put in writing because they occurred during particular Initiations, provide assurance that the Initiatory Order 'Loto-Croce' is a living and operative force wanted by the Avatar" (*ibid*.: 108).

It is important to note that Palamidessi claims not only the historical and spiritual necessity of his order, but also its truly and legitimately Christian nature. To justify such a position, he appeals to the principle of "the universal priesthood of believers", a foundational concept of Protestantism that was highlighted, a few years before the foundation of Archeosophy, by the Second Vatican Council.[19] According to this doctrine, all baptized persons are equal in their evangelical mission.[20] "By virtue of the 'priesthood of the faithful'", says Palamidessi, "it is possible and legitimate to develop a 'priesthood of initiates', *i.e.* an esoteric priesthood represented by the esoteric Ekklesia … Let us take on again, therefore, our priestly dignity. The sleep of laymen is over. Let us open to the Holy Spirit and enter the world" (*ibid*.: 102).

As regards its internal structure and doctrine, Palamidessi tells us that the order "Loto-Croce" consists of twelve degrees, plus a thirteenth degree represented by the Superior Initiator. It has its own "rites, symbols and theurgical instruments"; it possesses a rule and secret teachings. Both men and women are allowed in it. Its seat is in Rome. Its members meet in groups or "temples of assembly" whose management is entrusted to the one who has the highest initiatory degree (*ibid*.: 106).

Within the Order, we can identify two major activities: initiation and theurgical asceticism. Palamidessi describes the function and general characteristics of Lotocrucian initiation in his *Dizionario enciclopedico di Archeosofia* (1978). First of all, we are told that there is no single initiation, but three, each of them corresponding to a pole of the human psychic structure (Spirit, Emotional

Soul, Eros-Dynamic Soul). This triple initiation has a clear Christic character: "The three degrees are a crucifixion. The divine action is a transfiguration and resurrection" (*ibid*.: I, 188). In the three rituals, the initiator projects his energies on the physical seat of the three psychic principles of the individual: first on the brain, seat of the Spirit, then on the heart, seat of the Emotional Soul, and finally on the genitals, seat of the "Eros-Dynamic Soul". In theory, according to Palamidessi, there should be two initiators, a man and a woman, for each is supposed to work on a polarity of the initiate's energetic body. The transmission of the energies seems to be carried out mainly through mental concentration and magnetic passes. But Palamidessi, speaking of the awakening of the frontal centre, also alludes to the use of a particular ritual tool, the "sword of initiation" (*ibid*.: II, 40). The initiator prays to induce the descent of the "divine uncreated energies" on the recipient, while the latter breaths rhythmically, according to the rules of pranayama (Baroni 2009b: 308–14).

Initiations may be conferred at any time, but certain Christian holidays are to be privileged: the Epiphany, and above all Easter. To celebrate these rites it is necessary to have suitable theurgic instruments, that is "objects that have a symbolic importance, and also a dynamic one, because they contain forces that help" (Baroni 2011: 173). Regarding the ceremonies, Palamidessi adds: "A lot of things are needed: gowns, for example; everyone must have his white gown with symbols embroidered on the chest. Then, the temple and wearable objects, because each degree has its signs, symbols, collars, which help" (*ibid*.).

As far as theurgical asceticism is concerned, Palamidessi defines it as the "human dynamic set in motion by the special presence of the Triune God, through the theurgical practice … It's a progression, an advancement with the rites of Theurgy … which attract friendship and help of God, of Christ, of the Mother, of angelic spirits and of the Universal Community of the Adepts and the Saints" (Palamidessi 1985–88: I, 186). Theurgy, Palamidessi says, is based on *epiclesis*, that is, a form of "priestly prayer of the Initiated on behalf of the congregation or gathered Brothers, so that the Father manifests Christ in the Holy Spirit" (*ibid*.: 187). To make his prayer effective, the theurgist exploits "the power of symbols, of sacred letters, colours and fragrances, combinations of musical notes (chords), the exact pronunciation of the Divine Names and spirits, using the most favourable astronomical rhythms" (*ibid*.). While listing the essential tools of theurgical asceticism, Palamidessi also alludes to the "theurgical book of spirits of light" and to the "thaumaturgical stole", decorated with symbols and divine names, particularly useful in spiritual healing (*ibid*.).

But who is the addressee of the "theurgical epiclesis" practised by the order "Loto-Croce"? We find a hint in a Palamidessi's booklet, *Avviamento all'evangelo eterno* (written in 1982). In it we read that "when acceding to the third degree of Lotocrucian Initiation, and therefore attaining the rank of Master, the knowledge of *Angelology* becomes fundamental" (*ibid*.: II, 204). Each initiatory grade of the order from the fourth on, in effect, is related to a particular category

of angelic spirits: Angels (4), Archangels (5), Principalities (6), Powers (7), Virtues (8), Dominions (9), Thrones (10), Cherubim (11), Seraphim (12). The angelologic scheme underlying this distribution is a traditional one, that of the Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.[21]

The aim of Lotocrucian ceremonies, however, is not only to contact angelic spirits, but also to stimulate and develop the chakras of the adepts. An important part of Lotocrucian rituals is specifically devoted to this purpose:

> Epiclesis is very useful for the development of our Centres. It is used in rituals (set of words, gestures, ceremonies, music, perfumes, colours of garments, thoughts) of each centre. The ritual aspect of the epiclesis of the subtle Centres is undoubtedly the most fascinating and most powerful of practical Archeosophy. (Palamidessi 1974: I, 53)

Palamidessi, then, inserts epiclesis, typical of Catholic liturgy,[22] as well as Pseudo-Dyonisius's angelology, in a rich and elaborated esoteric ritual setting. Pentacles, sacred letters, colours and fragrances, divine and angelic names, astrology are summoned to create the ideal framework for the initiate's theurgical prayer. Interestingly enough, this is viewed as a means not only to ascend toward God, but also to reinforce and purify the adept's spiritual structure. This is clearly the legacy of early twentieth-century esoteric interest in "occult physiology", and shows quite explicitly the occultist and theosophical background of Palamidessi's synthesis.

THE "ARTISTIC MAGIC": ASCETICISM AND THEURGY OF SACRED ICONS

"Angelic epiclesis", inserted in an elaborated magic and ritual setting, is therefore the specifically theurgical dimension of Palamidessi's Christian esotericism. However, there is another domain of archeosophical asceticism which, according to Palamidessi himself, falls into the category of theurgy: the cult of sacred icons.

From the mid-1960s, in effect, Palamidessi mentions his interest in aesthetics, and practises sculpture and painting. This interest in art, seen as a support for inner elevation, found expression in many writings, among which *L'icona, i colori e l'ascesi artistica* (1986b) is undoubtedly the most important. This volume is meant as a textbook of "esoteric theory and technique of art" whose purpose is to teach students how to prepare a sacred icon and how to meditate on it.

In his treatise, Palamidessi sketches, at first, some general considerations on the concepts of art and aesthetics. Palamidessi subscribes to the definition of art conveyed by classical Antiquity, according to which *omnis ars est imitatio naturae* (Seneca, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*, 65: 3): art is primarily a mimetic

activity, whose basic purpose is to replicate the real. Palamidessi, however, cautions against a literal interpretation of this formula, and takes care of correcting it by placing emphasis on the subjectivity of the artistic process: "The work of art is not a realistic reproduction of materials or things: this is the product of moulding or of photography. The work of art is an interpretation of nature; more precisely, it is the representation of the subjective view that the artist has formed in his consciousness while contemplating the truth" (Palamidessi 1986b: 13–14).

Fundamentally free in his contemplation of reality, the artist may be receptive both to beauty and to ugliness, and may be sensitive or insensitive to the presence of God in nature. The quality of art, then, will depend on the artist's inclinations, that is, on the specificity of his spiritual vision. Art is beautiful, according to Palamidessi, when the artist makes "the inner spiritual truth" triumph through the reproduction of nature. This search for God through the imitation of nature is based on the analogy between the status of the artist and the status of God as creator of the universe. The mystical quest is possible since, in recreating the world following his own subjectivity, it is actually God, the supreme creator, that the artist imitates.[23]

Considered in this way, as the revelation of the inner spiritual truth through the reproduction of external reality, art can be converted into the support for the elevation of the soul, and thus become "sacred art". Hence the tradition of sacred painting, which finds its greatest expression in the art of the icon. The icon is for Palamidessi a "valuable instrument of sacred art which helps asceticism: its symbolic colours and pictorial canons constitute an aesthetic science aiming for self-transcendence and the perfect imitation of Christ" (Palamidessi 1986b: 18–20).

The effectiveness of an icon, according to Palamidessi, depends on two fundamental factors: chromatic and geometric symbolism.[24] But that is not all, because there is also the "psychological influence transmitted to the table by the mystical painter in a state of holiness" (*ibid.*: 40) and the penetration of the icon by the uncreated divine energies, which takes place when the icon is consecrated by a priest. All this explains the power of sacred images and their role in supporting the ascetic's mystical endeavours. Icons receive and absorb the energy emitted by the ascetic who paints them (as well as by the priest who consecrates them), and reflect it on anyone who contemplates them. They are, then, "sacred mirrors", whose properties recall those of ordinary, physical mirrors (*ibid.*: 42). According to Palamidessi, inspired by a freely reinterpreted Evdokimov,[25] the icon can therefore be regarded as a true sacrament (*ibid.*: 50).

"Theophanic mirrors" manifesting the divine presence, true sacrament, icons can legitimately become a medium for religious, and specifically ascetic, practices. Among these, Palamidessi preaches "iconognosis", meaning the "knowledge of the icon through meditation", a practice that represents, in his view, the Western equivalent of the meditation on mandalas. "Iconognosis", he says,

is "the knowledge of the image in a goal of spiritual elevation and encounter with God" (*ibid*.: 201). This is, according to Palamidessi, "the highest form of asceticism through the symbol".[26]

Beside the ascetic function of the icon, there is also, according to Palamidessi, a "theurgy of the icon". After describing the "liturgy of the icon", in effect, Palamidessi explains:

> When we talk of a personal icon … it is improper to speak of liturgy … All the necessary operations are carried out by the ascetic in perfect solitude, outside the framework of a monastic body or community, since the icon is only used by him as a means and support in catharsis. The individual, counting solely on his own faith, his strength, his courage, his will and boundless love for God, is undertaking a *theurgical* work. (*Ibid*.: 204)

However, theurgy intervenes essentially in the phase of preparation of the icon, where all the elements of the painting are to be duly purified and consecrated.

Palamidessi gives the reader a very thorough programme to follow during his spiritual retreats. The ascetic will go to a distant place, an uninhabited forest or a mountain, to get away from the "stormy psychic tide of humanity". There he will lead for a few days a life of semi-fasting and contemplation, centred on the "prayer of the heart" according to the method taught by Palamidessi in his treatises.[27] Before preparing the sacred icon, the ascetic will "theurgically" sanctify the water needed to dilute the colours. During a special ceremony, he will place the container on a white tablecloth in the middle of three candles, and burn some incense. Then he will melt in the water a bit of salt, a few drops of red wine and a pinch of ash obtained from a blessed olive branch, each of these elements having a particular symbolic meaning. Eventually, he will stretch out his hands over the water and recite a prayer to the Lord. A similar ceremony is needed to bless the wooden board which is to be painted. While painting, the ascetic will focus on the sacred symbolism of the colours used, in order to fully immerse in the mystical significance of the work that he is carrying out (*ibid*.: 217–34).

Eventually, when the work is over, he must invoke the Divine Presence, so that his icon will become "a centre of strength and radiance" (*ibid*.: 234). The blessing ceremony takes place at dawn. After placing his painting on a white tablecloth in the middle of three candles, and burning some incense, the ascetic will stretch his hands over the icon and will recite a special prayer:

> I call and cry to you, the Triune God, Lord of the universe (sign of the cross), so that the blessing descend on this icon and make it holy (sign of the cross), so that the paint which comes out from my hands and my heart like a white lotus flower, be living of your life, shining of your

> light, vibrating of your love. Bless and sanctify it (sign of the cross on the icon), and may it become the theophanic place from whence springs the clear water that quenches my thirst for wisdom, love and truth. I thank You, Almighty God, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, for listening to me and assisting me all along the hard road that I travelled to your glory and my regeneration. Amen. (*Ibid*.: 235)

As far as Palamidessi's sources are concerned, in this highly eclectic book (*L'icona*) at least three major traditions converge. The first is that of theosophical and anthroposophical anthropology, focusing on the study of the "invisible man" (subtle bodies, chakras, etc.) and of the colours of the aura.[28] The second is none other than the tradition of the Orthodox Church, in which the icon – which is part of the liturgy – is thought to have not only an educational, but also a "mysteric" value.[29] The ancient tradition of the Orthodox iconology reached Palamidessi through a double channel. Obviously, Palamidessi followed the reflection carried out by some prominent Orthodox theologians on the historical, sacramental and liturgical meaning of icons (Ouspensky 1960; Evdokimov 1970). But the founder of Archeosophy was also aware – and this is an equally important source – of the studies of the "perennialist" school which, while developing certain insights of René Guénon, examined the question of art and its symbolism, paying particular attention to the Orthodox tradition and its iconology. Among these authors, let us mention Frithjof Schuon, who had devoted a whole chapter of *The Transcendent Unity of Religions* (1948: 76–90) to this issue, and Titus Burckhardt, who treated the same subject, echoing Schuon's reflections, in *Principles and Methods of Sacred Art* (1958: 61–106). The third perspective is that of parapsychology, which Palamidessi often refers to in order to explain the psychological and spiritual effects of the realization and the contemplation of icons.[30] These different traditions eventually converge, leading to the development of an aesthetic that is not an end in itself, but is intended, on the contrary, as the support of a spiritual asceticism carried out both through meditation and prayer and through beauty, creation and visual contemplation.

According to Palamidessi, this spiritual science that governs the asceticism and the theurgy of the icon has always been a part of esoteric Christianity. To justify such an assertion, Palamidessi avails himself not only of historical documents but also of his alleged memories of past lives. In one of these experiences, described in detail in *Tecniche di risveglio iniziatico* (1975: 34–7), Palamidessi had a glimpse of a previous life spent in an Orthodox monastery, where he would have been initiated into the theurgy of the icon. Palamidessi's tendency to ground his doctrinal speculations on his personal spiritual experience is typical of new esoteric movements (cf. Hammer 2004: 431–53).

CONCLUSION

Historically speaking, Palamidessi's originality resides in his capacity to translate a vast ensemble of esoteric notions into a coherent – although often self-referential – doctrinal system, propped up by a strong Christian inspiration. After playing an important role in introducing astrology and yoga in Italy during the 1940s, then, in the second phase of his career Palamidessi incarnated a new way of looking at Christianity, fostering the interest for a range of themes that the prevalently neo-pagan-oriented Italian esoteric culture had not paid very much attention to. Among these subjects, let us mention early Christianity and the varieties of its doctrines, namely the so-called "esoteric" ones; the idea of a Christian ascetical science based on the prayer of the heart, and leading to the same mystical experiences induced by yoga and other spiritual methods; and the importance of sacred art in the ascetic's self-transmutation process. His approach to this matter had important affinities with Guénon's and Schuon's perennialism, and bore the traces of Besant's and Leadbeater's Christian theosophy. But Palamidessi rooted his religious quest in his own mystical experience, which gives his speculations a completely original flavour. Moreover, his treatises do not merely illustrate his doctrines, but describe spiritual techniques that readers can put into practice, which strongly contributed to their success. It is important to note that these techniques – the prayer of the heart, the meditation on the "occult centres", and the techniques for travelling in the astral realm and for gaining the memory of past lives – constitute the core of Christian esotericism as Palamidessi understands it (Baroni 2011).

This original vision of Christianity manifests itself in the archeosophical ascetical programme, and namely in its ritual and magical dimension. Palamidessi's "angelic theurgy", as we have seen above, displays an original contamination between the traditional patterns of ritual magic, typical of contemporary occultist associations, and the liturgy (and the angelology) of the Catholic Church. Similarly, his "theurgy of sacred icons" is the product of an astonishing synthesis between esoteric doctrines of the aura, parapsychology, Orthodox iconology, Roman liturgy and traditional magical techniques.

This "Christian theurgy", as Archeosophy itself, is the product of Palamidessi's keen sensitivity to Christian traditions, as well of his desire to prove that Christianity contains an inner dimension, compatible with the esoteric teachings of all ages. Historically speaking, this attempt is not insignificant, for it revives the ancient Italian tradition of Christian esoteric currents. Although they had dwindled, in recent times, because of the tense relations between the Church and the new esoteric movements, and of the consequential rise of a lively neo-pagan culture, such currents had a glorious tradition in Italy, where they can be said to date back to Florentine humanism, and namely to Ficino's and Pico's highly eclectic – and definitely inclined toward esotericism – Christian philosophy.[31]

Palamidessi died in 1983, and not very much can be said about the reception of his works, whose atypical, and often self-referential character may represent an obstacle for many readers. However, the "Archeosophical Association" is now firmly established in Italy, where it has approximately twenty centres, and continues its work with unfailing enthusiasm. The most successful among its activities are, by far, the courses in iconography, accessible in many Archeosophical centres, as well as the concerts of "Archeosophical music", performed in many prestigious sites all over Europe especially between 1999 and 2008.

During recent decades, then, the theme of "sacred art" has served as an effective interface between the Archeosophical Association and the surrounding culture. Palamidessi, who attached so much importance to the revival of Christianity through esotericism, and presented himself as the reincarnation of Origen, probably would not have expected it. The founder of Archeosophy, however, was well aware that art could be considered as a powerful instrument of spiritualization of consciousness. Had he not written in his treatise on the icon: "Beauty, as well as Truth, Goodness, Knowledge, Power, are attributes of God, and man can seek and discover the Divinity in Beauty" (Palamidessi 1986b: 15)?

NOTES

1. See Baroni (2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2011).
2. See Pappalardo (1922a, 1922b, 1922c).
3. On Giuliano Kremmerz, cf. Jah-Hel (1989), Introvigne (1990: 301–8; 1999: 148–56) and Introvigne *et al.* (2001: 733–49).
4. An outstanding work has recently been published regarding the major trends of Italian esotericism, from Antiquity to today: Cazzaniga (2010).
5. Cf. Gallini (1983).
6. In a recent article, Pasi (2010) has stressed the importance of these traditions, briefly going over their history, and showing the role they played in the spread of esoteric ideas, especially among the communities of intellectuals and artists, and in the emergence of new forms of spirituality in the peninsula.
7. On Reghini, see Sestito (2003) and Di Luca (2003).
8. The literature about Evola is abundant. Cf. the bibliography in Hakl (2005).
9. On the history of these reviews, cf. Del Ponte (1994).
10. Another important figure of Italian traditionalism is Guido De Giorgio (1890–1957), who met Guénon in Paris during the 1920s. Cf. Baillet (1987), Di Vona (1993) and Iacovella (2006).
11. On Evola's attitude towards Christianity, cf. Lami (2001) and Bonvecchio (2004: 43–9).
12. See Cazzaniga (2006).
13. On these authors, see Pasi (2010) and Belardo (2006a, 2006b).
14. See Evola (1931, 1971).
15. On these authors, see also Hakl (2008), discussing both Evola's and Kremmerz's sexual magic.
16. In this chapter, I cannot deal with this important aspect of Palamidessi's esotericism. I have treated it extensively in Baroni (2011), to which I refer the reader.

17. During the 1940s, while working in Turin as an astrologer and a psychic, Palamidessi mainly focused on medical and mundane astrology, publishing several books on these subjects: *Il Corso degli astri e le malattie nell'uomo* (1940); *La medicina e gli influssi siderali* (1940); *Astrologia mondiale* (1941); *Gli influssi cosmici e la diagnosi precoce del cancro* (1943); *Terremoti, eruzioni e influssi cosmici* (1943). In his youth, moreover, Palamidessi did not neglect spiritual alchemy, *Alchimia come via allo spirito* (1948), and tantric yoga: *I poteri occulti dell'uomo e lo yoga tantrico indo-tibetano* (1945); *La tecnica sessuale dello yoga tantrico indo-tibetano* (1948); *La potenza erotica di kundalini yoga* (1949); *Lo yoga per non morire* (1949), which was a quite exotic subject at that time in Italy. Palamidessi's role in the spread of these interests in contemporary Italy must not be underestimated. At the end of the 1940s, we find among his students Federico Capone (1923–2001), who was to create in 1970 the "Centro Italiano di Discipline Astrologiche" (which is still now the main astrological association in Italy) and Carlo Patrian (1930–2008), who founded a very successful yoga school in Milan in 1965, and who is commonly regarded as one of the pioneers of yoga in Italy. In these years, Palamidessi's activity is frenetic: after creating a "Cosmo-biological [i.e. astrological] Research Institute" in 1942, he founded a "Loto-Crucian Order" and the publishing house "Grande Opera" in 1948 and a School of Tantric Yoga in 1949. During the 1940s, moreover, he adhered to Theosophical groups in Piedmont, practised intensively spiritualism (as a medium) and studied hieroglyphs at the Egyptian Museum of Turin under the supervision of the director of the museum, Ernesto Scamuzzi (1899–1969); see Baroni (2011: 23–82).
18. Palamidessi (1985–88: III, 43–77, 5–41; V: 41–69). On Palamidessi's doctrine of reincarnation, see also his (posthumous) volume *Il Libro Cristiano dei Morti* (Palamidessi 1985).
19. Namely in the dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium*, 1964 (10–12, 34–6).
20. Cf. *First Epistle of Peter*, II, 9: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may proclaim the virtues of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light".
21. Cf. *Celestial Hierarchy*, 205A–261B.
22. In the Roman Catholic liturgy, epiclesis is an invocation to the Holy Spirit, made during the Eucharistic prayer (see Salaville 1924).
23. "Art is an unconscious search for the supreme Artist, from whom come the wonderful pictures of nature, galaxies, solar systems, the play of energies, the manifestation of mineral, vegetable, animal, human, superhuman life. The artist seeks God because he feels that he has a certain kinship with Him; he feels that he brings His image stamped on his spirit" (Palamidessi 1986b: 20). We find similar remarks in Schuon (1948: 90).
24. In his description of colour symbolism, Palamidessi follows two main sources: traditional heraldic and religious art, and the study of the "inner colours", that is, the colours of the subtle bodies. Since the aura colours are the expression of spiritual and moral qualities, the painter must be aware of their meanings in order to awaken, through his artwork, the corresponding feelings in the beholder (Palamidessi 1986b: 81–117). With regard to its shape and proportions, the sacred icon is based on a triangular structure, and namely on the "sacred triangle", whose dimensions are 3, 4 and 5 units. A rectangular icon will therefore include two sacred triangles. This applies to the icons representing a head or bust. If the icon should represent a standing human figure, its proportions change, the height corresponding to three times the base of the image. The icon will be then divided into three squares, each containing ideally a circle and a triangle in it. The icon of this second type can also be divided into nine parts, the complete figure corresponding to nine times the size of the face. According to Palamidessi, "such a slender, almost unreal size, gives austerity and spirituality to the image" (*ibid.*: 135). The face consists of three concentric circles, whose centre lies at the root of the nose. For Palamidessi this is certainly not a coincidence, since it is precisely at the root of the nose that is located, in the "subtle anatomy" of man, the frontal chakra (*ibid.*: 135–50).

25. Evdokimov (1970). Evdokimov said that the icon is a "sacramental" (a rite instituted by the Church for producing a spiritual effect), and not a sacrament. The difference between these two concepts is a significant one.
26. "The icon has a didactic function; it is a constant reminder to God, his energies, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Virgin, in Sofia, and to the desire to imitate them. Fixing its symbols means to resonate with their archetypes and to receive their beneficial effects … The icon may be considered a meditation castle, a magical circle, a powerful instrument on which we fix our physical look and the mind's eye to get away from the secular world and enter the sacred world" (Palamidessi 1986b: 201–2).
27. Especially in the booklet "L'Ascesi Mistica e la Meditazione sul Cuore" (Palamidessi 1985–88: III 41–69), and in Palamidessi (1975).
28. Steiner (1910) is a major source for Palamidessi here. Palamidessi could also know, however, the studies of Alice Bailey and Edgar Cayce on the subtle bodies and their colours (see Bailey 1942; Cayce 1945). We should probably add to these references the classics of twentieth-century chromotherapy by theosophist Roland T. Hunt and Corine Heline as well as the seminal 1857 volume of Frédéric Portal (see Hunt 1940; Heline 1943; Portal 1857).
29. On this point, see the French Orthodox theologian Olivier Clément: "The Fathers have laid great emphasis on the educational value of the icon … Yet the value of the icon is not only educational, but also mysteric ["*La valeur de l'icône n'est pas seulement pédagogique, elle est* mystérique"]. The divine grace is in the icon. This is the most essential, the most mysterious point of its theology: the resemblance to the prototype and its "name" make the objective holiness of the image" (Clément 2002: 101).
30. Palamidessi cites, for example, texts on extra-sensory perception like Pagenstecher (1946).
31. See on this point Vasoli (2010) and Brach (2010).

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CHAPTER 7

SAVITRI DEVI, MIGUEL SERRANO AND THE GLOBAL PHENOMENON OF ESOTERIC HITLERISM

Arthur Versluis

The last third of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century saw a significant increase in syncretic, cross-cultural, hybrid forms of esotericism. In what follows, we will consider several exemplars of a global form of esotericism that combines Hinduism, European paganism and Western esotericism with a religion of esoteric Hitlerism in order to create a strikingly new and, for many people, shocking approach to history. Here, Hitler is regarded not as a villain but as an avatar, a divine being. In this neo-esoteric religion, to defer to William Blake, "thou read'st black where I read white".[1] In what follows, we will outline the history of the main figures in esoteric Hitlerism, Savitri Devi and Miguel Serrano, and consider the global significance of these figures for the study of what we will term "neo-esotericism".

There is, of course, a long history of groups and individuals that reverse conventional values. Here we might recall the emergence, in the latter half of the twentieth century, of magical groups and individuals that took as their own the "unspeakable horrors" of the fiction of H. P. Lovecraft (1890–1937). In his gothic fiction, Lovecraft created what has become known as the "Cthulhu mythos", which includes a mythical book – the dreaded *Necronomicon* of Abdul Alhazred – and a mythos of terrifying "ancient ones", entities from beyond the depths of space and time that, far from being beneficent towards humanity, or even neutral, generate horror and even insanity in those who come into contact with them, or who even leaf through the pages of the *Necronomicon*.

That Lovecraft's fiction inspired believers – practitioners in its fictional tradition – is without question. There is a copious body of primary literature available celebrating the Cthulhu mythos, which has been incorporated into some magical practices and orders, and there can be no doubt there are some who find quite attractive the notion of invoking the nameless and terrifying ancient

ones from the depths of cosmic alienation.[2] Some may be inclined to poke fun at this phenomenon, but it represents nonetheless the very modern impulse to violate taboos, to shock, to embrace what is completely *outré* in conventional or mainstream societies, and thus to mark oneself as *truly* avant-garde. And what, after all, could be more avant-garde than dressing in black and invoking mind-destroying terror from beyond the depths? Lovecraft is a classic example of someone who created a fictional narrative that was subsequently literalized by others in ways that he probably would not have imagined.

But in what follows, we are not seeing a fictional narrative literalized so much as the creation of a new narrative that is intended, by its exponents, to be taken as entirely and thoroughly real; as, indeed, nothing less than the key to history. Since one cannot call such an interpretation ordinary history, we will use the term "counter-narrative". These counter-narratives, although they present themselves as having historical veracity, in fact bear a special kind of relationship to conventional history by virtue of the magnitude of their claims. Once one accepts the "key" that they present, then history is transformed – in these particular cases, the "key" being that Hitler is to be understood as an avatar and initiator into secret knowledge.

One could argue that despite the rather startling claims of Savitri Devi and, even more, of Miguel Serrano, esoteric Hitlerism is only an extension of Western esotericism into a deliberately shocking form. But, I would argue, this phenomenon of esoteric Hitlerism is a real departure from earlier forms of Western esotericism. Much more than earlier phenomena like Rosicrucianism, or even than later magical currents in the early to mid-twentieth century, esoteric Hitlerism is a hybrid of Asian and Western forms of esotericism, and represents a new, much more global and syncretic form of esotericism. It is arguably a variant of left-hand Tantrism grafted to pre-existing Western magical currents, and as such it is, in the work of Serrano, a clear example of global syncretic neo-esotericism.[3]

But Serrano did not invent esoteric Hitlerism out of thin air. The rudiments preceded him. And so we begin with the first major exponent of esoteric Hitlerism, Savitri Devi.

SAVITRI DEVI

Our story begins with a young, fiercely independent woman named Maximiani Portas (1904–82), born in Lyons, France. Highly intelligent, she was also wilful from an early age. She won a bicycle as a prize in an essay competition in 1920, but when she learned that the subject of the competition, Pasteur, had experimented on animals, she gave the bicycle back. By 1928, she had an MA in philosophy, and by 1932, she had an MSc in chemistry. In 1936, she received her PhD in the philosophy of science, but by this time she had begun her pilgrimage

to India, where she met luminaries like Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) and Mohandas Gandhi (1869–1948). All of this would ordinarily establish her as an admirable personage, but during the same time she became known as an advocate for a religious perspective that, for most people, comes as quite a shock. For Portas, who took the name "Savitri Devi", became a public advocate for what can only be termed "esoteric Hitlerism".

As Savitri Devi, she lived in India up to and during the Second World War, where she developed a strong faith in the enduring value of Hinduism, which she compared to ancient Greece. In *A Warning to the Hindus*, she wrote at length about how India had preserved ancient Aryan paganism, whereas it had died out in the West. In her view, India remained "the last great country of Aryan civilization" (Devi 1939: 34–5). From this basis – her conviction of the essential interconnection between European and Indian paganism – she developed a concurrent unshakeable belief in the rightness of the German cause under Adolf Hitler, whom she saw as inaugurating a restoration of Indo-European Aryan paganism over monotheist errors. Indeed, she came to see Hitler as in fact a divine avatar, come to inaugurate a new solar order in the world (see Goodrick-Clarke 1998: 92–3). She expanded her philosophy of esoteric Hitlerism during a later, post-war stay in Europe, where she wrote *The Lightning and the Sun* (1958).

In *The Lightning and the Sun*, she outlines her esoteric perspective in detail. She introduces the Hindu doctrine of *yugas*, or time-cycles, and the idea that there are golden, silver, bronze and iron ages, our own being the latter. She then asserts that, in this context of time-cycles, there are "Men in Time" (those who belong to and further the iron age or Kali Yuga), "Men Above Time", whose inner lives belong to the golden age, and "Men Against Time", meaning those who, as heroes, work against the destructive forces of the Kali Yuga to violently bring about a new golden age. The most important "Man Against Time" was, of course, Hitler, whose ascetic life and concern for animals marked him, for her, as a spiritual being, and whose doctrines were those of an avatar meant to restore Indo-European civilization and inaugurate a new era (see Goodrick-Clarke 1998: 109–25). In her view, the SS, with its black uniforms and death's-head symbolism, embodied an esoteric order meant to restore, through force, a proper cosmic order in tune with nature.

As one might imagine, once the full extent of her esoteric Hitlerism was made public, she became *persona non grata* in much of the post-war West, in particular in England and France, where she was periodically detained or refused entry. She became a kind of evangel for esoteric Hitlerism, but she also was regarded already then, and certainly after her death, as an important figure in the post-war National Socialist movement. She gave it a cosmological significance, a full cosmological narrative that completely reversed conventional narratives. For her, Hitler was not only a hero, but a divinity; and for her, his rejection of monotheism, and in particular Judaism, marked his revival of

ancient European traditions and the instauration of a new world order and a new *yuga* or time-cycle. It is as startling and brash a reversal of convention as one could imagine.

Savitri Devi died in England in 1982, but her work remains available, and in fact has a strong and continuing presence online. The most important subsequent figure in this *outré* religious tradition of esoteric Hitlerism, though, is her successor, Miguel Serrano.

MIGUEL SERRANO

After Savitri Devi, the most important figure in esoteric Hitlerism is Miguel Serrano (1917–2009), who is best known in the Anglophone world for his literary fiction and for his reminiscences concerning Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) and Herman Hesse (1877–1962) (Serrano 1966). Serrano was a Chilean diplomat for decades – ambassador to Austria, to India and elsewhere. Readers with an interest in initiatory literature were drawn to his esoteric fiction, widely published in the 1970s and 1980s. Works like *The Ultimate Flower* (1983), an initiatory novel featuring a spiritual Master and his circle in the tradition of Novalis (1772–1801), which joins Chilean/Andes references to European esotericism; or his reminiscences of his spiritual quest in Asia, entitled *The Serpent of Paradise: The Story of an Indian Pilgrimage* (1974); or his later works in English, like *El/Ella: Book of Magic Love* (1972) and *Nos: Book of the Resurrection* (1984) – these books were published by Routledge Kegan Paul in London and Harper & Row in New York, well-known publishing houses, and they reached a fairly broad literary–intellectual audience in the Anglophone world.

The last of these publications, *Nos*, began to introduce themes in Serrano's work that only become explicable within a larger context. *Nos* begins with a peculiar image or diagram of a human being, showing *chakras*, or energy centres in the body; at the top is north, at the bottom south. North is associated with the head, and with Thule, and the centre directly above the head is labelled "black hole", and "void". Above this is "Elella", and "Elael", and "Nos", "ultimate resurrection". The significance of all of these will become clear in a moment. For now, we may note that all of these and many other topics here introduced form Serrano's much larger esoteric system, which includes both cosmology and metaphysics.

Nos and *El/Ella* resemble in some respects the fiction of Herman Hesse, or perhaps to a lesser extent that of Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986); they seem like elegant literary parables. But in fact they presented, in a more or less palatable form, a central aspect of Serrano's esoteric Hitlerism, which is a kind of left-hand Tantrism. Central to all of Serrano's subsequent works is the idea of male–female union and the fulfilment of man through this inner union. There are admittedly hints of Serrano's full system in his literary works, as when he

writes that the Master teaches some people are less than human, mere "slaves of Atlantis", while others preserve "blood memory" of what or who they really are (Serrano 1984a: 61). But critics might be somewhat excused if they did not see the full extent of Serrano's counter-narrative from these literary works alone.

A more complete sense of Serrano's counter-narrative became visible in his trilogy of esoteric Hitlerism that commenced with the 1978 publication of his book *El Cordón Dorado*, or *The Golden Thread*.[4] This book has as its preliminary illustration a photograph of Hitler's extended hand, with Serrano's commentary in which he asserts that the hand is a "cosmic transmitter" of power, in effect the means of ending the *Kali Yuga* and beginning the millennial Golden Age. Serrano tells us that the Master who plays a role in his earlier books told his circle "Hitler is an initiate, able to communicate on the astral" (Serrano 1978: 18). In this book, Serrano commences his public explication of what he terms "esoteric Hitlerism".

Serrano's esoteric Hitlerism is among the most extensive and complex of historical counter-narratives. One must recall that Serrano was both very widely travelled and erudite, particularly in both Western and Eastern forms of esotericism, and one sees this in the extent of the esoteric system that he outlines in his later books. Serrano knew Julius Evola (1898–1974), and one can see Evola's influence, and with him that of traditionalism, in particular René Guénon (1886–1951), in these works that belong to the tradition of universalist history. For Serrano drew together virtually the full gamut of esoteric traditions, synthesizing them into a single narrative. It would be an achievement more widely recognized, were it not centred on the figure of Adolf Hitler, whom Serrano sees as the ultimate avatar.

Virtually every such counter-narrative and esoteric symbol or reference of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries is roped in here somewhere: Atlantis, UFOs, Tantrism, hidden realms like Shambhala and Agarthi, telepathy, the lore of Nazi occultism, astrology, rune magic … the list is more than extensive – it is virtually exhaustive. Eventually it becomes clear to the reader that Serrano seems to intend these books on esoteric Hitlerism to be his *magnum opus*, inaugurating the mythological framework for nothing less than a full esoteric religion centred on Hitler, the aim of which is the end of the Iron Age or the *Kali Yuga*, and the beginning of a new Golden Age.

One might be inclined to dismiss Serrano and his work out of hand, given the kinds of claims he makes in these works. He asserts, for instance, early in *The Golden Thread* (1978), that in his visits to Berchtesgaden, he realized that the "telluric vibration" of Hitler's mountain fastness connected the Alps with the Himalayas of Tibet, and that furthermore, the refuge of Hitler was linked with the "Lhasa of the Dalai Lama [and] with Shambhala/Kambala" (Serrano 1978: 24). It is, he continues, also linked with the Cathar mountain of Montsegur, and with Gralsberg, or the Grail Castle. These are all linkages that Serrano explores in much greater detail as his sprawling works unfold. One should keep

in mind that Serrano is creating not a series of disconnected assertions, but a mythological whole, for by linking all of these other mythological and legendary traditions together, he seeks to create a Hitlerian metanarrative.

In creating such a metanarrative, Serrano's esotericism is of the universalist, perennialist line that stretches from Helena Blavatsky (1831–91), René Guénon, and Julius Evola – it draws on all major world religious traditions, from a kind of remote perch. Although Serrano is indebted to and refers to these earlier seminal figures, following what we may term an associative methodology (as we see in the conflation of Berchtesgaden, Lhasa, Shambhala and Montsegur) he adds and develops an essentially new mythology as well.

Here I will sketch the general outlines of this new mythology. The starting point of esoteric Hitlerism in some respects is the end of the Second World War, for Hitler is said by Serrano not to have died by suicide, but rather, along with Eva Braun (whose name reflects the primordial couple Adam and Eve), he is said to continue to exist in an "interior land", "Agartha" or "Shambhala" (Serrano 1978: 26–8). Hitler is said to have been "rejuvenated". Furthermore, he continues, Hitler can be contacted astrally – to do so is to link with the Hyperborean realm of *superhombres* (supermen), which is in turn allied with the symbolisms of Thule, of the Black Sun, and of the Green Ray (Serrano 1978: 62). Hitler and his SS actually generated an initiation into these esoteric symbols and their meaning, their goal having the ultimate esoteric purpose represented symbolically by the leftward-turning Swastika: that is, the "involution of the *Kali Yuga*" or ending of the final age in the world cycle, so that a new Golden Age could begin (the esoteric meaning of the "Third Reich").

There is more, much more. To construct this counter-narrative, Serrano spends a great deal of time reviewing the past in a new light. Serrano's re-envisioning of history is still quite sweeping, even for this genre. He offers a grand metanarrative in which the entire history of the West is represented as a struggle or battle between those who sought to transcend the world, like the Cathars, and those who were effectively the prisoners or captives of the false and worldly god, the Demiurge, identified with Jehovah, with the Old Testament and with the Jews.[5] Hitler thus represents an avatar, an instrument in this battle, and this, Serrano believes, explains Hitler's antipathy toward the Jews. Serrano does not hesitate to invoke the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, or to deny that millions of Jews were killed by the Nazi regime (Serrano 1978: 204 ff., 220 ff.). Nor does Serrano shirk at dedicating his work to the Morning Star, Venus, identified also with Lucifer.

By now, although we have only begun to touch on the outlines of Serrano's somewhat chaotic narrative, we begin to understand the extent to which he and his work could be designated the ultimate form of the "return of the repressed". Serrano has gone much further than those, for instance, who would establish a cult of Cthulhu based on Lovecraft. At the end of the twentieth century, there was arguably no set of archetypes more universally maligned and rejected than

those associated with Nazism and Adolf Hitler, yet Serrano seeks to "reverse" history and make Hitler the hero of his narrative (literally) – indeed, to make Nazism represent virtually the culmination of Eastern and Western religion alike, and to make of Hitler the mythic figure incarnated who can, Serrano thinks, bring about the yearned-for Golden Age.

And there is still more. Serrano's earlier works, *El/Ella* and *Nos*, introduced his ideas concerning the integration of male and female within oneself through what Serrano termed "magic love", which entails the realization of an androgynous inner union that he terms also the "resurrection". These sexual/magical themes are continued as part of the larger schema of esoteric Hitlerism, which he asserts is explicitly Tantric (Serrano 1978: 202–4). We may recall that Serrano served for years as Chile's ambassador to India, and that he recounts his esoteric journeys in India in *The Serpent of Paradise*.

While there are explicitly Luciferian themes in Serrano's work, one might wonder whether his flamboyant use of all the rejected "others" in late-twentieth-century modernity – Hitler, Nazism, sex magic, a "Black Order" dedicated to a "Black Sun", Luciferism and so forth – corresponds to a kind of Tantrism; that is, to an embrace of "dark gods" as ultimately part of a comprehensive religion in the same way that in India one finds an embrace of the bloodthirsty goddess Kali, for example, or that in Tibetan Buddhism one finds deities adorned with necklaces of skulls and bloody daggers that are brought into religious liturgies and pantheons, so that the "excluded other" is incorporated into the religious tradition as a whole.

In any case, the metahistorical scope of Serrano's "esoteric Hitlerism" becomes clearest in the third volume of his series, *Manú, "Por El Hombre Que Vendrá"* (*Manú: For the Man To Come*, 1991), the most explicitly cosmological of the Hitler Trilogy because of its focus on Greek and Hindu traditions concerning time-cycles. There is, here, an imagined entelechy, which in Serrano's case begins with an apocryphal story about Hitler in the bunker near the end of the war. An SS man asks him what they will fight for if Hitler disappears, and Hitler replies that they will fight for "el hombre que vendrá", that is, for the man who will come, the man of the future, which Serrano helpfully glosses as "Manú".

Manú, Serrano writes, is a divinity-man and primordial legislator that initiates a "new cycle of manifestation" (Serrano 1991: 194). He is, in other words, the "ultimate avatar", who puts an end to the cycle of eternal return and to the forces of the demiurge. Manú means the restoration of the man of the god Wotan, the holder of the sword Excalibur, the man of the Führer, and the reintegration of primordial man and woman, which Serrano terms "Elella", and/or "Ellael" (*ibid*.: 195). He inaugurates a new kalpa, yuga or manvantara, that is, a new cycle of time. And at the centre of this set of temporal mysteries is "the lost continent of Mu, a part of Lemuria, submerged in the Pacific Ocean" (*ibid*.: 197). Mu is linked to Serrano's native Chile, which is seen as "the ultimate refuge of the initiation of the Manu-Tara", "refuge of esoteric Hitlerism" (*ibid*.).

At this point, it is worth noting that Serrano's esoteric Hitlerism bears striking resemblances to Blavatsky's "secret doctrine". Here we see the synthesis of numerous world religious traditions into a single code, we see a narrative of "Mu" and of "Lemuria", which derive from Blavatsky's own emphases on them, and we see the characteristic Blavatskyan concentration on temporal cycles as well as the expectation of an apocalypse and a coming new time-cycle, that is, the end of the *Kali Yuga* and the inception of a new golden age. Truth be told, Serrano's primary innovations here are these: he sees Hitler as prefiguring and representing primordial man, and he sees Chile as playing an important role in esoteric Hitlerism – which of course it in fact does in circular fashion, since Serrano is Chilean.

Serrano sees Chile in particular, and South America in general, as playing a central role in a counter-narrative based on the idea that Hitler was an avatar or messianic figure who heroically opposed the "robotic" "slaves" of the demiurge, Jehovah, God of the Jews (see Serrano 1986: 31). For Serrano, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is an authentic document reflecting the agenda of those who serve the demiurge and who seek to dominate the world via a tightening financial network. An anti-Jewish perspective thus is woven into a larger anthropological–mythological narrative in the same way as are elements of Hinduism and Aryanism.

Serrano's esoteric Hitlerism is a synthetic construction in exactly the same way as Blavatsky's "secret doctrine"; it is assembled out of particular world religious traditions, notably in Serrano's case Hinduism and Norse religion, and it is deliberately shocking to Jewish and Christian sensibilities. Its anti-Jewish spirit is obvious, and as to Christianity, it foregrounds Lucifer and the Morning Star, Venus (Serrano 1986: 98; 1984b: 643). Here we might be reminded that it was Blavatsky who also chose to foreground Lucifer in relation to the etymological meaning of the word, "light-bringer". My point here is that just as Blavatsky's reinvention of Lucifer was shocking in the Victorian era, so too Serrano's esoteric Hitlerism is even more so a century later.

It is also worth noting that there are more than a few indications in Serrano's work that there is a magical order and there are magical practices built into it. The most obvious evidence for this is Serrano's own remarks concerning his initiation into the Thule Society in Chile in the 1940s, as well as his testimony concerning the esoteric teacher who revealed to him the secret(s) of esoteric Hitlerism (Serrano 1978: 15–19). In addition, we should note the illustrations in Serrano's Hitler trilogy. The first book includes esoterically interpreted photographs of Hitler and of various Nazis; the second book introduces a few hand-drawn stylized images of, for instance, "Wotan-Lucifer"; but the third book in the series, *Manú*, includes a host of esoterically interpreted Runic hand-gestures that Serrano also terms *mudras*. Here we see an entire magical–astrological system of associations that, taken together, strongly suggests a magical order akin to, for instance, the German Fraternitas Saturni.[6]

Can we draw any larger conclusions from phenomena like the absorption of the Lovecraftian Cthulhu mythos into various magical groups or systems by people who take Cthulhu or Hitler seriously as something to be invoked? The sinister has perennial fascination and power, and Nazism participates in this by design – after all, the Nazi swastika did turn to the left, a fact that Serrano makes much of. There is quite evidently a certain *frisson* that comes from embracing and exalting the excluded, the other, that which the rest of society detests and abhors. Without doubt, phenomena like Cthulhuism, or Satanism, or esoteric Hitlerism, all exist precisely because of this negative or sinister charge.

But there is more to it. For there is implicit in these also a drive for what we may term world-erasure. Such a drive for world-erasure is there in apocalyptic Christianity – we see this in the works of figures like the American evangelical John Hagee. It is certainly also present in this phenomenon of esoteric Hitlerism. In it, we see a very extreme form of apocalypticism that, although it may seem to be based in anti-Judaism and anti-Christianity, in fact participates in a messianic cult that is deeply indebted to both, as also to messianic and apocalyptic Islam. Indeed, Serrano dedicates *El Cordón Dorado* to Rudolf Hess (1894–1987), whom he terms an *Imam* of esoteric Hitlerism. Effectively, esoteric Hitlerism can be described as a kind of inverted extension of apocalypticism that is indebted to all three branches of monotheism, even as it rejects monotheism.

A well-known analyst of Hitler and of National Socialism, George Mosse, emphasized the mythological dimensions of Nazism. In an interview with Michael Ledeen – who was later to be an instrumental adviser to the Bush Jr administration concerning its unilateral militarism – Mosse said that:

> Hitler's myths were very strong, but Hitler's success was due to the fact that while his myth – of race, and let us say of the occult, in which he also believed – was detached from reality and gave him his goal, he also had a very strong sense of the objective reality, that is to say he had a profound sense of the political and social forces of his day, of political timing and tactics, and this made reaching the goal possible.
>
> (Mosse & Ledeen 1978: 30)

Although some might want to dismiss Serrano's esoteric Hitlerism as flat-out crazy, it does represent a revivification and intensification of the mythological elements in National Socialism. While this new mythology lacked a practical application through the end of the twentieth century, the mythology itself is necessary prior to any such application. History suggests that historical counter-narratives, however outlandish they might seem, nonetheless do sometimes form the basis for action in the world. We should not dismiss that possibility out of hand.

Although we have looked here most closely at Serrano, we must note that he is not the only example of this tendency. Of course Serrano's own work is a synthesis of previous authors' works, notably Savitri Devi and Julius Evola, and also various others. But there are also independent parallels to Serrano's esoteric Hitlerism, the most noteworthy of which is the early-twenty-first-century Russian author and political adviser (one is almost tempted to say Rasputin), Aleksandr Dugin (b. 1962).[7] Dugin is certainly an interesting figure in his own right, as a theoretician of a projected "Eurasian" empire who achieved some official recognition and authority as well. Here I will only note that what I have seen in English of and about Dugin's works, including on his own and related websites, strongly suggest a sinister, that is, explicitly "left-hand" apocalypse-embracing parahistorical counter-narrative with at least some similarities to Serrano's esoteric Hitlerism.[8] That Dugin is said to have many connections to Russian political, military and espionage leaderships only lends credence to the sense that his must be a somewhat convincing counter-narrative for those who dream of Russian hegemony, perhaps with a satisfying apocalypse as a chaser.

In a way, those who welcome the "dark side" are the natural complement called into being by apocalyptic rhetoric itself. If Christian millennialists look forward to a bloody literal battle over Jerusalem, well, it should hardly be surprising that someone else might happen upon the notion that the "other side" is, for them, the more attractive of the two. After all, a projected apocalyptic battle automatically generates its own mythological complementary opposites, does it not? Little shock, then, that there appear some who argue that the "left hand" is doing the work of God just as much and perhaps even more than those on the "right hand". They embrace the "dark side" and so distinguish themselves from the herd of ordinary mortals.

It is worth asking in what respects esoteric Hitlerism is related more broadly to Western variants of tantrism.[9] Jeffrey Kripal (2007a, b) has argued that the 1960s counterculture represented a kind of Westernized tantrism, and further that left-hand Tantra was and is provocative, even shocking, not only in some of its Western adaptations, but also in Indian cultural contexts precisely because it incorporates what is ritually excluded or profane. Certainly, if one thinks of esoteric Hitlerism in the broader context of Western adaptations of tantrism (as Serrano's work effectively compels us to do), then it may not be correct to speak of it as "the return of the repressed", because in fact it is more like one manifestation among many of a much more widespread religious phenomenon in which the interdicted or "profane" is in some sense yoked to a broader religious symbolism and tradition. It is quite a departure for most people to think of esoteric Hitlerism in terms of comparative religion, but such a perspective may help us to understand it in new ways.

In any event, Serrano was not the first of this type, and clearly he will not be the last. But at this point, we turn to some implications of Serrano's neo-esotericism.

NEO-ESOTERICISM AND GLOBALISM

The term "neo-esotericism" has been applied primarily by scholars discussing new religions in Brazil or, more broadly, in South America.[10] The reason they deploy this term is that, just as there is clearly a difference between paganism in ancient Greece and contemporary neo-paganism, so too there is a distinction between Western esotericism as we see it in a more or less monological current like, say, Christian theosophy in seventeenth-century England, and the global, hybrid forms of esotericism that we see emerging in Brazil during the late twentieth century. In what follows, I will outline some aspects of what I mean in this context by "neo-esotericism", and then consider how esoteric Hitlerism fits this typology.

Neo-esotericism in Brazil is characterized by a pot-pourri of elements, including some aspects of Western esotericism to be sure, but also New Age, Asian and indigenous South American traditions, so that, for instance, feng shui might be joined with geomancy and ideas drawn from acupuncture, but mingled in turn with advice drawn from the works of Aleister Crowley (1875–1947) or from the Golden Dawn, or from Chaos magic. What specialists in Brazilian religion have found, in other words, is a strikingly global and creative synthesis of different religious terms, ideas and currents taken from around the world and mingled in new, hybridic religious forms. This is largely, though not by any means exclusively, an urban phenomenon.

Some characteristics of neo-esotericism include: (a) hybridity: that is, mingling European and Asian esoteric religions; (b) expecting a new age or era; (c) incorporating science or quasi-science, for instance, paranormal research or UFOs / aliens into the mythology; (d) creating new mythologies out of earlier elements with new ones added; (e) offering a "key" to a new understanding of history; (f) seeking to unify science and religion in a new synthesis; seeking scientific legitimization; (g) incorporating new forms of technology into the religious mythology; (h) looking toward a new era that will transform human life, but not via conventional politics. This is not a comprehensive so much as an indicative list, pointing towards tendencies that help us to recognize a neo-esoteric movement. Certainly, "neo-esoteric" does describe Serrano's (Chilean) form of esoteric Hitlerism.

The neo-esoteric movement's essential characteristics, then, are its hybridity and its creativity: it weaves together disparate global elements in ways that did not and could not have existed before global communication was possible. Serrano exemplifies these tendencies: he is in fact a very sophisticated exemplar of neo-esoteric religion. He mingles Asian and European traditions with South American ones; he looks toward a new era; he incorporates para-scientific themes in his work; he creates new mythologies, offers a key to understanding the past, and looks towards the transcendence of conventional political polarities in the cosmic figure of Hitler. Above all, his

work is functionally esoteric: that is, it offers initiatic knowledge of how the world "really" is.

We can only expect neo-esotericism to develop, perhaps even accelerate its creative hybridity in combining multiple global religious currents and ideas into new and exotic forms. Online videos, websites and social networking all act to bring together people and ideas from around the globe, irrespective of place. While a figure like Serrano seems alien, even bizarre at first with his amalgams of world religious traditions into esoteric Hitlerism in a Chilean setting, in fact he should be seen as characteristic of what is undoubtedly a continuing global phenomenon of neo-esotericism. One finds esoteric Hitlerism popping up here and there in unexpected places, but it is by no means the last or only form of neo-esotericism, and it will be interesting indeed to see what new forms of neo-esotericism emerge in years to come.[11]

NOTES

1. William Blake, "The Everlasting Gospel", line 14.
2. There has been some scholarship devoted to Cthulhu and related themes in contemporary magic. See Woodman (2004), for instance.
3. The term "left-hand Tantrism" typically describes those who practise transgressive rituals, whereas "right-hand Tantrism" typically refers to those who regard such transgressions as symbolic. For a history of the hybridization of left-hand Tantra and Western esotericism, see Urban (2006).
4. Sometimes translated as "The Golden Band" or "The Golden Ribbon".
5. On the Cathars, see for example Serrano (1978: 109, 189); on the demiurge, see Serrano (1984b: 181 ff., 248 ff.).
6. The Fraternitas Saturni are said to practise sexual magic, and are Nietzschean in philosophy. See Hans Thomas Hakl's Chapter 3 in this volume.
7. On Dugin, see Shekhovstov and Umland (2012). See also Sedgwick (2004).
8. Regarding Dugin, see his website, www.arctogaia.com. See also Laruelle (n.d.) and Umland (2004), as well as Shekhovstov and Umland (2012). Not all writing on Dugin seems to acknowledge the apocalypticism of the writings available on his website and elsewhere in his publications.
9. The term "tantrism" in lower case conventionally distinguishes informal Western variants from more "official" forms of Tantra.
10. See Dawson (2007: 39), at the beginning of a chapter titled "Neo-esoteric Religiosity". Dawson is drawing from Magnani (1999). See also, for instance, Siqueria (2003), or, in English, Carpenter (1999). The concept of neo-esotericism is clearly useful to understanding the "esotericization" of Latin American religions.
11. See, for instance, Alex Kurtagic, *Mister* (2009), a novel that incorporates aspects of esoteric Hitlerism.

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CHAPTER 8

SEXUAL MAGIC AND GNOSIS IN COLOMBIA

Tracing the influence of G. I. Gurdjieff on Samael Aun Weor

PierLuigi Zoccatelli

TRACING THE POSTERITY OF THE "FOREST PHILOSOPHERS"

This chapter purports to be the first enquiry into the previously uninvestigated influence of the ideas of the Caucasian esoteric thinker George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (1866–1949), the creator of what many years ago was defined as the "forest school" (Sharp 1923), on the founder of a specific twentieth-century Gnostic movement, Samael Aun Weor (1917–77).[1] We have taken up this task for three main reasons.

First, both esoteric thinkers under consideration gave rise to an extremely complex genealogy of groups and movements, often in varying degree of conflict with each other, widespread around the globe, with thousands (if not tens of thousands) of followers, to such an extent that we might apply to them the term "hypertrophy of filiation", used by sociologist Massimo Introvigne (1999) in studying the posterity of another leading figure in the contemporary esoteric-occultist milieu, Giuliano Kremmerz (Ciro Formisano, 1861–1930). In this regard, although there are numerous studies of the filiation and posterity spawned by Gurdjieff's teaching (Rawlinson 1997: 282–313; Wellbeloved 2003: 223–54), no such studies of Samael Aun Weor exist. Indeed, no studies of any kind exist regarding him, except for two essays, which we have produced in recent years (Zoccatelli 2000, 2004). It bears underlining here that this reveals how vast a field remains to be explored in the realm of contemporary esotericism. Within the domain of sociography, we would like to mention here that in summer 2000, while doing field investigation on the "Weorite galaxy" in Italy, we participated in a workshop of several days organized by one of the dozens of "Weorite" movements (which in this particular case is unpopular with the

other movements) together with approximately one thousand people who had come from all over Italy.

Second, the hermeneutic and sociological cipher defined by American scholar Jane Williams-Hogan (1997) as "the charisma of the book" may be applied to both personalities, as it may indeed to most "classical" authors of modern and contemporary esotericism. This is a peculiar yet universal phenomenon which, focusing attention on a deeper level of reality and performing a unifying function by speaking to people beyond barriers of their culture of origin or personal culture, invites individuals to confront their own life and needs, and to find an answer addressed specifically to them in a book. As far as Gurdjieff is concerned, it is well known that he founded and disseminated his teaching also through his writings (but not only, or especially through them), an opus of sizable magnitude, and that the "charisma of the book" engendered by his work is contained within the impressive bibliographic production penned by his pupils (Driscoll 1985, 2004). In the case of Samael Aun Weor, the teaching transmitted to his pupils also derives from a large quantity of written matter (though it is a matter of controversy whether he wrote forty-nine or seventy books), and, as in the case of Gurdjieff, also entails an oral transmission of more "internal" theoretical and practical teachings.

Third, considering the enormously important role played by Gurdjieff in the panorama of contemporary esotericism, the analysis of Gurdjieff's influence on Samael Aun Weor throws into relief one aspect of Gurdjieff's teaching that is not generally held to be either at the centre or on the fringes of the "self-realizing" practices performed by the pupils of the "forest school", or of their theoretical preoccupations, but which, transplanted to Samael Aun Weor's "Gnostic movement", assumed an absolutely central role, although its source was never disclosed. Here we will anticipate that we are referring to the practice of sexual magic which is the key to the whole Weorite system and which derives from an almost literal adaptation of Gurdjieff's ideas.

At this point, we are obliged to clarify a few things, since we are perfectly aware that in the teaching of the Greek–Armenian born in 1866 in Alexandropol (today Gyumri in present-day Armenia), the theme of "sexual magic" or " internal alchemy", or however one prefers to call it, is not given high priority. Yet that is only how things appear to be. Indeed, a more thorough enquiry into the Weorite opus and the attempt to make an overall comparison of it with Gurdjieff's ideas requires that we hypothesize that this issue was not extraneous to the "heart" of the Fourth Way. Rather it was substantially more central to Gurdjieff's teaching than has heretofore been evinced. If this should indeed be true, in our view, a deeper investigation of the teaching of George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff would be warranted.

As we will see later in this chapter, the relationship of these two teachings finds its focal point in the shared doctrine of "sexuality as an eminent form of relationship with the transcendent", and the contact between the two schools,

given the influence exerted by Gurdjieff on Weor, constitutes the first "discovery" of the research documented here. A second perhaps even more important "discovery" of this study, if we may be allowed a timid tone of emphasis, is the observation that it is possible to consider Gurdjieff's work *also* from the perspective of doctrines concerning the transmutation of being through the use of sexual energy. The conceptual coordinates regarding this aspect of the Gurdjieff "Work" have never been adequately emphasized in the extensive "Gurdjieff bibliography", except in a fragmentary and evasive manner (to such an extent that they have not been taken into consideration by interpretative studies), which we will discuss in due time, as though sexual magic was of no importance to Gurdjieff's thought.

From these considerations further reflections and questions arise which the limits we have imposed on this chapter regarding Gurdjieff's influence on Weor do not allow us to investigate more deeply, but we can give a general outline of them. As we have suggested, in gleaning the traces of "inner alchemy" in Gurdjieff's teaching, it would seem that in making use of this material Weor did less violence to Gurdjieff's ideas than we might first suppose. Here another question emerges which we present in rhetorical form. Should we then conclude that Weor was the only one who took note of this aspect of Gurdjieff's teaching, while most of his more accredited pupils refrained from giving it the emphasis it deserved? Or do the teachings regarding inner alchemy emanating directly from Gurdjieff continue to gush through the streams of Gurdjieffian filiations without ever being rendered public (differently from other movements in which this aspect may not be the most important but is treated more explicitly)? And hence, what role is played in Gurdjieff's teaching and in the Gurdjieff milieu by the theme of "sexuality as the eminent form of relationship with the transcendent"?

A first answer to these questions may be found in a passage appearing in *Gurdjieff: Making a New World*, by John G. Bennett (1897–1974), famous British pupil of Gurdjieff, in which he writes:

> It is, of course, clear from the chapter "Purgatory" of *Beelzebub's Tales* that Gurdjieff regards the sex energy, there called *exioehary* as the main source of nourishment for the higher bodies of man. His teaching about the transformation of the sexual energy is very personal and he was emphatic that there are no general rules that can be given.
>
> (Bennett 1973: 233)

We will return to the reception of this subject in the Gurdjieff milieu later. But we should anticipate here that in the complex doctrinal and cosmological overview presented in "The Holy Planet Purgatory" chapter in *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* – where readers unfamiliar with the author's language might find themselves baffled by notions such as "the Choot-God-litanical

period", "the fifth Stopinder Harnel Aoot of the law of Heptaparaparshinokh" and "the mechano-coinciding Mdnel-In" – Gurdjieff touches upon the theme of sacred cosmic substances, including *being exioehary* (i.e. "sperm" and the "sum of the substances which arise in beings of the female sex"; Gurdjieff 1976: II, 384) and their manipulation within the framework of a wider reference to the "cosmic crystallizations which are formed in the presences of Tetartocosmoses" among which "exioehary" is listed among the six "independent arisings" (*ibid*.: 353).

NOTES ON THE "WORK"

This is not the place to present biographical information concerning Gurdjieff, subject of an impressive literary production of quite recent vintage, the many volumes of which taken as a whole offer a comprehensive "state of the art" (Webb 1980; Moore 1991). But given the task we have chosen here, it will be useful to sketch a basic outline of the teaching that combines spirituality, philosophy, cosmology and a complete model of the human being, all bound together in a unified system with an esoteric background. We will do this by following the synthesis of a chapter dealing with Gurdjieff drawn from an encyclopaedic project which we have co-directed (Introvigne & Zoccatelli 2013: 601–9).

The Gurdjieff Work addresses personal evolution, social transformation and, ultimately, a transformation on the cosmic scale. The expression "Work" refers to the effort required in order for the pupil to wake up to the meaning of human existence. The fruits of this "Work", which begins as an inner work on oneself, must ultimately transform the pupil's daily life. The "Work" is a form of oral tradition and requires a "school" and "pupils" or "students" willing to submit to a master's guidance, without which inner transformation is deemed impossible. The human condition as it exists nowadays is far from its original truth and potential. In the modern world, many contradictory "I"s exist within a person, in competition with each other. This conflict makes unified thought and action impossible. Moreover, in every person two separate natures coexist which are unable to recognize each other: essence and personality. Freedom, conscious action and authentic will cannot exist in such a fragmentary state. What we call "action" is merely a mechanical and unconscious phenomenon. This common and everyday state is called "sleep" by Gurdjieff. Personal evolution is the awakening from the state of sleep and the passage from fragmentation to unity. The state of "sleep" not only deprives the person of freedom and responsibility, it also deeply distorts his relationship with the cosmos. Gurdjieff demands, at times brutally, that we take note of the disharmony and the illusions, which prevent us from seeing the reality of the actual human condition.

The "Work" slowly reveals how the entity of oneself that a person considered unitary, coherent and free is in reality a contradictory composite of thoughts,

emotional reactions and repetitive mechanisms of self-protection. Becoming aware of this state of confusion is the first step towards awakening. The second necessary step is to accept what has been seen. The first phases of the "Work" propose observation, verification and acceptance of the truth of the human condition through study, participation in group work and exercises, which involve focusing attention ("self-remembering"). The teaching of Gurdjieff is not organized around a doctrinal system, but rather around a method. He insists that everything must be called into question. By living in a perpetually critical way, the capacity for observation and attention become more finely honed, and the ideas taught by the "Work" find verification in daily life. Gurdjieff taught that his doctrines could not be transmitted in a univocal manner because each individual has an independent and unique path of development to follow, which must be taken into consideration. However, it is also true that – despite the risk of self-illusion – group work with others is indispensable to transformation. By working in a group, self-observation becomes more objective. Furthermore, some exercises are possible only in a group context.

Groups in the "Work" must also develop sincerity, inner strength and new capacities. Concretely speaking, the "Work" is based on methods of self-observation which have, among other things, the aim of teaching the practitioner to "remember himself". Observing how one thinks, acts and feels emotions reveals how the three centres of the human person – intellectual, emotional and moving – operate at three different speeds and are often in contradiction with each other. The "Work" exercises allow the practitioner to become aware of the relations between the centres and allow him to experience moments in which his mechanical nature is no longer dominant. These moments in which a person emerges from the state of "sleep" are ephemeral, but they gradually become linked one to another, offering a new possibility of integration.

Both music and physical movement could serve the "Work". Gurdjieff and Thomas de Hartmann (1885–1956) have left a vast musical corpus intended to transmit a practical teaching regarding the relationship linking vibration, the experience of sound, and awareness. Jeanne de Salzmann (1889–1990) in turn transmitted a large number of "sacred dances" or "movements" created by Gurdjieff on the basis of diverse traditions observed during his travels. The music and movements offer opportunities for study and "self-remembering", creating conditions in which it is easier for the pupil to observe the relationship between his body and the quality of his attention. Through the body different levels and qualities of energy may be experienced.

Gurdjieff describes higher states of personal evolution as difficult but not impossible to attain. Unlike other esoteric systems, Gurdjieff's system teaches its pupils to integrate what it defines as the two natures of human existence, one which tends towards evolution and the other which tends towards an involution – in order to reach an ideal realm located at the midpoint of these two natures. Only at this midpoint will it be possible to rediscover and nourish

the essence, that part of the human being that may reveal the aim of a person's life. As development continues, the awareness of responsibility also increases and the person may render service to others and to the great cosmic process of evolution. Gurdjieff places the "Work" within a complex cosmology. The aim of life is to transform energy consciously and to participate responsibly in a cosmic process and drama in which humanity has a role in the great chain of being. Individuals who do not attain this state of consciousness also contribute, but passively and involuntarily, by liberating energy which serves to fuel cosmic processes, becoming "food for the moon" (Ouspensky 1949: 57).

In more religious terms, some interpreters of Gurdjieff's thought have affirmed that here we find the idea, shared by other esoteric systems, that not everyone has an immortal soul, but only those who are able to construct one consciously through a laborious process which consists in the "harmonious development of man". "This is the crux of Gurdjieff's anthropology – Man is not by nature an immortal soul" (Bennett 1973: 245).

Since this question is so vital to the further development of our analysis, we mention here Thomas de Hartmann's remarks regarding this aspect of Gurdjieff's teaching.

> The gist, he said, is this: man on his present level of being does not possess an immortal, indestructible soul, but with certain work on himself he *can form* an immortal soul; then this newly formed soul-body will no longer be subordinate to the laws of the physical body and after the death of the physical body will continue to exist.
>
> (de Hartmann & de Hartmann 1992: 6)

Naturally there have been many attempts to identify the source of Gurdjieff's teachings, which would seem to be an unsolvable problem, or at least part of the Gurdjieff enigma (Bennett 1966), given that Gurdjieff's autobiography seems to be written in a deeply allegorical language, which characterizes its narration and the factuality of episodes recounted (Gurdjieff 1963). On the other hand, James Webb (1946–80) seems to have no doubts (Webb 1980: 533) that the point of departure for Gurdjieff's synthesis is to be found in *The Secret Doctrine* (Blavatsky 1888), the classic work by the founder of the Theosophical Society, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–91). This has further been emphasized by Sophia Wellbeloved (2003: 204–6), who locates the influence of Theosophy on Gurdjieff within the prevailing climate of place and time:

> When Gurdjieff began teaching in Russia c1912, his cosmological teaching was given in occult terms, the group meetings were held in secret, pupils could not relate what they learned to others outside the group. This was in accord with contemporary interests because the occult revival was strong in Russia, Theosophy and other Western

> Occult teachings were of great interest to the intelligentsia in general and Gurdjieff's pupils in particular. (Wellbeloved 2001)

JOURNEY TO COLOMBIA

It will be useful here to outline the main events in Samael Aun Weor's life in that they help shed light on his ideas.

Víctor Manuel Gómez Rodríguez was born in Santa Fe of Bogotà in Colombia, in 1917. After beginning his education in a Jesuit school, he abandoned his studies at the age of twelve, disillusioned by religion. At fourteen he became passionately interested in spiritualism, particularly in Allan Kardec (1804–69) and his successor Léon Denis (1846–1927). In 1933, he joined the Theosophical Society, but later withdrew to become a member of Arnoldo Krumm-Heller's (1876–1949) Fraternitas Rosicruciana Antiqua (Weor 1972: 26), which had begun to spread through South America in 1927. He is said to have personally received an episcopal consecration in the Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica deriving from Theodor Reuss (1855–1923), although this has been subject to debate and contestation (Introvigne 1993: 198).

Disappointed by his previous experiences, and after having devoted himself to the study of Eliphas Lévi (Alphonse-Louis Constant, 1810–75), Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) and Max Heindel (Carl Louis von Grasshoff, 1865–1919), he withdrew for a period of meditation, during which he discovered that in his previous lifetimes he had been an Egyptian priest, Julius Caesar, a member of a Tibetan order consisting of 201 monks who sustained mankind, and the equivalent of Jesus on the moon. To save mankind residing on the moon, he had been crucified and entrusted with preparing the coming of the "Fifth race root", according to the classic theosophical scheme elaborated by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. In any case, when Krumm-Heller died in 1949, Gomez after having assumed the initiatic name of Samael Aun Weor (the origins of which are partly obscure: "Samael" may be traced by to Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* in which "Samael is Satan"; Blavatsky 1976: II, 483), published his first book *El Matrimonio Perfecto de Kinder* (*The Perfect Matrimony*) and decided to open the gates of Gnosis to mankind and to found the Universal Christian Gnostic Church in Mexico City. Over the course of decades this was to assume other names, partly owing to the many branching-offs and scissions of the "Gnostic Movement".

After Samael Aur Weor's death (in Mexico City on 24 December 1977) a long battle ensued to determine his successor and today dozens of separate branches exist. Although these branches diverge not only concerning Weor's successor, but also in points of doctrine, they all share a veneration for the writings of Samael Aun Weor and also for his person as master Kalki Avatar of the Aquarian Age (the New Age which for Samael Aun Weor

began on 4 February 1962 between 2 and 3 pm; Weor s.d.n.l. 1960), Buddha Maitreya and Logos of the Planet Mars. His worthiness as an object of veneration further increased after 27 October 1954 when the "Spiritual Advent of Archangel Samael", a "Gnostic nativity" and "cosmic fact" occurred (or rather the final phase in the initiation of Victor Manuel Gomez who from that moment on incarnated Samael Aun Weor in his inner being). Samael Aun Weor's first disciples were witnesses to that event (*ibid.*). From a strictly phenomenological point of view, Samael Aun Weor's Gnosticism, which obtained a rapid and marked success in Latin America, Quebec, the USA and Europe, combines themes deriving, as we have seen, from the tradition of the Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica, Arnoldo Krumm-Heller (and from the leader of the Fraternitas Rosicruciana in Equador, Jorge Adoum known as Magus Jefa, ?–1958), Tantrism, the Theosophical Society, without omitting the Thelemic influences (which we may trace back to Aleister Crowley; 1875–1947) and above all, obvious borrowings from Gurdjieff. Indeed, we must not forget that Samael Aun Weor defined himself as the "Master of Synthesis" for having conceived a corpus of doctrines that synthesizes in a didactic manner the initiatory knowledge possessed by the primitive and esoteric cultures of the Earth, associated with an "inner work" of verification through the practice of the astral double, and states of *jina* (journeys of the physical body in the hyperdimension) and so on.

HIC RHODUS, HIC SALTA!

The synthesis of Samael Aun Weor's Gnostic teachings and of the schools which we may trace back to him may be found in "Three Factors of the Revolution of Consciousness", the dynamics of which are summed up in three volumes (Weor 1989, 1992, 1995). These "three factors" are: (a) the *death* of the negative, interior universe of each person ("ego", artificial aggregates of the psyche that impede the manifestation of being) through self-discovery, understanding and the disintegration of all other psychological aggregates (blocks, conditioning, identification, fear etc.) that hinder the free circulation of energy and the reawakening of "objective consciousness"; (b) the *birth* of internal bodies or superior existential bodies of the human being (astral body, mental body, causal body), indispensable vehicles for higher dimensions above the physical plane, thanks to the transmutation of creative energies (through the practice of Arcanum AZF, or rather through the practice of exciting the male sexual organs without the emission of semen and the consequent "cerebralizing" of semen and the "insemination" of the brain) and the elimination of psychological aggregates in order to foster development and total regeneration, reawakening faculties such as clairvoyance, hearing distant voices, intuition, telepathy; (c) the *sacrifice for mankind* by means of the divulgation, in any opportune way, of eternal

wisdom, striving to pass on the keys of universal knowledge received through the Gnostic path.

Samael Aun Weor's aim was to reawaken human consciousness, which begins with self-observation through which a person turns inwards and discovers that he lacks "something". This process of reawakening is not easy because the consciousness is closed up and impeded (asleep) by a series of negative psychological structures (called "I"). The first task required of the adept is to identify these structures. A person discovers that his interior world is composed of three different elements: his essence, his "I"s, which are located in the forty-nine levels of the subconscious (Weor 1995: 17), and his personality. The essence is the divine Gnostic spark dwelling within every human being. Despite the presence of this divine element, contemporary man degenerates into violence and cruelty. This occurs because of the "red demons of Seth" – that is, the "I"s, psychological structures, defects and vices that are manifested both in a person's thoughts and behaviour. The personality, in turn, is not innate, unlike essence, but comprises all the values received through culture and education. The first task then, without neglecting education, which from childhood on should aim to develop essence and personality harmoniously, is to work on the "I"s, which prevent essence from emerging and dominating the personality.

In a personality dominated by essence, human will is converted to Christ-will. (The term "Christ" has an esoteric significance here independent of the historical person of Jesus.) Dissolving the "I"s by scaling three mountains, an individual may reach union with the absolute, where duality ceases to exist. Scaling the first two mountains, the initiate creates his "solar bodies" (which however may still be used by the evil "I"s) and lastly, once these have been dissolved, "golden bodies". Once he has climbed the third mountain, there are no more bodies, and the Kundalini serpent is swallowed by the eagle, symbolizing the process through which every specific form must die in order to become part of absolute unity.

To reach this aim Samael Aun Weor offers knowledge, an alchemical approach to sexuality, invocations, chains of protection, treatments, as well as a special anointment which consecrates the Gnostic priesthood at the end of a specific course of study. The rituals, divided into seven degrees, are collected in the Gnostic Liturgy (Prócoro Lozada Misionero Gnóstico Nacional 1986: 4, 48–59), including a Gnostic mass. As far as specific practices are concerned, after the adept has reached a certain level of understanding of the Gnostic teachings, emphasis is given to the "out of the body" journeys and to the creation of the astral body. For this, the transmutation of the sexual hydrogen SI-12 is necessary. "In all the elements of nature, in every chemical substance, in every fruit, there exists a corresponding type of hydrogen. The hydrogen of sex is SI-12." (Weor s.d.n.l. 1967: 88). Anyone even only slightly familiar with Gurdjieff's teaching will not fail to note that this reference corresponds perfectly to Gurdjieff's concept of the hydrogens as recorded by Piotr Demianovitch Ouspensky

(1878–1947) in *Fragments of an Unknown Teaching*, held by all scholars to be an eminently authoritative source, which synthesizes the theoretical and practical aspects of Gurdjieff's teaching. Here is one of many examples: "Hydrogen si 12 is the 'hydrogen' which represents the final product of the transformation of food in the human organism. This is the matter with which sex works and which sex manufactures. It is 'seed' or 'fruit'" (Ouspensky 1949: 255).

Concerning the modalities for transforming the sexual hydrogen SI-12, Weor writes:

> The sexual hydrogen develops inside the human organism according to the musical scale: do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-si-do. The sexual hydrogen SI-12 is found plentifully in sperm. It crystallizes new human bodies and wisely transmuted, it gives form to the astral body. If the sexual impulse is inhibited in order to prevent the ejaculation of sperm, Hydrogen SI-12 receives a special shock which allows it to pass to the next higher octave where it acts in accordance with the scale do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-si. No occultist must ignore that the transformation of substances inside the organism acts in accordance with the Law of the Octave.
>
> (Weor 1991: 127)

Gurdjieff's teaching is almost identical to Weor's (Ouspensky 1949: 254–9) even as far as concerns the explanation of the "forming of the astral body" which "alchemy defines as transformation or transmutation" (*ibid*.: 256). Were these the "inner exercises" (de Hartmann & de Hartmann 1992: 40) taught by Gurdjieff, which Thomas de Hartmann briefly mentions, adding that he did not feel "authorized" to speak of them? Were these the exercises concerning "sexual energy which he told me never to repeat to others"? (*ibid*.: 107). We do not know the answer to this question. However, from this viewpoint it is easy to see what Gurdjieff was referring to when in a brief passage taken from a conversation with his pupils in New York, on 20 February 1924, published only after his death, even though sexual energy is not explicitly mentioned (which however was the subject of Gurdjieff's oral comments to his pupils, at least at the end of 1940s; Bennett & Bennett 1980: 15), nor are "inner practices".

> Man by himself cannot become a new man, special inner combinations are necessary. When such a special matter accumulates in sufficient quantities, it may begin to crystallize, as salt begins to crystallize in water if more than a certain proportion is added. When a great deal of fine matter accumulates in man, there comes a moment when a new body can form and crystallize in him … a higher octave. This body, often called the astral, can only be formed from this special matter and cannot come into being unconsciously. In ordinary conditions, this matter may be produced in the organism, but is used and thrown out.
>
> (Gurdjieff 1975: 202)

Most certainly Samael Aun Weor, who made Arcanum AZF, sexual magic, the crux of his teaching and consequent practices, was aware that he had "surpassed" Gurdjieff, who is rarely cited in Weor's work and is never mentioned as a source for his ideas. "We are more revolutionary in psychological teachings than Gurdjieff or Ouspensky" (Weor 1995: 99), claimed Weor but, simplifying, we might say that in Weor's system Gurdjieff provided the theory and Krumm-Heller the practice:

> The great German sage Krumm-Heller advises: "Instead of coitus which leads to orgasm, one must offer reflexively sweet caresses, amorous phrases, and delicate touches, keeping the mind far from animal sexuality, sustaining the purest spirituality as if the act were a true ceremony. However, the man can and must introduce his penis into the female sex and keep it there … until both experience a divine sensation which can last hours and withdraw at the moment the spasm approaches in order to avoid ejaculating sperm." (Weor s.d.n.l. 1960: 137)

Whether Weor "surpassed Gurdjieff" or not, the fact that he drew his theory from Gurdjieff and his practices from Krumm-Heller (in the context of a certain occult Rosicrucianism) is of interest here. As for Weor (for Weor *secundum* Gurdjieff) the main premise underlying both the discourse and itinerary of his teaching is the consideration that man does not possess an immortal soul and that in order to "make one", he must crystallize a subtle fluid in the human organism by means of a process of transmutation. Moreover, according to both Gurdjieff and Weor, for this soul to become truly immortal, the creation of an astral body is not enough because after attaining that state the adept must concentrate on creating a third body, the "mental body": "But [the third body] is still not the soul in the real meaning of the word. Only the fourth body completes all the development possible for man in the earthly conditions of his existence. It is immortal within the limits of solar system" (Gurdjieff 1975: 217; for a comparison, see Weor 1991: 129–35).

AFTER GURDJIEFF: SEXUAL MAGIC IN WEOR

In the preceding pages, we briefly inquired into the sources of Gurdjieff's ideas, mentioning James Webb's opinion that he had drawn from Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's doctrines and underlining the analogies between his esoteric teaching and that of the Theosophical Society, as suggested by Sophie Wellbeloved. If the main concern of this study is to determine the unmistakable and detailed influence of Gurdjieff's teaching on Samael Aun Weor's system of sexual magic, this observation, it bears repeating, does not necessarily imply an analogous preeminence of sexual magic within the "forest school". Yet methodological

rigour requires that we also investigate the source of Gurdjieff's ideas regarding "inner alchemy". However, as we have observed regarding Gurdjieff's sources in general, neither the studies produced so far, nor the primary sources seem to offer a plausible reply. James Webb considers Paschal Beverley Randolph (1825–75) as an influence in Gurdjieff's teaching regarding sexual energy (Webb 1980: 532), but this suggestion, however stimulating (also with regards to the rather tense relations between the Theosophical Society and other occultist environments in which sexual magic surely had a role; Godwin *et al.* 1995) does not appear adequately clarified, nor do studies of Randolph himself (Deveney 1997).

Thus all we can do is continue sketching out a red line connecting Gurdjieff's teaching to that of Samael Aun Weor. A red line, which it seems, not only regards theories of sexual magic, but in general far vaster segments of Gurdjieff's ideas, as for example, the "Three Factors of the Revolution of Consciousness" previously discussed (in which Gurdjieff's influence is quite evident). Likewise, the theme of multiple "I"s, so important in Weor's system derives, as we have noted, from a specific teaching of the Fourth Way (Walker 1951). Another key concept in Gurdjieff's ideas, "the Ray of Creation" (Ouspensky 1949: 82–8, 94–5, 132, 137–8, 167–9, 207, 305–6) finds an exact echo in Weor (1991: 38) (and this is by no means an exhaustive list). The concepts of "Holy Affirming, Holy Denying, Holy Reconciling" in *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* (Gurdjieff 1976: I, 138) reappear in Weor (s.d.n.l. 1967: 14), together with the *Law of Three*, "Triamazikamno" (*ibid*.: 15; for a comparison, see Gurdjieff 1976: I, 137–48), and the Basic Cosmic Law Heptaparaparshinokh, the *Law of Seven* (Gurdjieff 1976: III, 3–60; for a comparison, see Weor s.d.n.l. 1967: 15). Moreover, not only did Weor draw heavily on Gurdjieff's discourse but also on his spiritual itinerary. Indeed, in the original plan for the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man people entering the institute were to be divided into three groups (exoteric, mesoteric and esoteric; Gurdjieff 1988: 39). This hierarchal structure has been adopted by the Weorite movement, as Weor's most important disciple Joaquin Enrique Amortegui Valbuena (1926–2000), better known as V. M. Rabolú, informs us (Rabolú 1991: 23–38). The itinerary of approach to Gnostic teachings of the Weorite movement is divided into three cycles, for a total of fifty encounters weekly, corresponding to a programme of gradual study. The first chamber (*exoteric circle*) is composed of three phases (A, B, C) corresponding to important phases of learning the basics (meditation, relaxation, vocalization, mantras), astral journeys, awakening the chakras, self-knowledge (transmutation of energy, etc.). The second chamber (*mesoteric circle*) is for those who after understanding and practising Gnostic teachings aspire to live according to the "Three Factors of the Revolution of Consciousness". Lastly the third chamber (*esoteric circle*) is open to very advanced pupils. The central practice called by the tantric term *Sahaja Maithuna* (Weor s.d.n.l. 1972: 101) consists in a complete sexual act

between a man and a woman that allows for the sublimation of sexual energy without reaching orgasm ("*inmisio* [*sic*] *membri virili in vagina feminae sine ejaculatium seminis*"; Weor s.d.n.l. 1960: 78) so that the transmutation of sexual energy contributes to open the forty-nine levels of the subconscious, making all the hidden "I"s come forth and allowing Gnostic ascent to occur. This practice differs from *coitus interruptus* (in that the semen rather than being ejaculated must be put in circulation through an internal pathway) but should allow the transmutation both of male energy, semen, and female secretions, equally important for the reawakening of *kundalini*.

Further evidence to support the influence of Gurdjieff on Weor as well as Gurdjieff's presence in Weor's doctrines concerning "inner alchemy" is to be found in *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* where the retention of sperm in the transmuting sexual energy is fleetingly mentioned in connection with teachings concerning "being exioehary", the knowledge of which survived the disappearance of Atlantis.

> In these though fragmentary yet nevertheless authentic information, it was very convincingly indicated that by means of the substances Exioehary or sperm formed in them, it was possible to perfect oneself, but unfortunately for them there were no indications in this information which had survived and reached them, what and how precisely this had to be done.
>
> Then certain of them began to think and to strive persistently somehow to understand what was necessary to be done, in order, by means of these substances inevitably formed in their presences to struggle for self-perfection.
>
> The result of these serious ponderings of theirs was that the conviction first arose in them that this self-perfection could probably be actualized by itself, by abstaining from the ejection from oneself in the customary manner of these substances formed in them called sperm, and certain of them decided to unite and exit together in order to convince themselves in practice whether such abstinence could indeed give the supposed results … So from that time it began and automatically continues that such followers organize themselves in separate groups.
>
> (Gurdjieff 1976: II, 399)

Differently from other esoteric environments, Samael Aun Weor considers sexual alchemy as the only legitimate path of development. All others are rejected and even attacked as diabolic, and even believed to be under the control of a Black Lodge (Weor s.d.n.l. 1956: 69). Samael Aun Weor teaches that through the practice of *Sahaja Maithuna*, a third force, Cherubim, is produced by the union of male and female. Cherubim is part of the Great Divine Mother, a creature of fire who acts for a limited amount of time, but long enough to

burn away the "I"s against which her force is directed. Drawing from a tantric tradition with a long history in Eastern spirituality and Western esotericism, Samael Aun Weor claims that by avoiding the emission of sperm the sexual energy, rather than being dispersed towards the outside travels towards the deepest fibre of being and consciousness, which is then awakened. Unmarried disciples, although not in all branches of the Gnostic movement, are taught a transmutation exercise also known by a tantric term, *Vajroli Mudra* (although in Tantra this term carries different meanings [White 1996], as does *Sahaja Maithuna*). This exercise consists in special postures followed by a firm massage of the sexual organs (Weor 1983: 136–45).

Confirming a non-Libertine approach to sexuality which must be experienced with absolute chastity of the mind, Samael Aun Weor stresses that the fatal antithesis of the *Vajroli Mudra* is "the abject and repugnant vice of masturbation", which leads to the "abyss and second death" (*ibid*.: 142) described in the *Apocalypse*. Here lies a special key to the whole Weorite Gnostic system, which considers sexuality as an eminent form of relationship with the transcendent. "Sex is the creative function through which the human being is a true god" (Weor s.d.n.l. 1950: 34) and "sexual alchemy is the science of the New Age of Aquarius" (*ibid*.: 37). Weor teaches that the dispersion of sexual energy is "a vice the Lucifers have taught us" (Weor s.d.n.l. 1956: 68). These Lucifers are esoteric rivals who have deviated from the main road of sexual magic and are the root cause of the loss of internal faculties, illness, old age, degeneration of vital functions, loss of memory and even death itself, given that "the tenebrous advise the ejaculation of sperm" (*ibid*.: 62).

"STOP!"

At the beginning we stated that the objectives and limits of our enquiry focused on an investigation of the influence of George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff's teachings on Samael Aun Weor, given the extraordinary impact of Gurdjieff on the panorama of contemporary esotericism, to say nothing of the influence, as widespread as it is unknown, he has had on contemporary literature, art, architecture and music. Specifically our enquiry concentrates on Gurdjieff's definite impact on the theoretical practical system that Weor created in the 1950s.

Through the comparison we have adopted on both philological and interpretative terrains, we do not intend to attribute to Gurdjieff what properly belongs to Weor. Yet having made this distinction, we can but suggest that an attentive reading of Weor will lead us to "reread" Gurdjieff from a perspective not usually taken by the many and often in-depth studies regarding him. Yet there is something else that enhances the meaning of our small undertaking, and which would be missing from our study if we were unable to go beyond a mere textual comparison. This "something else" reveals how all teachings,

doctrines, practices, cognitive schemes, conceptual sophistications, based on the idea of "sexuality as an eminent form of relationship with the transcendent", and on transformation or transmutation of being to a higher state through the use, manipulation, intelligence of sexual energy, understood in terms of its micro–macro cosmic relations, are a sort of "signature" of a far greater number of modern and contemporary esoteric and occult groups than is generally held.

This "something else" invites us to reflect on this particular underground river whose premises, coordinates, geographies, histories remain to be systematically organized. Were we capable of a leap of intellect, it might reveal itself to be a peculiar persisting of Gnosis, a return to Gnosis or neo-Gnosticism, though we must keep well in the mind that the scholar must distinguish between Gnosticism, neo-Gnosticism, new Gnosticism, between the reawakening of Gnosis and the return of gnosis, eschewing any improper assimilation by current cultural myths.

NOTE

1. An earlier version of this chapter (in Italian) was published in 2005 as "Note a margine dell'influsso di G. I. Gurdjieff su Samael Aun Weor", *Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism* 5(2): 255–75.

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CHAPTER 9

OCCULTISM IN AN ISLAMIC CONTEXT

The case of modern Turkey from the nineteenth century to the present time

Thierry Zarcone

Islam is an Abrahamic religion which shares with Judaism and Christianity many eschatological, cosmological, psychological and soteriological ideas. Furthermore, Islam played a major role in transmitting to the Christian world the Greek philosophy; that is, not only Platonism, Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism, but also hermetism, theurgy, alchemy and astrology. But there are not exact equivalents in Islam of the Western concepts of esotericism (the inner) and occultism (the hidden), although one particular current of thought, the Batinism (Arabic: *Batiniyya*), which has emerged in the eighth century, fits more or less the definitions of Western esotericism as conceptualized by several scholars. Moreover, Batinism actually integrates the idea of secrecy and inwardness (its name derives from the Arabic *batin*, "inner", "inward", "hidden"). And several Turkish spiritual movements more or less linked to this historical Batinism have been regarded by Western esotericists and occultists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as Muslim esoteric trends, and vice versa.

The introductory section of this chapter will be dedicated to a definition of Batinism, a current of thought that is intimately linked to Sufism, though not identical with it. The transformations underwent by Batinism in the Ottoman Empire, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when the Empire faced the challenge of Western-imported modernity and Western occultism, may be compared with the history of Western occultism, though there is not a clear-cut division in Islam between esotericism/Batinism and occultism. Thus, in the most popular French–Turkish dictionary used in Turkey by educated people at the end of the nineteenth century, the French adjective "esotérique" is explained first as "a philosophical path coming from some philosophers of the old Greece that was keep secret and communicated to few disciples only", and second as the "batini philosophy" (Samy-Bey Fraschery 1882). So, this term is linked to the

historical Batinism. A major philosophical figure in the Ottoman Empire, Rïza Tevfik (1868–1951) considers also that the adjective "ésoterique" (in French in his text) is identical to the substantive "les Batinites" (in French and in Ottoman Turkish "Batiniler") (Tevfik 1911–12: 466).

The second section of this chapter will deal, on one hand, with the major aspects of Ottoman occultism at the end of the Ottoman Empire (nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries), especially the reinterpretation of Batinism under the influence of Western occultism (magnetism, theosophy, occult Freemasonry, Martinism etc.), and, on another hand, with the Muslim "occult sciences". The third and last section will examine the continuation of the Ottoman occultism under the new social and political conditions brought by the Kemalist ideology which dominates Republican Turkey since 1923.

WHAT ARE ESOTERICISM AND OCCULTISM IN ISLAM IN GENERAL AND IN TURKEY IN PARTICULAR

The definition given by Antoine Faivre of "Esotericism" in a Christian context, as a doctrine based upon a "form of thought" with four intrinsic characteristics and two non-intrinsic or secondary components, is particularly appropriate here to define what should be a "Muslim Esotericism" (Faivre 1996: 25–32).[1]

First and foremost, it must be pointed that I definitively oppose the idea that Muslim esotericism may be equated with Sufism, commonly depicted as "Muslim mysticism", since Sufism is actually one only among several diverse spiritual trends in Islam (and Sufism itself is a divided house). As shown below, Sufism incorporates nevertheless some aspects of Muslim esotericism, but Muslim esotericism as a whole is wider and integrates many other spiritual trends which are not "Sufi", and are even sometimes opposed to Sufism.

Islam inherits many Neoplatonic, Pythagorean, Hermetic and Gnostic ideas that were mixed with free religious speculations, which emerged in the first centuries of Islam in both Sunni and Shia milieu, and especially in the latter (Lory 1988, 1989; Morewedge 1992). The "form of thought" Faivre defines as esotericism is partly contained in this amalgam. The three main Muslim spiritual trends (hereafter depicted in a broad sense as Muslim esotericism) in which esoteric ideas appear are: Ismailism and extremist Shiism (Batinism, Hurufism, Nuqtaviyya); syncretistic Muslim religions (Turkish Alawiyya/Alevism, Ahl-e Haq, Yazidism); and some Sufi currents and brotherhoods (Bektashism, Melamiye, Hamzaviye etc.). Besides, the Ikhwan al-Safa movement (brotherhood of pious ascetic scholars, tenth century), close to Ismailism, was also composed of Neoplatonic philosophers looking for the purification of the soul through the study of all the branches of science from geometry, music, biology, medicine, politic and so on, to magic, alchemy, astrology and spells.

The living Nature

To the eyes of the extremist Shiites or Ghulat trends, God (Allah) is a divine spirit "which may be manifested in diverse forms and creatures", and, consequently, there is an "infusion or incarnation (*hulûl*) of the divine essence in the human body, especially in the body of the imams" who are their spiritual leaders (Daftary 1990: 66). This peculiarity fits with the characteristic of the Faivre paradigm dealing with the "nature vivante", that is, the perception of nature as permeated and animated by a divine presence or life-force. This belief is also present, though in a different form, in the theory of the "*wahdat al-wujud*" (Unity of Being) of the Akbarian Sufi school, initiated by the Andalusian Ibn Arabi (twelfth to thirteenth centuries) and his major disciple Sadr al-Din Qunawi, who lived in Turkey in the thirteenth century. Thus, God as the One Being is One and All, manifested outwardly within the various levels of existence, which is a theory that is very close to the Neoplatonic theory of the hypostases (Chittick 1991).[2] The "*wahdat al-wujud*" theory was adopted by many spiritual movements and Sufi brotherhoods in the whole of the Muslim world from Morocco to Indonesia, and particularly in Turkey; several thinkers however interpreted this theory as "pantheistic", leading to a clear rejection of the ontological distinction between God and man (Morewedge 1992; Chittick 1992). In Turkey, a literary genre was devoted to this belief with poetry describing the travels of the soul from the Absolute/God, down to the corporeal world throughout the various worlds of existence.[3] Besides, heated debates about the interpretation of the *wahdat al-wujûd,* particularly whether or not it is a deviant, not to say a heretical theory, have made their imprint on the history of Sufism and philosophy since at least the fifteenth century and are still occurring nowadays.[4] As shown later, this theory is central in the batini movements and it will play a notable role in the reception and reinterpretation of some ideas and practices of the European occultism in a Muslim spiritualist milieu, and especially in Turkey.

Correspondences

Faivre's second characteristic of esotericism is the "idea of correspondence (correspondance)", that is, a belief in invisible and non-causal "correspondences" between all visible and invisible dimensions of the cosmos, that is synonymous with the Macrocosm–Microcosm schema. This doctrine is present for instance in Ibn Arabi theosophy where the "Perfect Man" (*Insan al-kamil*), that is, the "realized man", reunites the One and the Many; the "Perfect Man", writes Chittick, is actually the macrocosm while individual man is the microcosm (Chittick 1991: 66). The correspondence between the letters of the Arabic alphabet and the human form is essential in the doctrine of the Hurufi trend

(mysticism of the letters) where the letters and the body are considered a complete divine manifestation. The Hurufi ideas have impregnated many Turkish Gnostics and Sufi brotherhoods like the Bektashi and Malami order.[5] For example, Bektashi artists created a peculiar iconography with calligraphic compositions in the form of a lion, face of man and so on, that we may depict as an esoteric calligraphy (Birge 1965: 232–47; Uludag 2005: 49–31). All are actually esthetical and artistic representations of this idea of correspondence. These calligraphies are also used as talismans, and following the introduction of printing in the Ottoman Empire, they were widely circulated, especially since the end of the nineteenth century. Such calligraphies have played a notable role in practical occultism in twentieth-century Turkey (Perk 2010). The contemplation and the manipulation of letters (*cifr*) have thus led to one of the most important occult sciences in Islam, which is practised generally by the Sufi shaykhs.

Secrecy and secret societies

Although secrecy is often seen as an important notion within the field of Western esotericism (see for instance, Faivre's understanding of "transmission" and its relation to secrecy; and von Stuckrad's discussion about the notion of "secret" is useful for the study of esotericism; von Stuckrad 2010: 59), I would argue that secrecy is pivotal in Muslim esotericism and obviously more important than in Western esotericism. It is actually linked to a doctrine based on the dialectic of the outer (*zahir*) and inner or secret (*batin*) meaning of the Quran, which dominates this current and also the whole of Shiism, especially the Ismaili branch, Batinism, and many Sufi lineages. The knowledge of the inner (*batin*) gives ability to explain the true meaning, inner sense, of the Quran through allegorical interpretation (*ta'wil*); here, the law of Islam (*sharia*) is equated with the outer dimension of the Quran. The esotericists have thus emphasized the inner aspect of the doctrine of Islam, looking either for an harmonization of the inner and the outer, or to favour the former to the latter. The Batini Ismaili movements who are named after the "inner" because they favour it, and sometimes even reject the outer dimension, say that the interpretation or unveiling of the *batin* was made known by the imams (their religious leaders) to a small number of initiates.[6] Also, the Shia imam Jafar Sadiq, regarded as the founder of the occult sciences in Islam and especially of the arcane science of letters and of alchemy, is supposed to have revealed his esoteric knowledge to a small circle of privileged disciples (Lory 1989). Mention should be made here of the legendary discovery by Appolonius of Tyane/Balinas of the "Emerald Table" – well known among the alchemists – a written table in a cave under a statue of Hermes Trismegistus. This table contained the key of *batin*, but Balinas found also in the same cave a book which displayed the *zahir* in nature (van Reeth 2002: 284).[7] Thus the Hermetic tradition of secret and the "occult sciences",

namely the science of letters, alchemy, astrology and talismanic art, has mingled with Islam and Ismailism, and especially with Batinism.

In addition, in relation to the Faivre's "transmission paradigm", it is worth saying a few words on the Muslim "spiritual chivalry" (Futuvva) that has particularly impregnated many Gnostic circles and Sufi movements, whether or not structured in the form of a brotherhood. This chivalry has transmitted to these movements an initiatic hierarchy, the idea of secrecy and dissimulation, the idea of fighting one's own ego, and, especially, several initiation rituals like the girding on the belt which is the main ritual in many Turkish and Persian brotherhoods, as well as the drinking of salted water (Corbin & Sarraf 1991; Mahjub 1993; Zarcone 2008b). The Futuvva initiatory ritual, and the girding ritual especially, was also the model for the reception in the guild of craftsmen. Up to our time there are some Batini and Ismaili groups (Druzes, Nusayri/Syrian Alawis) and Sufi lineages (Bektashism, Melamism) which have kept secret their doctrines and ritual practices, unlike mainstream Sufism which has its ceremonies open to all (secrecy is entirely interiorized in the latter). Thus the exaggeration of secrecy constitutes the borderline inside Sufism and Sufi brotherhoods. This is not to say that secrecy is absent in Sufism in general but rather to point that secrecy is considered essential in some of its branches where ceremonies are frequently closed to non members. Similarly, the *batin* played a greater role in Ismaili Shiism if compared with Twelver Shiism.

The case of the Bektashi reception ceremony is the most suggestive due to its complexity and the prominence of symbolism, and also because in the nineteenth century the Bektashi ceremonial and the Bektashi ideas were compared, by the Bektashi themselves, to the Freemasonry and to other occultist societies such as the Theosophical movement and the Martinists (see below). During a secret meeting attended exclusively by the members of the order, the Bektashi shaykh and the other dignitaries (twelve) sit in the hall of the lodge in very precise places. Second in importance after the shaykh, is the cook (*ashçi*), actually the man who cooks the "raw" meat (a metaphor for the candidate) to bring it to maturity (cooked), that is, to realize its full potential. The ceremony starts at the twilight and is then performed with candlelight. The candidate, male or female, walks bare-footed around the hall, accompanied by a "guide" who shows to the candidate several holy symbols and sacred gestures, and explains their meaning.

Three rituals are particularly important during the ceremony. First is the "lighting of the candles". Second is the salutation to four symbolic Gateways, symbolizing the four degrees of knowledge, from the lower to the higher: the religious law (*shari'a*), the mystical path (*tariqa*), the pure knowledge of God or of the Truth (*ma'rifa*) and the experience of the Pure Truth (*haqiqa*). Third, the placing of a ritual belt around the neck of the candidate (see above). Later this belt will be bound around his waist (an import from the Futuvva). This third ritual can be considered the peak of the Bektashi ceremony; it is

complementary to the coming of the candidate to the centre of the hall, depicted as the "gallows" of al-Mansur al-Hallaj where this Sufi was symbolically hanged in 922. These two rituals are interpreted as a "mystical sacrifice" or a "symbolic death" and a "second rebirth."[8] This ceremonial has facilitated the hybridization of Bektashism and Freemasonry at the beginning of the twentieth century (see below).

It is worthy of mention here that the conflict of Muslim esotericism with the "orthodoxy" of Islam is quite different from what has happened in Western esotericism, since Muslim orthodoxy has never been firmly fixed. In Islam, there was neither hierarchy, nor council to fix the creed, unlike Christianity which had its creed fixed at the Council of Chalcedon (fifth century). Then, the two most representative branches of Islam, Sunnism and Shiism, had accused each other of having falsified the Quran and moved away from the path taught by Muhammad the Prophet, and of being non "orthodox". Norman Calder writes that "the significant creeds are those that emerge within a discursive tradition, through an informal, consensual acknowledgment of value that is quite different from the formal procedures of the Roman Catholic hierarchy". The orthodoxy of Islam then "lies inside the discursive tradition of jurists who write creeds" (Calder 2000: 70–71).

From the beginning and up to our time, the ideas of Muslim esotericism have been more or less tolerated by the mainstream orthodoxy (Sunni or Shii) and the four Sunni schools of law set up by famous jurists. Most important is the fact that some extreme Batini groups (Ghulat) believed the outer aspect of the Quran to be invalidated by the inner aspect. Consequently, they argue that the possession of the knowledge of the *batin* would confer exemption from duty to obey the religious law. Antinomian esotericism is definitively considered heretical and condemned by mainstream Sunnism and Shiism. Conversely, moderate Batini movements rarely led to a complete abjuration of the religious law. It follows that disregarding the Islamic law and its ordinances is not the general rule in Muslim esotericism. Another belief, foreign to Islam, defended by some Ghulat groups and still advocated nowadays in the Middle East and in Turkey (by the Alevis, Bektashis and Druzes), is metempsychosis or transmigration of souls (*tanasuh*) (Madelung 1990; Birge 1965: 130). It has been severely condemned by the representatives of orthodoxy. This idea of metempsychosis however was instrumental in the establishment of links between some Ottoman Sufi orders, Bektashism in particular, with occultist societies, such as the Theosophical Society, which were considered similar to them by some Ottomans. Hence, these Sufi orders and Bektashism were, in a sense, regarded as "occultist societies".

THE FABRICATION OF A MUSLIM "OCCULTISM" AT THE END OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE (NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES)

Since the middle of the nineteenth century and especially in the first part of the twentieth century, Turkish esotericism – that is, some Sufi orders and batini currents like Bektashism – and the "occult sciences" traditionally cultivated in Islam among the Ottomans, have undergone major changes due, on one hand, to the introduction of Western modernity in the Empire (technology, natural sciences etc.), along with the adoption by the Ottoman intellectuals of the ideas of the French Enlightenment and of Western modern philosophy (positivism, pragmatism, Bergsonism, Monism, etc.). On the other hand, the coming to Turkey of some well-known Western occultists (von Sebottendorf, Gurdjieff, Vett) and of initiatic societies like the Carbonari Freemasonry and Martinism, led to a mixing of Western and Eastern esoteric and occultist practices.

Turkish occult sciences and occultism

The sciences as "*ulum-i hafiye*" (secret sciences) or "*ulum-i garibe*" (strange sciences) in the Muslim world before the nineteenth century comprised in general three types of sciences: (1) alchemy; (2) the making of amulets/talismans, and several arts of divination like astrology, geomancy, art of the Arabic letters, interpretation of dreams; and (3) magic or the evocation of spirits. Among the Ottomans, the expressions "secret sciences" (*ulum-i hafiye)* and "strange sciences" (*ulum-i garibe*) were still in use in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries along with that of "occult sciences", borrowed from Europe.[9] For instance, in the popular newspaper *Ikdam*, in 1920, "*Sciences occultes*" (in French in the text) is quoted as similar to "*ulum-i hafiye*" (secret sciences) (Q. 1920). Let us mention also that in the Turkish dictionary mentioned above (Samy-Bey Fraschery 1882), the adjective "*occulte*" got the sense of "secret" without more explanations, but the expression "*sciences occultes*" is rendered by "false sciences which comprehend chemistry, magic and divination".

Among the Ottomans, the "occult sciences" were not cultivated only in esoteric circles – that is, in Batini movements and brotherhoods – but also among the orthodox Sufi orders, some being fiercely opposed to Batinism, and also by Sufi shaykhs at the service of the Ottoman dynasty, and by individuals. Regarding the occult sciences at the Court of the Sultan, it must be mentioned here that an office of "chief astrologer and astronomer" (*münecimbashi*) existed at the Ottoman Palace since the fifteenth century and up to the end of the Empire. Besides, one of the latest sultans, Abdülhamid II (reign: 1876–1909), had his personal Sufi shaykh from the Shadhiliyya Sufi Order who was both a spiritual guide, and a talismans maker and a seer (doing *remil*

– geomancy) (Abdülaziz Bey 1995: 366–7; Zarcone 2005b). Also, the sultans have supported an uninterrupted tradition of writing official "oracular books" (*falname*) or "guides for fortune-telling" (many being attributed to the Imam Jafar Sadiq). "Talismanic shirts" (*shifa gömlek*, *tïlsïmlï gömlek*) were also a widespread Ottoman tradition; sacred motifs and figures were printed on the shirts instead of being brought in a pocket or engraved on a jewel (Özdemir 2003: 62–71; Tezcan 2006). The interpretation of dreams is performed in general by almost all the Sufi shaykhs, as well as the making of talismans (*muska, tilsim*), which bear not only geometrical figures, numbers and Arabic letters, as usual, but also many symbols and motifs from Sufism (Perk 2010).

There also exist in Turkey three other traditional and widespread techniques – all inherited from the Arabs – of discovering what will happen in the future. The first one is to ask a question and then to open at random the Quran or the *Mathnavi* (of Mavlana Rumi) to get an answer from the interpretation of the first three verses that are found in the page on the right. The second technique, *cifr*, attributed to Imam Ali, is based on the manipulation of Arabic letters. The third technique is *remil* (geomancy). Astrology, fortune-telling with the Quran, *Mathnavi* and Arabic letters, talisman-making, geomancy and also alchemy were welcomed by the Ottoman Palace and the Ottoman society; this means that these sciences were accepted by the representatives of orthodox Islam up to the end of the Empire, though criticized by radical Islam.[10]

Conversely, there are some other "occult sciences" absent at the Ottoman Palace, usually fiercely condemned by Islam, which are cultivated in some Sufi heterodox circles only and in popular Islam. It is the evocation of the spirits (jinns) in order to heal the sick or to find the stolen objects, a practice more or less linked to pre-Islamic, usually animistic rituals, and particularly to Central Asian shamanism (Abdülaziz Bey 1995: 369–73; Zarcone 2013). This practice usually involves the women more than men; these women invoke the jinns through a ritual that uses drums and songs.

By the middle of the twentieth century, the whole of these occult sciences were re-evaluated, especially in the educated milieus, following the discovering and in some cases the introduction of Western occult sciences in Turkey, while they have continued to be practised according to the tradition in rural areas.

Less than one century after magnetism had emerged in France, we notice that an Ottoman named Calouste Constant (mid-nineteenth century) was a follower of this esoteric school and a representative of the French Society of Magnetism. Also a member of the Asiatic Society of Paris (an association of orientalists), Constant was a Christian Levantine living at Smyrna. In 1863, he interpreted the art of healing among the popular Armenian and Turkish healers of Anatolia as "animal magnetism" and he published, in the journal *Le Magnétiseur* (Genève), an article in French illustrated with several drawings which shows the technique followed by a female Armenian healer to cure a patient. These drawings give details of the ritual followed by the healer, which

is of considerable ethnological interest and has a shamanistic origin (Constant 1863). Besides, Constant considers that the magnetism practised in the West is identical to that used in the East; also, that this "magnetism" was practised in the East a long time before it was discovered in the West. Constant reports also that "he has tried to bring out in the open some strange facts, misunderstood until now, and regarded as silly by the scientists (*esprit fort*)" (*ibid.*). In other articles published in the same journal, Constant investigated the case of the Turkish traditional medicine and of the amulets (Constant 1862). Constant's case seems to be isolated and there is no likelihood that a Society of Magnetism was set up in Turkey at the end of nineteenth century.

Freemasonry and "occult Freemasonry"

Freemasonry was introduced in the Ottoman Empire by the beginning of the eighteenth century but the Muslims were initiated in great number only after the middle of the nineteenth century (Zarcone 1993). There is one particular dimension of Freemasonry that is worthy of interest in this chapter: it is the case of the "occult masonry" (Maçonnerie occulte) from the title of a book (1853) by the famous French Freemason and occultist Jean-Marie Ragon (1781–1862). This particular Freemasonry, far from any social or political concern, was essentially interested in the perfection of the soul, in magnetism, in somnambulism, and in many occult sciences – astrology, Kabbalah and such. Although the interest of the Ottoman Masons towards Freemasonry was mainly political and philosophical, there were also some among them interested in occultism, and the mutual attraction of Sufis and especially Bektashis, and Masons reveals this feeling. So, it is no accident that several European and Ottoman Freemasons were convinced that the Sufi brotherhoods were an Eastern equivalent of the Masonic fraternities since both have rituals, an initiatic – that is, hierarchical – structure, and cultivate the secrecy (Zarcone 2002a: 2; 2008a: 118–19). John P. Brown, an American Freemason established in Turkey, published a pioneering analysis of Sufism, *The Darvishes or Oriental Spiritualism* in 1868 and wrote that "the title by which, it is said, Mussulman Freemasons are known is Malamiyun" (Brown [1868] 1968: 64). In the same book, Brown adds that "the Darvishes of the Baqtashi order consider themselves quite the same as the Freemasons, and are disposed to fraternise with them" (*ibid.*). These two movements, Malami and Bektashi, as shown above, were the most esoteric among the Turkish Sufi brotherhoods with a strong Batini and Hurufi background and an absolute respect for secrecy. Brown depicted also the Melami as Hamzawi, the latter brotherhood being an offshoot of the former in the Balkans and in Istanbul (*ibid.*: 229).

The connection between Bektashis and Freemasons is exemplified in the case of the Ali Koch Bektashi convent at Belgrade in the middle of the nineteenth

century, a place where some Freemasons and Bektashi dervishes have fraternized. This Sufi convent, composed of Christian and Muslim members, had regular exchanges with the Austro-Hungarian lodge Baldwin zur Linde based at Leipzig. The most interesting thing is that the Ali Koch convent endeavoured to develop a kind of protocol or agreement which permitted the Masons and the Bektashis to hold common meetings and to become full members in their respective orders. The shaykh of this convent wrote to the worshipful master of the Balwin Lodge that "your and our fraternity are one and the same, and that all Freemasons (Bektaschias) in the world are related" (Freemasons' Quarterly Review 1849). However, tolerance has its limits, and in case a Freemason wanted to go deeper into the Bektashi order, he was invited to convert to Islam (Zarcone 2009: 35–9).

The Druze movement in Lebanon, another secret Batini-oriented movement with initiatic rituals, was also considered by Freemasons, at least since 1761 and particularly during the nineteenth century, as the descendant of the first masons and builders of the Solomon Temple, on the ground that they used secret signs and passwords (Freemasons Magazine 1859: 506; Springett 1922: 248–58, 270–87; De Smet 2004). Surprisingly, by the beginning of the twentieth century, a new secret society called "The Virtous Order" (Tarikat-i Salahiye) was set up by some Ottoman Freemasons and Bektashis. The Virtuous Order, which has existed a few years only, reveals a deep blurring and borrowing between the rituals of the French masonry and Bektashism. Specifically, the reception ceremony in this society was an imitation of various ceremonial acts borrowed from Masonic rituals with many Muslim and Sufi elements (Zarcone 2002a: 131–55; 2008a: 124–5).

Although there were Sufis initiated in Freemasonry who belonged to other brotherhoods, like the whirling dervishes (*mevlevi*), the majority of them were Bektashi.[11] Two notable figures deserve to be mentioned here. The first one is Rïza Tevfik (d. 1949), Great Master of the Ottoman Grand Orient and a famous Bektashi poet who was one of the introducers of modern Western philosophy (Bergson, Spencer, Hamilton) into Turkey and a writer on Sufism, Muslim esotericism and Batinism. In particular, Rïza Tevfik has tried to reinterpret Batinism and Hurufism in a philosophical way, through, for instance, a comparative study of Spencer's agnosticism and Bergson's spiritualism (Zarcone 1993: 357–86, 400–410). Worthy to be noted here, is the comparison developed by other thinkers of the Sufi theory of the Unity of Being (*wahdat al-wujud* – see above) with the Monism of the German Ernst Haeckl and Ludwig Büchner (*ibid*.: 157–8). The second figure is Ahmed Rifki (d. 1935), a Bektashi poet and a member of the Virtous Order, who can be considered a pioneer in the study of comparative religion in Turkey. Rifki found several common ideas between Eastern and Western spirituality, and advocated perennialist ideas. He doubtless detected Renaissance Hermeticism in Freemasonry, comparing it with Muslim Hermeticism present in Bektashism and in other Batini Sufi trends. He was

also deeply interested in the Kabbalah and in the Ottoman science of letters (Hurufism) (Topçuoglu 2001a, b).

Without any doubt, the occult wing of Freemasonry is represented by Martinism and Martineism (both named after the French Louis Claude de Saint Martin and Martines de Pasqually who lived at the end of the eighteenth century). Martinism was structured on the model of Freemasonry but as an independent movement by Papus (Gérard Encausse, 1865–1916). This new order set up in 1891 is, to quote Jean-Pierre Laurant (1992: 139), an "institutionalized occultism" (*occultisme institutionalisé*). Martinist and Martinesist ideas were introduced through two ways in Turkey: (1) the founding of Martinist circles or lodges; and (2) the reading of the writings of these two occultists. The announcement in the journal *L'Initiation* in July 1892,[12] that a representative (correspondant) of the Groupe indépendant d'études ésotériques (Independent Group of Esoteric Studies), a kind of occultist university founded in 1890 by Papus and closely linked to the Martinist order, will be soon appointed at Constantinople, is an indication that some Ottomans have joined this association. Meanwhile, many circles of *correspondants* of the Independent Group established in Egypt (Sakha, Port Said, Ramleh, Alexandria) were seen as a sign of "increasing success of occultism in Egypt" (*success croissant de l'occultisme en Egypte*).[13] More documented is the story of a Martinist lodge, set up at Salonika (Northern Greece), in the years 1905–7, associated to a Turkish Masonic lodge named "Veritas" (with a warrant of the Grand Orient of France and one of the Papus's Martinist order).[14] The members of this lodge were predominantly Jews from the Sabbatean movement whose leader, Sabbatai Zevi (1626–76), influenced by Kabbalah, converted to Islam, while still inwardly practising Judaism. It has been claimed but never definitively demonstrated that Sabbatai Zevi and the Sabbateans have certain relations with some Sufis and especially with the Bektashis (Fenton 1988; Ortaylï 1998: 101). In addition to a Martinist lodge, another lodge was founded in Salonika, in 1906, warranted by the "Swedenborgian Rite for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland".[15]

"Monsieur Philippe" (Nizier Anthelme Philippe, d. 1905), Papus's spiritual master, also known as the "Balzac of occultism", was a very reputed healer and magician. From two letters dated 1893, we know that Papus has asked Philippe for a "psychic intervention" (intervention psychique) in favour of the Ottoman sultan Abdülhamid II.[16] This is the sign that the celebrity of Philippe and of Papus was not unknown in Turkey by one or more people close to the court and to the sultan, to such an extent that they asked Papus to tell Philippe to give a psychic support, actually a magical benediction, towards the Ottoman Empire, depicted at this time as "the sick man of Europe" ("*l'homme malade de l'Europe*") because of a major economic and political crisis. But Philippe's magical action was totally inefficient for the sultan was deposed in 1909 and then arrested by the new constitutionalist government. Mention should be made here that, one year before, in 1892, the Martinist journal *L'Initiation*

had look favourably on the politic of the Ottoman sultan Abdülhamid II, and especially his modernization of the country. Quite surprisingly, an author of *L'Initiation* wrote the following text about the Ottoman Empire and its sultan:

> Mingling the esoteric traditions of Islam and the Western science, the Turkish religious schools have taken a unexpected place in the European intellectualism, especially since the sultan Abdülhamid II, who is broad-mindedness, didn't hesitate to give the study of philosophy and of the hermetical science the wider place it deserve. The foundation in Turkey of an university that was constituted according to the traditional teachings of esotericism, won't have a scientifically impact only, but also political". We wonder here if "esoteric" and "esotericism" in the mind of the writer means Sufism. It should be the case since we know the considerable influence of some Sufi shaykhs on the Ottoman sultans.[17]

Besides, Saint Martin and Pasqually's books are quoted in the writings of very few Ottoman writers; one of them was Mehmet Ali Ayni (d. 1945), a Sufi, an academic and a prolific writer on the history of Sufism (see below).

EUROPEAN OCCULTISTS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

In the beginning of the twentieth century, some well-known figures interested in occultism and in occult sciences have visited the East and Istanbul, in search of a new source of inspiration and of sacred knowledge in order to revitalize Western esotericism. Three major figures, the German Rudolf von Sebottendorf, the Greco-Armenian George Ivanovich Gurdjieff and the Dane Carl Vett, during their stay in Istanbul, were either initiated in some Sufi orders or instructed in meditation techniques (*dhikr*), while never converting to Islam. A Freemason, a rosicrucian and an alchemist, Rudolf von Sebottendorf (Adam Alfred Rudolf Glauer, 1875–1945?), arrived in Turkey in search of spiritual and magical knowledge; he became convinced that some Gnostic and Sufi teachings were still secretly cultivated by the Bektashis, to whom he refers as "Oriental Freemasons" (*orientalische Freimaurerei*). In his opinion these Sufis were "still respectful of the ancient philosophies, modern Freemasonry has forgotten" (von Sebottendorf 1924: 18). Von Sebottendorf also coined the expression "the old Turkish Freemasonry" (*der alten türkischen Freimaurerei*), meaning that this "Turkish Freemasonry" had ascetic and contemplative practices, contrary to modern Freemasonry which was purely speculative. He was particularly interested in the mysticism of letters cultivated in Bektashism, a practice inherited from Hurufism. Von Sebottendorf invented then a romantic masonic ritual impregnated with Rosicrucian and alchemical ideas and based on the

mental repetition and combination of letters with visualization of colours. He called this path "Practice of the old Turkish Freemasonry" (*Die Praxis der alten türkischen Freimaurerei*, 1924) (Goodrick-Clarke 1985; Zarcone 2005a). Although a fabrication, von Sebottendorf's method has combined genuine Sufi ideas and practices, which the German occultist observed at Sufi ceremonies in Bursa and Istanbul, with occultism.

A Greco-Armenian occultist interested originally in parapsychology and magic, George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (1866–1949) travelled all over Central Asia, from the Caucasus to Bukhara and Chinese Turkistan, and finally stayed one year in Turkey (1920–21) to learn sacred music and Sufi dances, especially that of the whirling dervishes. In the company of Thomas de Hartmann (1885–1956) and P. D. Ouspensky (1878–1947), Gurdjieff visited the Sufi lodges of Istanbul and organized some exhibitions of sacred "gymnastic", as he called the mystical dances impregnated with Sufi and folk movements he learnt during his travels in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Gurdjieff's exibition led, however, to a heated debate in the Ottoman intellectual milieu about the spiritual legitimacy of his exercises. Although Yakup Kadri (1889–1974), a famous Ottoman writer sympathetic to spiritualism, appreciated Gurdjieff's sacred gymnastic and wrote that the latter had perfected the old Sufi dances, the scholar Mehmet Ali Ayni (1890–1945), who taught history of Sufism at the University of Istanbul and was himself a member of Sufi brotherhood, criticized Gurdjieff's dances on the grounds that these dances were not integrated into a Muslim context – that is, without any reference to the Muslim faith (Zarcone 2007a).

In 1925, the Danish anthroposophist Carl Vett (1871–1956) reached Istanbul in order to "observe at first hand the ecstatic states attained by the dervishes in their way of initiation" and for establishing links between the Western and Eastern "schools of initiation" or "occult schools". The Western school mentioned by Vett is the anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner, while the Eastern schools are, according to him, the Turkish Sufi brotherhoods (Vett 1953: 9, 155; Zarcone 2007c). Vett was also the instigator of the first international congress for psychic researches at Copenhagen in 1921.[18] Like many Western Freemasons and other esotericists, he was convinced that the Sufi brotherhoods constitute the "esoteric side of Mohammedanism" and that Freemasonry is no more than a kind of *tariqa* (Sufi order). Vett attended several Sufi assemblies, especially the meetings of the whirling dervishes and that of the sober and orthodox Naqshbandi brotherhood. This second order, originally from Bukhara, cultivates strong techniques of meditation with breath control and visualizations, both associated to the repetitive litanies (*dhikr*) (Zarcone 1996). Vett was instructed on the secrets of this technique by a well known shaykh of a Naqshbandi lodge, Esad Efendi, where he stayed fifteen days. He wrote, however, that he never converted to Islam, though Esad Efendi thought the contrary. Also, the esoteric and perennialist ideas of the Dane upset the Naqshbandi Sufis when saying that he "believes that the time

has come when free men [the esoterists] no longer need the external rules or commandments of any religion to find their way to God" (Vett 1953: 168). Naqshbandi Sufis were actually far from being sympathetic to these ideas, contrary to the Bektashis. Besides, Vett, who like many anthroposophists believed in reincarnation, noticed that the Bektashis were of the same opinion but that the Naqshbandi opposed sharply this belief (*ibid.*: 114, 133–6). Vett observed also at the convent a Naqshbandi shaykh interpreting the dreams of one of his disciples. The mystical adventures of Vett in Turkey demonstrated the complexity of Sufism and how the Sufi brotherhoods may differ from one to the other: it appears as if one can speak of an esoteric Sufism versus an exoteric one. Vett didn't succeed finally in establishing a bridge between the Western and Eastern schools of initiation.

WESTERN AND EASTERN OCCULT SOCIETIES IN A LOOKING-GLASS

On the other hand, Vett met Mehmet Ali Ayni, the critic of Gurdjieff and a key figure in Turkish Sufism, who helped him find his path in the Sufi milieu of Istanbul (Aksüt 1944; Zarcone 1998). Ayni was also very interested in establishing relations between the Sufi brotherhoods and the Western esoteric societies. In 1923, that is three years before the coming of Vett to Istanbul, Ayni had encouraged a federation of Sufi lodges from various brotherhoods, called the Sufi Society (Cemiyet-i sufiye) and based at Istanbul, to write to the French, British and Italian headquarters of the Theosophical Society. This is, he said, because the members of these Western societies believe in reincarnation, like our Bektashi dede (leaders) and Nusayri shaykhs (in Syria), and they must have exchanges (Ayni 1923: 186; Zarcone 1993: 319). Ayni also endeavoured, under the influence of Vett and with the support of three other scholars, to set up a branch of the Parisian Society for Metapsychic Studies (Société d'études métapsychiques) at Istanbul (Aksüt 1944: 326–30; Zarcone 2007c). This branch does not seem, however, to have existed for long (Vett 1953: 95, 124; Aksüt 1944: 326–30). The metapsychic studies were not unknown to the Ottoman intelligentsia; for instance, an article dedicated to this topic, entitled "The Metapsychic Science" (*Maba'dürruhaniyat*) was published in 1924 in the Sufi Journal *Mahfil* (Sacred Assembly) (Sa'adi 1924). The writer of this article, a renowned member of the whirling dervishes, mentioned that some international congresses for the metapsychic studies (*beynelmilel ruhaniyat kongresi*) were organized in Europe and that the last one was held at Warsaw in 1923. The article provides also some details about the metapsychic sciences, today called parapsychology, that must not be confused with the spiritualism of Allan Kardec (Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail, 1804–1969).

The mixing of Western occult sciences, metapsychic sciences and Eastern magic is exemplified in the case of a certain Sheikh Abdul Vehab, an

ambiguous person who presented himself as an Arabian Sufi shaykh living in Constantinople. Abdul Vehab gave a lecture at the international meeting of the Society for Metapsychic Studies at Warsaw in 1923. According to Vett, Abdul Vehab described "a form of oriental occultism that, though mingled with much superstitions, has something in common with the subject of psychic research" (Vett 1953: 17). Abdul Vehab's lecture dealt actually, among many other topics, with the traditional evocation of spirits/jinns (see below) but he interpreted the powers developed by the magician as telepathy (*ibid*.: 18–19).[19] Surprisingly, Abdul Vehab opened in the European district of Constantinople an "office for psychic consultations and occult experiments". Vett reports that one advertisement in the official telephone directory of this city ran as follows: "this office is the most important one in Constantinople. Astrological, chiromantic, chiroscopic, and graphological séances; consultations with mediums, crystal-gazing, horoscopes, etc" (*ibid*.: 20–21).

Kardec's spiritualism was not unknown to the Turks and its introduction in Turkey has provoked many reactions from Sufi shaykhs and caused concern for the practitioners of the traditional occult sciences, since spiritualism deals with the spirits, a practice which was until that time the preserve of the traditional magic. However, we must distinguish two kinds of practitioners of spiritualism. The first practitioners regarded spiritualism as an "experimental science" (*ilm-i tecrübe*), instead of a secret or occult science, and they encouraged the scientists to study it. Their ideas were expressed in a journal entitled *Spiritualism* (*Ispirtizme*) published in the years 1907–08 (twelve issues). The second group of practitioners of spiritualism mixed this practice with the occult science and magic. Thus, some spirit séances to evoke the souls of the deceased or other spirits were organized by intellectuals, writers and teachers and university professors in the years 1920–21 at the University of Istanbul and in some other schools. Some Turkish newspapers mentioned these séances and reported also about the project by Thomas Edison (1847–1931) to make a machine to communicate with the dead. However, in the journal *Ikdam*, a Sufi opposed this idea and considered Edison a "charlatan". He wrote therefore that many occultists, like the Sufis, estimate on the contrary that the only way to talk with the dead souls is not through a machine, but using "intuition" (in French in the text and *tahaddüs* in Turkish) (Ertuğrul 1920; Tevfik 1920; Q. 1920). Besides, Kardec's spiritualism was considered very close to the rituals performed by the Turkish traditional magicians who evoke the jinns. For example, Ahmed Naim (1872–1934), an intellectual of Istanbul, writes that spiritualist is no more than an *alafranga cinci*, an "exorcist in the Occidental way" (Çakan 2003: 35). The same year, the journal of the Roman Catholic Church in Istanbul denounces fiercely spiritualism and reminds the Christians of Turkey that this trend has been condemned by the Pope in 1864 (Bulletin du Vicariat 1920). Surprisingly, we learn that Vett attended a séance at the University of Istanbul, though he was opposed to this movement, and that the medium was in contact with the

soul of the famous Sufi Ibn Arabi. Vett was then convinced of the inanity of spiritualism (Vett 1953: 35–6).

Spiritualism attracted many people in the course of the twentieth century and was associated with the belief in reincarnation and with the study of parapsychology. It was also compared with some Sufi practices (Onbulak 1958). More, the reading of the numerous books of Camille Flammarion, of Charles Richet and of the *Science occulte* of Paul Jagot has influenced a novel of the famous Turkish writer Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpïnar (d. 1944): *Are the dead living?* (*Ölüler Yaşïyorlar mï?*) (1932).

SOME ASPECTS OF TURKISH CONTEMPORARY OCCULTISM

The end of the Ottoman Empire saw the dismantling of the Sufi orders prohibited by the New Republican regime in 1925. From this date, many brotherhoods ceased to exist while some others have continued to work illegally. Among the latter are several branches of the Naqshbandiyya lineage, a very sober and orthodox Sufi order which opposed Batini ideas, and some other lineages sympathetic to Batinism, such as the Bektashi and Melami brotherhoods who tried to adapt their activities to the new conditions (Zarcone 1998; Kïlïç 2005). Some Bektashi Sufis still have links with the Freemasonry, though less important than in the past. It is worth mentioning here that a Muslim intellectual fiercely criticized Freemasonry in the 1950s, not because of its perceived atheist and materialist background, as was usual before, but for being a Batini-oriented trend – heretical in his eyes, which is also to say esoteric and occultist (Zarcone 2009: 45).

The law which prohibited the Sufi brotherhoods in 1925 also banned several practices considered as superstitions (*hurafe*) and prejudicial to the development of a new modern state. Among these "superstitions", there were some occult sciences like fortune-telling (*falcïlïk*), magic (*büyücülük*), healing by breathing (*üfürüçülük*) – an ancient healing tradition attributed to the Prophet of Islam – and the making of amulets (*nüshacılık*). The law has been strongly detrimental to the Turkish occult sciences, putting an end to several lineages of fortune-tellers and magicians, and forcing some of them to work illegally. This policy against the "superstitions" was especially implemented through education, and especially at the faculty of divinity of Erzurum, in the east of the country, the first to set up a course in a positivist view, in 1958, on the history of the "occult sciences" (*Okkült Bilgileri*). The aim was to inform the students about the noxiousness of these sciences (Jacob 1982: 208–9). In the course of time, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, originally a positivist and Kemalist institution but nowadays a representative of Sunni Islam, has traditionally fought the superstitions and regularly printed books to denounce them. However, since the1950s, and although the law is still in force, the government

has turned a blind eye to these activities and became more tolerant than in the past. These practices are nevertheless still blamed. Thus, in a book entitled "Living Superstitions", published in 1989 by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the magic, the making of amulets, the fortune-telling and the healing ritual with molten lead are castigated, but without any mention of the expression "occult sciences" (Erdil [1989] 2003).

Educated in the Ottoman Empire but living also during the first decades of Republican Turkey, Mehmet Ali Ayni, quoted above, was a reader of Eliphas Lévi and of many other French occultists and metapsychists, like the Chevalier de Reichenbach (praised by Ragon's "Occult Freemasonry"), Albert de Rochas and Charles Richet (Ayni [1924] 1986: 40, 42; 1926: 57). Ayni made some quotations from Lévi's *Histoire de la magie* in one of his books on Sufism, borrowing some of the expressions coined by the French magician, as the *agent mixte*, when trying to set up a common theoretical basis for western esotericism/occultism (Ayni does not distinguish these two words) and Sufism (Ayni [1924] 1986: 22, 42). Ayni could be, in this way, considered a Turkish theoretician of occultism.

Sufi shaykhs and occultism

In contemporary Turkey, the occult sciences are practised in three different milieus. The first one is the circle of the Sufi brotherhoods, Batini-oriented or not. In general, two occult sciences are practised by the Sufi shaykhs who direct these orders: the interpretation of the dreams of their disciples and, though not in a systematic way, the making of amulets. The disciples who are sick or have social or financial troubles in the day-to-day life are advised by the shaykh according to the events and symbols that appear in their dreams. Dreams are also interpreted by the shaykh to guide his disciple on the spiritual path.[20] The practice of astrology and geomancy by the Sufi shaykhs has almost totally disappeared nowadays. The same must be said of the ancient power of healing attributed to the shaykhs, as has been demonstrated in 1990 in a sociological study of the Halveti-Cerrahi order, one of the most important Sufi lineages at Istanbul. From this study, it appears that the prayers of the shaykh and his supposed magical power are now complementary only to a treatment by a doctor (Atacan 1990: 111–13).

Some educated shaykhs, in urban areas, were influenced by Western books dealing with esotericism and occultism, and they drew a parallel between Sufism and esotericism. It is worth mentioning here Hasan Lutfi Shushut (1903–88), the major representative of the Melami Sufis in the twentieth century, an order deeply influenced by Batini ideas and hurufism (mysticism of letters), who set up weekly circles in 1953 to teach Sufi philosophy and meditation exercises when the Turkish regime became more tolerant towards religion. Shushut had a strong interest in comparative religious studies, in modern sciences and in

the Western perennial philosophy.[21] Quite interestingly, he made a distinction between Sufism (*tasavvuf*) that, in his view, is identical with "mysticism" in the West, and "esotericism", that is the science of the *ladun*: the direct knowledge of God through inspiration only. This last path was of course the path he taught. Meanwhile, Shushut uses the word "occultism" as a synonym for esotericism, though he never practises any occult sciences.[22]

Another prominent representative of Sufism was the Shaykh Kenan Rifai (1867–1950) of the Rifaiye brotherhood. Having given up the brotherhood framework, due to the banning of the orders, Kenan Rifai adopted the secularist ideology and Western modernity, and set up informal circles. First and foremost a commentator of the *Mathnawi* of Mawlana Rumi, he was also interested in Christian theologians like Denys (the Aeropagite), Saint Bernard, Saint Victor, and in the "mystics" of this religion among whom he quotes the names of Emmanuel Swedenborg, Martinez (Pasqually), Saint Martin and Jacob Böhme! Kenan Rifai considered these "mystics" actually as representatives of esotericism and occultism (Yonsel 1996: 100–110).[23] Besides, Kenan Rifai strongly opposed Kardec's spiritualism (*ispirtiz*) which has, in his views, "adopted a modern and academic appearance and then took the place of the magicians, seers, geomancers and soothsayers of the ancient period" (Ayverdi *et al.* [1983] 1993: 125–9). However, the practitioners of spiritualism and the mediums, he said, have never tried to purify their soul, and the spirits they invoke are not pure souls like those of the Muslim saints but jinns and demons coming from the lowest level of the subtle world, not to say hallucinations (Rifai 1992: 329). There are, however, inside Sufism itself, many fierce enemies of occultism and of the occult sciences; this is the case of the austere and very orthodox Naqshbandi Sufi order which considers it a great fault for a religious to believe in magic (*sihir*), to learn and teach it; to recognize astrologers, foretellers and soothsayers and to visit them (Kotku 1984: 50, 98).

Traditional wizards and healers

The second milieu is constituted of individual wizards/healers and the members of guilds of healers (masters of jinn, people of the fire-place etc.), the latter being organized on the model of the Sufi brotherhoods. These wizards/healers were originally established in the rural areas, but some have moved to the cities due to rural depopulation after the 1960s. These wizards heal the sick or search for missing people or objects. They perform various rituals and use magic stones or other sacred objects such as knives. The main rituals are: the invocation of spirits; the healing through pouring molten lead; and the healing by breathing. All these rituals are actually a derivative from Central Asian shamanic practices (Boratav 2003: 130–62; Zarcone 2013). A major role is played among those practices by the evocation of spirits, which is performed by a "Master of the

jinns" (*cinci, cindar*). All these wizards practise their art in conformity with the Ottoman tradition and not under the influence of Western or Turkish occultism. Besides, they have never developed any theoretical thought on occultism related to their practice, and there are no books published by them.

Occultism and Republican modernity

The third milieu is composed of urban and educated magicians trained in the Western occult sciences who practise astrology, talismanic art, divination by the tarot and so on, as well as the derivative of some traditional rituals performed by the healers of the second milieu (especially the healing through pouring molten lead and by breathing). Mention should be made, in addition, that alchemy is the lone occult science that had disappeared by the beginning of the twentieth century and which is practised no more today. The theoretical background of these traditional practices is usually understood in the light of the philosophy of occultism, that is, in terms of "occult", "vital" and "magnetic forces" and so on, that are manipulated by the magician. Besides, it is not surprising that these magicians regard these occult sciences as belonging to Batinism, as clearly shown in the title of a book published by a certain Melih Ülkü Akat, in 2007: *Esotericism and the History of Batinism* (*Ezoterism ve Batïnïlïk Tarihi*). Although the word "esotericism" is used in this title, the book deals also with occult sciences.

Doğan Mirzaoglu, a teacher and a contemporary "master of the jinn", an amulet maker and also a tarot reader, is emblematic of contemporary Turkish occultism. His book (1999) entitled *Cinler* ("the Jinns") aims to harmonize the traditional Turkish practice of the evocation of spirits with magnetism and the art of the medium, the latter term being borrowed from Kardec's spiritualism (though Mirzaoglu rejects Kardec's philosophy of spiritualism). Mirzaoglu reminds us of the case of the occultist Abdul Vehab met by Vett in 1925. First of all, Mirzaoglu considers that the magician who wants to evoke the jinns must prepare himself through a purification of his soul and make a retreat from the worldly life, as was the case in the ancient Arab and Ottoman magic (Fahd 1993: 44), and similarly with the magician in Eliphas Levi's *Treatise of High Magic* (Lévi 1954: 197–203). Therefore, in Mirzaoglu's view, the art of the evocation of the jinns is intimately linked to amulet making (*muska*) since amulets bear symbols and letters which are supposed to draw the jinns on Earth. Like some Turkish Sufi shaykhs (e.g. Kenan Rifai; see above), Mirzaoglu advocates the idea that the "master of the jinn" can call only the jinns, who are entities living in the intermediary world, but not the pure souls who are those of the Muslim saints (Mirzaoglu 1999). Here, Mirzaoglu criticizes the contemporary Turkish followers of Kardec's spiritualism who think the contrary. In addition, Mirzaoglu explains that he never learned his art by reading books, but thanks to his innate faculties of medium which have allowed him to experience a state of trance (he

used here the Sufi term *istigrâk* – immersed in ecstatic contemplation – together with the Western term trance). Besides, Mirzaoglu gives explanations and new basis for the practice of the traditional Turkish technique of healing with the breathing (*üfürükçü*) and considers that all the occult sciences (alchemy, physiognomy, etc.) are instrumental in establishing a connection between the metaphysical world (where live the spirits) and our world. Magnetism is, for him, the key for the understanding of all. For example, he regards some mausoleums of saints, which are the focus of pilgrimages, as places with magnetic qualities that can heal the sick. A chapter in Mirzaoglu's book is dedicated also to the jinns who have stolen things and how to recover them (a traditional activity of the Turkish shamans of Central Asia and Siberia). A popular magician with a lot of customers, Mirzaoglu was arrested by the police in 2005 on the charge that he was an amulet maker, an activity forbidden by law. His book on the jinns is, nevertheless, very popular among the present followers of magic in Turkey.

René Guénon in Turkey

A surprising event in the year 1980 was the introduction in Turkey of the writing of René Guénon (1886–1951), a French "metaphysician", renovator of esotericism and fierce opponent of spiritualism, who converted to Sufism and died in Cairo in 1951. Guénon taught the way to attain the "Primordial Tradition", the historical and principal origin of all the religious traditions. It is based on the principle of the complementarity and harmonization between the exoteric and the esoterism (Sufism). Besides, Guénon published an article on the *zahir* and the *batin* in 1931. However, Guénon's conversion to Islam remains problematic since the French metaphysician never said that he converted to this religion but that he has "settled" in it, otherwise expressed by Laurant as a "non-conversion" (Laurant 1998; Zarcone 1999: 113–14). Guénon's translators are Turkish scholars (e.g. Mustafa Tahralï, Mahmud Erol Kïlïç, Sadïk Kïlïç)[24] specialized in Sufi studies and especially in Ibn Arabi. The opinions of the Muslim theologians and intellectuals toward Guénon's ideas are various. Ismail Kara, a scholar and a writer expert on Sufism and philosophy, considers, in 1998, the "Traditionalist School" (*geleneksel ekolu*), that is the movement inspired by Guénon, an autonomous current in his classification of Muslim thought in Turkey (Kara 1998: 24). He reports that Turkey is the lone country in the Middle East that has experienced a major modernization on the Western model, and also a country subjected to a spiritual crisis that resembles that of the West. Thus, Guénon's writings were regarded as a remedy to this crisis, and his Turkish followers have applied his criticism towards modern Turkey. Moreover, the Turkish Guénonians oppose the Muslim modernists who endeavour to harmonize Western modernism and religious traditions, and also any project of Islamization of modernity. Doing so, they apply to Atatürk's modern Turkey

the same criticism that the French metaphysician had applied, fifty years before, to the West. However, these Guénonians are convinced that this situation can't be resolved through any re-Islamization of the society, but rather in emphasizing the inner side of Islam, through Sufism, and searching the ultimate Truth (Zarcone 2002b; Sedgwick 2004 : 254–7). Conversely, Guénon's ideas are fiercely opposed by Islamist thinkers and theologians who interpret these ideas as a contemporary rehabilitation of Batinism and Muslim heresy, and consequently of esotericism and occultism (Zarcone 2002b). Although almost all the books of Guénon have been translated into Turkish, the Guénonians are a minority and Guénons's writings are not popular among the Turkish Freemasons. Guénon's critique of spiritualism (*L'Erreur spirite*, 1923) was translated into Turkish very recently (1996) and didn't seem to have aroused any reactions or sparked interest among practitioners of, or opponents to, spiritualism.

CONCLUSION

The Ottoman Empire has welcomed the Western technology and modernity (i.e. liberalism, constitutionalism, etc.) since the beginning of the nineteenth century. But like in Europe – France particularly – the interest in the occult sciences in general was far from negligible in this country. A great interest in Kardec's spiritualism and many Western occult sciences and divination has emerged in this country, followed by attempts to understand the Eastern magic with the eyes of the natural and experimental sciences, as with the new physics and chemistry. As with esotericism in the West, the Batini movement in Turkey (close in its nature to Western esotericism), when confronted by the European modernity and by the introduction of occultism among the Muslims, was forced to adapt to the new situation. Striking is the fact that spiritualism had a very strong impact upon the Ottoman and Turkish elites, since the nineteenth century and up to the 1960s. Facing the challenge of modernity, spiritualism was interpreted by many Europeans and Turks as a new science and also a philosophy that can surpass the "positive" sciences in several fields. However, in 1925, the Turkish Republic banned the Sufi orders and prohibited the practice of several traditional forms of magic and divinations (some having over time mixed with Western occult sciences), launching one of the sharpest persecutions of "occultism" in modern times, in the name of science and the fight against superstitions. Although Turkish occultism and traditional magic had suffered from this interdiction, they have re-emerged gradually since the 1950s. Nowadays, as the result of more than one century of continuous and productive exchanges between Turkey and Europe in the field of esotericism and occultism, the face of Turkish occultism reflects, mostly in urban milieu, the harmonization of Western occult sciences with traditional Turkish magical arts and even with some remnants of Central Asian shamanism.

NOTES

1. Although it has been contested, Faivre's typology is helpful enough for our purpose. See the adjustments made to this typology in Hanegraaff (2005: 339–40) and von Stuckrad (2010: 46–64).
2. About Neoplatonism in Muslim mysticism see Morewedge (1992).
3. I have translated into French such poetry by a Sufi author of the twentieth century in Zarcone (1993: 479–82). See an analysis of this genre in Uçman (2005).
4. About this debate in nineteenth/twentieth-century Turkey, see Zarcone (1993: 154–61) and Kara (2005: 568–9).
5. On Hurufism see Algar (1997, 2004) and Mir-Kasimov (2007).
6. See Radtke (1989: 859–61); Halm (1989: 861–2); Daftary (1990: 137–8).
7. About Hermes/Idris in Islam see Lory (1988) and Peters (2004).
8. On Bektashism and especially on its rituals see Birge (1965: 175–204); Soyyer (2005); Zarcone (2008b).
9. *Ulum-i garibe* is considered the exact equivalent of "occult science" in the *New Redhouse Turkish English Dictionary* (Istanbul: Redhouse, 1968).
10. There are many details about the practice of these occult sciences among the Ottoman at this time in Abdülaziz Bey (1995: 359–74).
11. Mehmed Ataullah, the shaykh of the Mevlevi lodge of Galata, the Western district of Istanbul, was made a mason in a British lodge at the end of the nineteenth century; see Zarcone (2007b).
12. Paris, no. 10, p. 74.
13. *L'Initiation*, vol. 3 (December 1892), p. 267.
14. From the correspondence of the Veritas lodge with the Grand Orient of France (Library of the Grand Orient of France, Paris).
15. From the correspondence of the Veritas lodge with the Grand Orient of France (Library of the Grand Orient of France, Paris). On the masonic lodges of Salonica, see Dumont (1984).
16. See extract of one of these letters (with a facsimile) in Encausse (1954: 335).
17. *L'Initiation*, 4 January 1893, p. 275.
18. See Vett (1923).
19. An article about telepathy was published in 1920 in another journal (Rahmi 1920).
20. Observations made at the Kadiri convent directed by the shaykh Misbah Efendi, Istanbul.
21. Shushut's teaching is known thanks to the publication of the notes taken during the weekly assemblies by his disciples between 1957 and 1978; see Yonsel (1996).
22. "Tasavvuf, mysticisme'dir. Esotérisme, ledün demektir" (Yonsel 1996: 118, 299).
23. The notes taken by his disciples during the meetings were collected and published in Rifai (1991–2).
24. Very recently Mustafa Tahralï has been interviewed by Ismail Kara, a Turkish Islamologist, about his first encounter with Guénon's writings in the year 1960 when he was a student in Paris; see Kara (2010).

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CHAPTER 10

RECEPTION OF OCCULTISM IN INDIA

The case of the Holy Order of Krishna

Henrik Bogdan

> "Do what thou wilt," then, is the categorical imperative of the Hindu-Yogi Philosophy. (Bhikshu 1928)

> If then the West would take a leader for their occult rejuvenation we would recommend Crowley as the one man that can unite and equilibrate the magic symbols of East and West.
> (*The Kalpaka*, September 1929)

The discussion of the term "Western" in Western esotericism – and by extension the Western understanding of occultism – often focuses on the various problems connected to the construct of the "West", and the tendency among a number of scholars to exclude traditions that are viewed as being non-Western, such as Jewish and Islamic forms of esotericism, but also various Eastern traditions. Yet, it is evident that non-Western traditions have exerted a profound influence on Western esotericism and occultism. A case in point is, of course, the theosophy of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–91) and Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907), which to a large extent can be described as a Western interpretation of Hindu and Buddhist traditions, set within the context of nineteenth-century occultism. In this chapter I would like to discuss the other side of the encounter of occultism with Eastern spiritual practices, that is the migration of occultism into a Hindu context.

Using the Holy Order of Krishna (which has existed for over a century) as a case study, I will discuss how aspects of occultism have been adopted and reinterpreted in a Hindu setting – and more specifically the adoption and reinterpretation of Aleister Crowley's motto "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" by the Holy Order of Krishna as a "supreme mantra" during

the late-1920s and 1930s. Furthermore, I trace the reverse influence of the Holy Order of Krishna upon British occultism through the enigmatic Swami Pareswara Bikshu (or Yogi Bhikshu). Bikshu, who was affiliated with the Holy Order of Krishna, acted as the personal "guru" to a Londoner named David Curwen (1893–1984), who got in contact with Aleister Crowley (1875–1947) in 1944, and became the last IX° member (the highest initiatory degree, in which heterosexual magic was taught) of the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO) during Crowley's lifetime. Bikshu's views on Tantra, as expressed in an important manuscript commentary on the *Ananada Lahari*, would later exert a profound influence on the British occultist Kenneth Grant (1924–2011) and his interpretation of sexual magic. The object of this chapter is not to propose some sort of new theoretical or methodological approach of how we should study occultism in a non-Western context, but simply to show how aspects of occultism can acquire totally new meanings when migrating into a new context, and I would argue that this is yet another aspect of the dynamic and complex field of western esotericism that deserves to be studied. As discussed in the introduction to the present collection, when we speak of occultism we are not dealing with any clear cut-borders or static belief systems. On the contrary, that which we are identifying as occultism is subject to the complex processes related to syncretism, change and reinterpretations.

THE LATENT LIGHT CULTURE AND THE HOLY ORDER OF KRISHNA

Before discussing the case-study of this chapter, the Holy Order of Krishna, allow me to provide a short background as to how I got interested in this obscure Indian organization that is virtually unknown in the West today. For several years now, I have been researching various aspects of the work of the British occultist Aleister Crowley. I have particularly been interested in Crowley's sexual magic, and the fact that it has frequently been claimed that it derived from tantric sources. The idea of a relationship between the sexual magic of the OTO and tantric practices was in particular promoted by Kenneth Grant, who had been Crowley's secretary for a short period in the 1940s. Grant has claimed in his published work that Crowley met a certain David Curwen in the 1940s who had been initiated into Tantra by a South Indian tantric adept. On 5 December 1945, Curwen became the last person to be initiated into the IX° of the OTO by Crowley, but according to Grant Curwen came to realize – based on his knowledge of Tantra derived from his South Indian Guru – that certain aspects of the sexual magic of the OTO were incorrect, and he would later initiate Grant into the tantric mysteries. Grant subsequently developed a new form of sexual magic in his revised version of the OTO that he began to promulgate in the so-called New Isis Lodge in the middle of the 1950s.

Curwen and his alleged Indian Guru have received an almost legendary status in the so-called Typhonian Trilogies by Grant, and I decided to investigate the Crowley–Curwen–Grant connection, and discover what role, if any, the "South Indian Guru" had played. After a lot of research, a small amount of detective work and a fair amount of luck, I managed to track down Curwen's grandson, who lives in London. About the same time, I received copies of the correspondence between Crowley and Curwen (of which only a few excerpts had been published in some of Kenneth Grant's works), for which I had searched for years. More importantly, it turned out that some of Curwen's papers had survived, and among them was a collection of secret degree documents from the 1930s of a – to me – unknown organization, the Holy Order of Krishna, based in India.

Now, who was Curwen's mysterious tantric guru? Kenneth Grant identifies him as Swami Pareswara Bikshu, a "high priest of a Shakta temple in Travancore" (Grant 1999: 85).[1] There are no accessible records of Swami Pareswara, but fortunately a photograph of Curwen's guru has survived among Curwen's papers, and on it his name is written as "Bhikshu". Judging from Curwen's surviving papers it is evident that Curwen had been a member of the Order of Krishna, and that Curwen's guru was in fact his superior in the Order of Krishna. The correspondence between Crowley and Curwen, together with an account of my research, was published in *Brother Curwen, Brother Crowley: A Correspondence* (Crowley & Curwen 2010), and the present chapter is partly based on the research presented in my introduction to this volume.

The Holy Order of Krishna is linked to the Latent Light Culture, founded by Dr T. R. Sanjivi in Tinnevelly (South India) in 1905, and is still in existence, and it appears that the Latent Light Culture worked as an outer organization for the Order of Krishna. According to *The "Order of Krishna" Manifesto* (Latent Light Culture 1931) the Order is working "its Will through the medium of the Latent Light Culture", and "The Latent Light Culture is the only medium of communication and correspondence with the *Order* of *Krishna* and between the Members of the Order" (*ibid*.: 2). Both the outer Latent Light Culture and the inner Order of Krishna's teachings and organizational structures provide us with an intriguing mixture of Hindu spirituality and occultism. At the core of the teachings we find a classical Hindu concept of Krishna covering all of God's aspects, such as being all-powerful, supremely merciful and all-loving, as formulated in *Gaudiya Vaishnava* philosophy (originally formulated by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, 1486–1534). However, at a superficial level both the Latent Light Culture and the Order of Krishna seem to be focused on a mixture of Hindu practices such as yoga, with Western occultist practices. According to an early newspaper advertisement the Latent Light Culture was established for "the promotion of the Study and Practice of Mental Sciences and Finer Forces" and it undertook to teach by correspondence topics such as "hypnotism, personal magnetism, mesmerism, occult-therapeutics, mind reading, telepathy,

will-power, clairvoyance, and magnetic healing". Today, the purpose of the Latent Light Culture is described as follows:

> The Institute imparts practical training in Ancient Yoga, Mental and Psychic Sciences, Spiritualism and Tantra Shastra. As the name stands for, it cultures the light that is latent in one and all.
>
> The Institute was established with the purpose of educating people to culture the light that is latent in one and all. To those who seek the inner peace and joy, we are here to help. Remember! Many are called, few choose, still fewer care to get chosen. The Latent Light Culture deals with every individual individually because it knows that every individual has his own Sva-Dharma – a personal Rule-of-Life. For the development of man and his inner faculties, we offer courses on Ancient Yoga and Spiritualism.
>
> The Latent Light Culture is a pioneering institute of the East in Ancient Yoga, Mental and Spiritual Sciences.[2]

One can easily detect the influence from theosophy, but there are also other influences, such as from New Thought and Freemasonry. The latter is obvious in the organizational structure of the Holy Order of Krishna, which is divided into three main degrees that correspond to the three Craft degrees of Freemasonry: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason. There are also a number of higher degrees but, just as in Freemasonry, they seem to be of less import. However, in contrast to initiatic societies such as Freemasonry, the Holy Order of Krishna did not appear to confer their degrees through rites of initiation, but instead the teachings of each degree were transmitted through "lessons" which were mailed to the initiates at regular intervals. In order to advance through the degrees, the members had to pass certain exams and to submit detailed records of the prescribed practices, such as yoga. Many of the lessons, however are not written by the Holy Order of Krishna, but actually consist of long excerpts from published works, although the original sources are not stated in the lessons. For instance, one lesson entitled "Palmistry" for the Probationary Grade, is in fact taken verbatim from a work by William Horatio Bates (1860–1931) *The Cure of Imperfect Sight by Treatment Without Glasses* (1920). In some instances the name of the original author is given; for instance, the lesson no. 33 for the First Grade, "The Elixir of Life" is composed of extracts from an article written by Godolphin Mitford, with the caveat "We give the text of the instructions, revise it and add such details as are in our view accepted by the Order".[3]

According to the aforementioned manifesto, the initiatory system of the Order of Krishna is divided into a Probationer's Grade and three main degrees. In "Grade 0", the Probationer's Grade, the aspirant is expected to study twenty-four lessons (1–24). These lessons cover a wide variety of topics and practices, including pranayama, thought-control, an introduction to the astral plane and so on.

When the probationer has competed the first twenty-four lessons, he has "an indefeasible right to admission into the Order of Krishna, as Yajamana, sacrificer", that is, Grade One. In this grade there are another fourteen lessons (25–38) which include the study of the Bhagavad Gita, "Directions for the Entered Apprentice", "Sankhya Yoga as Samadhi", "Correct Teaching on the Pineal Doorway", "details of Raja Yoga", "the Elixir of Life", "Hatha Yoga" and so on. In addition to these instructions one is expected to carry out "the Daily Ritual of Life", and to ground "himself in practice in one of the two paths of Sankhya and Yoga".

After three months the member is eligible for admission to the Second Grade, that of *Pra-Vesya*, upon which he has to submit the Note Books which he has kept during his period as a member of the First Grade. He is also required to complete successfully a written Question Paper before he is accepted into the Second Grade. In the Second Grade there are additional lessons that "give the theory and practice of Yoga completely and without reserve". The member has to keep a record of his yoga practices, and may be admitted to the Third Grade, called *Rajanah* (Prince) after nine months. On applying for the Third Grade the member has to state that he:

- has accepted the First and greatest of all the Privileges of the Order, namely the Law of the Gita: *Yatha Ischasi Tatha Kuru—Do Thy Will and Rejoice,*
- recognises that he has become and is free and independent, and has destroyed all fear whether of custom, of faith, of other men or death itself,
- devotes himself without further ado to the Service of God, *Krishna*, the Invisible, Secret King, as utterly as he can. (Latent Light Culture 1931: 9)

Although a Fourth Grade (*Chakravartis*, Emperors) and higher degrees are mentioned, the first three grades seem to be the most important ones, just as the three Craft degree are in Freemasonry.[4]

The official magazine of the Latent Light Culture, and by extension the Holy Order of Krishna, was *The Kalpaka: The Psychic Review of the East*, which had been founded in 1905. Edited by T. R. Sanjivi, with A. P. Mukerji[5] as the Associate Editor, the magazine was published from Tinnevelly, India and had a wide distribution in Europe and the United States.

HINDU INTERPRETATION OF THE OCCULT?

The fascinating part about The Holy Order of Krishna from the perspective of the study of Western esotericism and occultism, is how key-concepts taken from a Western context are being reinterpreted along Hindu lines. In the *Order of Krishna Manifesto* (1931) it is described how the Order of Krishna has existed

since before the beginning of time, and how the "Divine Mysteries of Krishna were first instituted in this aeon by Zarathustra – Dhritarashtras, Emperor-Kings of ancient Indo-Iran before the separation and expulsion of the Semites". It is emphasized that the "Mysteries of Krishna" are not limited to Hindu traditions, but can also be found in the West:

> In time the Mysteries ceased to be Mysteries, having been profaned; they were, by the mercy of the Masters, revived in various other forms in a thousand cults – Shakta, Shaiva, Soura in the East, just as they passing on to the West became embodied in the Ritual of the Rosy Cross, the Knight Templars and other Masonic Bodies and Churches.
> (Latent Light Culture 1931: 1)

The idea that there is an ancient tradition that has been handed down from generation to generation is of course not unique to the Western notions of philosophia perennis or later forms of traditionalism, but can also be found in Hindu traditions. However, it is interesting to note how it is being presented, and that Western organizations are specifically mentioned as transmitters of "The Mysteries of Krishna", which are thus seen as a Universal Tradition. At the same time, it is explicitly stated in the Manifesto that the Order of Krishna is not an exclusive organization, but open to members of other esoteric groups:

> The *Order* of *Krishna*, being the more ancient, infringes none of the privileges of other Orders like that of the Illuminists, Rosy Cross, Free Masons, Anuttara Amnaya, Sat Bhai, etc. and is quite willing that Theosophists, Members of other Orders and any other creeds or cult offer themselves for admission to the *Order* of *Krishna.* (*Ibid*.: 5)

A particularly telling example of how the Order of Krishna reinterprets aspects of Western esotericism are the conspicuous and surprising references to Aleister Crowley. It came as a surprise to me when I discovered that the secret degree documents of the Order of Krishna (printed in 1926), which had survived among David Curwen's papers, were headed with the words "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law", which of course is Crowley's central motto. To Crowley, the first primary goal of initiation is self-knowledge or the so-called Knowledge and Conversation with the Holy Guardian Angel, which in essence meant to discover the true self, the Will, and to act out this will.[6] The motto was taken from chapter 1, verse 40 of *The Book of the Law*, or *Liber AL vel Legis*, which had been dictated by a "praeterhuman entity" named Aiwass, to Crowley in Cairo on 8, 9, 10 April 1904.[7] The text identified Crowley as the Beast 666, the Prophet of a New Aeon, a role which Crowley from 1906 onwards fully accepted. In his short tract "The Message

of the Master Therion", Crowley explained the central role of the will in a straightforward manner:

> It should now be perfectly simple for everybody to understand the Message of the Master Therion [i.e. Crowley]. Thou must (1) Find out what is thy Will, (2) Do that Will with (a) one-pointedness, (b) detachment, (c) peace. Then, and then only, art thou in harmony with the Movement of Things, thy will part of, and therefore equal to, the Will of God. And since the will is but the dynamic aspect of the self, and since two different selves could not possess identical wills; then, if thy will be God's will, *Thou art That*. (Crowley 1919: 42)

Crowley's motto of "Do what thou wilt" was not only used as a heading in the secret Grade Lessons of the Holy Order of Krishna, but it was also referred to in one of the two books that Swami Pareswara Bikshu published under the shorter pseudonym Bhikshu. Bhikshu's *A Series of Eleven Lessons in Karma Yoga (The Yogi Philosophy of Thought-Use) and the Yogin Doctrine of Work* was published in 1928 by Yogi Publication Society in Chicago, whose Indian agents were none other than the Latent Light Culture, the public manifestation of the Holy Order of Krishna. In this book Crowley's teachings of "Do What Thou Wilt" are interpreted as congenial to the Hindu theory of *karma*, that is, by controlling the Will that governs the actions man is able to create good *karma*:

> *Act* Thou, therefore, when opportunity confronts you; responding to it, meeting it bravely, utilising it, actively. "*Do* what thou wilt," say the Masters, "Shalt be the whole of the Law," of Dharma of Karma – only he who *doeth* is the Karmi; he who *wills to do* and doeth is the Karmi Yogi; the *Deed* is the *Karma*, his future, his destiny the harvest of his Thoughts and Acts. Your Deed is the expression of your will, the will in you; say then to yourself "I will" and Act. So acting shalt thou not sin, says the Lord Krishna. (Bhikshu 1928: 17)

This is further explained:

> In this then shall be the Ordinance (*Sastra*) for you Karmi Yogi, in the dictum of "Do what thou wilt" which shalt be for thee the whole of the law, teaching you comprehensively what to do, what to avoid, this is only ordinance; "do what thou wilt, then do nothing else"; we shall repeat it constantly, without end, that you may be unified of will, that in all your act you may bring all the universe that is of you, that in your act the whole of you and not the puny portion of you miscalled the "I" at the threshold, at he outer gate of consciousness, may act, and impress itself on the event that anyhow must be. (*Ibid*.: 18–19)

And:

> "Do what thou wilt shalt be the whole of the Law" is the mantra of this lesson of Karma Yoga. There is no law beyond "Do what thou wilt" – *Ishta Poorti* – the ordinance is called in the Vedas. The individual will such as it feels to be, has always the last word, the casting vote. (*Ibid.*: 33)

Despite his enthusiasm for Crowley's writing, Swami Pareswara Bikshu's familiarity with his work seems to be limited to a few of published books, notably *The Equinox* III(1) (Crowley 1919), from which Bikshu quoted segments of "Liber CL, De Lege Libellum" (Bhikshu 1928: 66–7), "Liber CI, An Open Letter to Those Who May Wish to Join the Order" (*ibid.*: 127), and paraphrased Crowley's commentary on Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence*:

> There is an aspect of the doctrine of Detachment that has been rediscovered in the West and may be found, as "art for art's sake." Actually it is an indifference especially necessary when wrong thoughts come and afflict one and tempt to persuade one that if on goes on the Path of Karma Yoga he will go mad or some such thing. Says Frater O.M.[i.e. Aleister Crowley]: "In times of dryness the 'Devil' comes to you and persuades you that it is most necessary for your spiritual progress to repose (i.e. refrain from the task of the Karma Yogi). He will explain that by the great law of action and reaction you should alternate the task you have set forth to do with something else, that you should in fact somehow or other change your plans. (*Ibid.*: 134–5)[8]

This alternative interpretation of "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" also appeared in *The Kalpaka*. In the "Notes of the Month" of the April 1929 issue, it was discussed how the "cult of the Vauls (Bengalee, bauls)" – described as "aborigines of Bengal" – and their ancient religion is "akin to the religion of the Bhagavad Gita in many respects":

> And *the* leading tenet is the Doctrine of "Do what thou wilt", in the sense that they obey no master, nor injunctions, nor canons, nor customs, nor submit to man-made distinctions exerted by our desires and antipathies. "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" says the Gita also (18.63) but of course it is not the same thing as "do what you like"; decidedly not.[9]

To Crowley, the nature of Will is Love, as expressed in Liber AL I:57, "Love is the law, love under will", which Crowley explained as "Love under will – no casual pagan love; not love under fear, as the Christians do. But love magically directed and used as a spiritual formula … This love, then, should be the serpent

love, the awakening of the Kundalini" (Crowley 1974a: 164). Again, the quote from Liber AL is reinterpreted in a radically different way by the Holy Order of Krishna, as indicative of the Bhagavad Gita and to the "One religion of God the Invisible King":

> Love, to the Vauls, is the law; love under the Law of "Do what thou wilt"; they delight in the everchanging play of life which cannot be expressed in mere words but of which something may be captured in song through the ineffable medium of rhythm and tune. Here is the religion of the Gita; that all men whatever their religious persuasion of the heart shall, as indeed they do, meet within the influence of music, of the chant, whatever religion it may belong to. It is not the words nor even the ideas therein but the rhythm and tune, the harmony and melody that shall bring together all men to the One religion of God the Invisible King who can be *heard* albeit He may not be seen.[10]

In the September 1929 issue of *The Kalpaka*, Crowley is not only mentioned explicitly, but even hailed as a potential Western leader with the capacity of uniting the "magic symbol of East and West". Significantly, Crowley's interest in "sex mysteries" is mentioned, and his esoteric writings *The Rites of Eleusis and Ecclesiae Gnosticae Catholicae Canon Missae* are praised:

> We have from the *Detroit Free Press* of May 1929 an account of Aleister Crowley and his effort to found an Abbey of Thelema – DO WHAT THOU WILT SHALL BE THE WHOLE OF THE LAW. Of course Crowley tried merely to materialise the dream of inimitable Rabelais – and *failed*. He did take care to affirm that "Do What Thou Wilt" is not the same thing as Do what you like, but none the less so heterodox were his methods, so much against the prudery of Puritan Xty were his open truths that several countries would have nothing to do with this wonderful man. That he is one of the greatest mystics the western world has ever known is evident from the fact that the teachings of the Gita and of the Tamil Siddhas find their full expression in the few works that Crowley has left behind. And to the West his Rites of Eleusis and his Canon Gnostical Ecclesiae [*sic*] stand for their usefulness on a distinct level, that is hard to attain. Very true dabbled in sex mysteries but not so bably [*sic*] (judged from the results) as Leadbeater did. If then the West would take a leader for their occult rejuvenation we would recommend Crowley as the one man that can unite and equilibrate the magic symbols of East and West.
>
> And Crowley was the foremost in kicking down and out all the rubbish about the "astral plane" such as Dion Fortune revels in. The astral plane as we always said is nowhere else except on the physical

> plane; it is that part of the physical that we see by closing our eyes, hear by shutting our rears to aught else. It is not the mental plane at all and the statements of various people about elementals and elementaries on this plane are utter rubbish as Crowley has said. You can invoke any of these, command them, invoke them, dismiss them, but you shall not blaspheme or ridicule any of these, whether your visions or your creations.
> (Sanjivi 1929: 227–8)

However, quoting Crowley's central motto "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law", even to the extent of proclaiming it as the supreme mantra of the Order, came with the risk of criticism. Crowley had been the target of a fierce campaign by the British yellow press during the 1910s and 1920s. With headlines such as "The most wicked man in the world" and "A man we would like to hang", Crowley was denounced as a devil worshiper, a drug addict (which he in fact was) and a murderer.

Apparently, readers of *The Kalpaka*, and other publications related to the Order of Krishna, easily recognized that references to "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" and "Love is the law, love under will" pointed towards Crowley, despite the fact that Crowley was often not explicitly mentioned, and that these quotes were understood in a completely different way by the Holy Order of Krishna than how Crowley interpreted Liber AL. One of those that objected to the use of "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" was Dion Fortune, who, in her review of *Practical Instruction in Occultism (Yoga)*, published by The Holy Order of Krishna, commented:

> There is one point that may be raised, however. The Order appears to have for its slogan the words "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law." This phrase has somewhat sinister associations in English ears and the organisers of the Holy Order would be wise not to employ it in literature intended for European circulation.[11]

In the April–May 1931 issue of *The Kalpaka*, a short rebuttal of the criticism was published. It is significant since it not only names Crowley explicitly, but also claims that Crowley had been trained by yogis in India:

> We are once again being taken to task for some of our writers quoting often the slogan of verse I8.63 of the Bhagavad Gita "Yatha ischasi tathha kuru" – of which we accepted Crowley's "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law" as the best English paraphrase; and if there is so much public opposition to the very mention of Crowley's name we have to bow thereto, and do so. But that is not to deny that Crowley had been trained in India of men who were great Yogis such as Karunananda, Sabapati Svami's disciple. In deference to occidental

opinion we shall paraphrase the Gita dictum by the English in "Fulfill thy Will".[12]

SWAMI PARESWARA BIKSHU

The exact identity of Swami Pareswara Bikshu (or Yogi Bhikshu as he was also referred to in advertisements for his two published books) is not known, although it has been suggested that it might have been a pseudonym used by the author and occultist William Walker Atkinson (1862–1932). Atkinson was promoter of New Thought and published over one hundred books – many through Yogi Publications Society – using a wide range of pseudonyms such as Yogi Ramacharaka, Swami Bhakta Vishita, Swami Panchadasi, Theron Q. Dumont, Magus Incognito and so on. Philip Deslippe, who is writing the first full-length biography of Atkinson, argues that there are a number of points that bear out the theory that Bhikshu was one of Atkinson's pseudonyms.

First, the style of Bhikshu's *Karma Yoga* and *Bhakti Yoga* is consistent with that found in a variety of the works published under Atkinson's name and his known pseudonyms, then the Bhikshu books use certain phrases typical of Atkinson such as "Yogi Philosophy". The Bhikshu books also cite sources like Henry James, Émile Coué, and various of the philosophers and theosophical authors that were favoured by Atkinson. Further, two articles by "Subhadra Bhikshu" were published in 1919 issues of the magazine *Advanced Thought* that Atkinson both edited and contributed to, while the publication dates for the two Bhikshu books (1928 and 1930) are both from a period when Atkinson was still writing, but there is little published work from him that is known. Finally the Yogi Publication Society was the publisher for nearly all of the work done under Atkinson's "Eastern" pseudonyms.[13] In addition to this, in Bhikshu's book *A Series of Lessons in Bhakti Yoga* the author says: "We have treated in brief, rather we have touched only the fringe of the subject, in Chapter VII of our 'Advanced Course in Yogi Philosophy and Oriental Occultism'" (Bhikshu 1930: 11). This book, first published in 1905, is attributed to Yogi Ramacharaka, a well-known pseudonym of William Walter Atkinson. This would seem to suggest that "Bhikshu" indeed was a pseudonym used by Atkinson.

However, there is still no definitive evidence – such as a copyright entry or direct claim to authorship – that would confirm that Bhikshu was one of Atkinson's many pseudonyms. Also, there is no known connection between Atkinson and The Holy Order of Krishna, and given the fact that he lived in America and died in 1932, he surely could not have been the guru under whom Curwen claimed to have studied for six years during the 1930s. Furthermore, it is explicitly stated in the Publisher's Note to *Karma Yoga* that the "lessons included in this book were written by an Asiatic for the English speaking peoples of the word, and suffer from the fact that the mother tongue of the

writer is not English nor Sanskrit and that his metaphysic is oriental". While this statement might have been a publicity ploy, it is significant that the reader is encouraged to get in contact with the Latent Light Culture in India, and not the Yogi Publication Society in Chicago. Perhaps most importantly, however, is the fact that William Walter Atkinson never refers to Crowley or to "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" in any of his known published writings. Given the central role of Crowley's "Do what thou wilt" in Bhikshu's *Karma Yoga* and in the Holy Order of Krishna, as shown by the secret degree lessons and references in the *Kalpaka*, it would seem Crowley would have been mentioned by Atkinson if "Bhikshu" was one of his pseudonyms.

There is yet another intriguing aspect – directly linked to Aleister Crowley – about the fact that Swami Pareswara Bikshu published two books through Yogi Publication Society. The same publisher had also published two books by Charles Stansfeld Jones (1886–1950), *The Chalice of Ecstasy* (1923) and *Crystal Vision Through Crystal Gazing* (1923). C. S. Jones had joined the A∴A∴ in 1909 and became Crowley's closest disciple during Crowley's stay in the US (1914–19), and was even accepted by Crowley as his "Magical Son", although the two became estranged during the early 1920s. It seems too much of a coincidence that both C. S. Jones and Swami Pareswara Bikshu were associated with Yogi Publications, and it appears plausible that Bhikshu's interest in Crowley – as shown in Karma Yoga and the Grade Papers of the Holy Order of Krishna – might have come from C. S. Jones, but what, if anything, this connection was, is open to conjecture.

BIKSHU'S INFLUENCE ON THE SEXUAL MAGIC OF KENNETH GRANT

Although Curwen and Crowley embarked on a correspondence which would last for almost three years, and Curwen became last person to be initiated into the IX° of the OTO during Crowley's lifetime, little has been written about him. He is not mentioned in any of the Crowley biographies, and the few references that we do have in other sources derive exclusively from the writings of Kenneth Grant.[14] In November 1944 Kenneth Grant, then aged 21, had written to Crowley and shortly thereafter the two met, and for a brief period Grant came to serve as Crowley's secretary.

A few weeks after Curwen had been initiated into the IX° he asked Crowley to be put in contact with other OTO members, and Crowley suggested that he should get in contact with Grant, described as belonging to "the very young generation". Curwen made a lasting impression on Grant: by Grant's own account he was "initiated into the A(nuttara) A(mnaya), and confirmed in IX° OTO, by Frater Ani Abthilal" in 1946. Ani Abthilal is apparently an Order name that Curwen adopted after Crowley's death, while the name that Curwen had chosen in 1945 upon becoming a member of the OTO was Frater A. A. L.[15]

Perhaps mindful of Curwen's privacy, Grant used Ani Abthilal as a pseudonym for Curwen in the references that he made to him in the first two volumes of the first of the so-called "Typhonian Trilogies". It was only in *Remembering Aleister Crowley* (1991), published well after Curwen's death, that Grant finally made mention of him by his true name.

> When I met him, shortly before Crowley's death, he was a member of the IX° OTO. His passion for alchemy was all-consuming; so much so that he had nearly died after imbibing liquid gold. His knowledge of Tantra was considerable. It was through Curwen that I received, eventually, full initiation into a highly recondite formula of the tantric vama marg.
>
> There exists a document relative to this formula compiled by Curwen's erstwhile guru, a South Indian tantric. It is in the form of an extensive commentary on an ancient text of the Kaula School. Curwen lent Crowley a copy of it. In it appeared an adverse criticism of Crowley's attempts at preparing the Elixir of Life. Against it, Crowley had scribbled: "He has not seen my ms. on the subject. But – no failure!" But Crowley had not really succeeded, and it is not surprising. In the instructions which accompany the higher degrees of the OTO, there is no comprehensive account of the critical rôle of the *kalas*, or psycho-sexual emanations of the woman chosen for the magical rites.
>
> The commentary was an eye-opener for Crowley, and it explained some of his preoccupations during my stay at 'Netherwood'. These involved a formula of rejuvenation. The OTO lacked some vital keys to the real secret of magick which Crowley claimed to have incorporated into the higher degrees.
>
> Curwen undoubtedly knew more about these matters than did Crowley, and Crowley was piqued. The *kalas*, or secretions of the tantric *suvasini* {the Scarlet Woman, as she is called in the Crowley mythos} became the subject of a typically Crowleyian joke. He advised Curwen to call on a Captain Gerald Yorke who, Crowley said, retailed bottles of 'suvasini juice', much as he himself – in the days of *The Equinox* – had trafficked in Potted Sex-Appeal Ointment. Curwen followed the advice, and Yorke nearly died – laughing. Yorke told me later that this story, which I originally heard from Curwen, was true. (Grant 1991: 49)

The picture of Curwen that emerges from Grant's work is that of a tantric adept who initiated Grant into the *vama marg*, or Left-Hand Path, and further, whose teachings form the basis of the revised teachings on sexual magic that Grant expounds in his Typhonian Trilogies. These teachings derive from an unpublished typescript that Curwen had received from his Indian guru in the 1930s, described variously as "an initiated Tantric work on the worship of the Supreme

Goddess, by an Adept of the Left Hand Path" (Grant 1972: Acknowledgements) and "an invaluable contemporary Kaula Comment on ancient Tantric rites" (Grant 1973: 2). In *Beyond the Mauve Zone* Grant goes on to identify this text as a commentary on *Anandalahari*:

> Since the publication of *Cults of the Shadow* (1975) I have undertaken further research in the mysteries of the Sri Chakra in connection with the Fire Snake and its Typhonian implicist. I am greatly indebted in this matter to my late friend, Mr. David Curwen, who made available to me a contemporary Comment on an ancient Tantric work, *Anandalahari*. The commentator was a Kaula Adept of the *Anuttara Amnaya*, and I wish to acknowledge this source of information in chapters 3, 4 and 5. It is my understanding that the spiritual lineage represented by this Adept is identical with that which informed Dr. Karl Kellner, the Austrian Freemason who, at the turn of the nineteenth century, was responsible for the revival of the Order of Oriental Templars, or OTO.
>
> (Grant 1999: xi)

Ananda Lahari ("The Wave of Joy") is the first part of the tantric text *Soundarya Lahari*, attributed to the eighth-century advaita philosopher Adi Shankara. It is a hymn of praise addressed to Parvati, the consort of Shiva, which includes metaphysical speculations. Furthermore, Gerald Yorke also connects the manuscript to *Bhairavi Diksha*, initiation into tantric eroto-mystical practices involving a female horde collectively known as the Yoginis.[16] The author of the manuscript claimed to have been a friend of Crowley's teacher at Madura, India,[17] but Crowley denied this and stated that:

> I cannot understand why your teacher should be so careless of fact. His letter says: "He was the student for a time of a brother of mine staying at Madura." I was only at Madura for three days and was nobody's pupil. I had a casual conversation for a couple of hours one morning with a local Camille, but there was no suggestion of any sort about tuition.[18]

As shown above, Curwen's guru was definitely familiar with at least some of Crowley's published work, but it is unlikely that there is any truth to the statement that Crowley had been a pupil of a guru in Madura. According to Grant, Crowley is mentioned in the manuscript as having failed to understand the psycho-sexual techniques, but Crowley denied these charges:

> In an invaluable contemporary Comment on a text of the Vama Marg which bears special reference to Shri Vidya in its Chandra Kala recension, Crowley is mentioned as having failed to understand the real nature of the psycho-sexual techniques which he received from the

> Arab Initiate via Kellner and Reuss. In a marginal note to a typed copy of this Comment, Crowley denies the charge of failure and adds that the commentator "has not seen my manuscript on the subject".
>
> (Grant 1973: 102)[19]

Judging from the correspondence the tantric manuscript was probably sent along with other papers to Crowley on 28 August 1945, and Crowley took a great interest in this. In fact, he even sent it to his friend and erstwhile disciple Gerald Yorke, and commented: "I am sending you under separate cover registered a private MS. which has been lent to me. I have found it of considerable interest so far as I have gone with it. I must ask you to let me have it back as soon as you are through with it as I must return it to the lender."[20]

Four days later Crowley had received Yorke's opinion on the manuscript, and answered:

> Thanks for yours. I do not know who wrote the typescript but the style of typing is very familiar to me, and I think it is a Babu of some sort, as you yourself apparently do.
>
> I could give you a whole lot of information, but not by writing, the subjects which these MSS. treat being unsuitable for that medium. The MS. was lent me by Mr. David Curwen, 7a Melcome Street, Baker St., N.W.1, but I am not at all sure whether he will be pleased at me having disclosed his name. He is a very curious person.
>
> I quite agree with you about the inherent difficulties in the Manuscript. One of the troubles is that, as you know, the Hindus have got an Anatomy of their own. That, too, you seem to have noticed.
>
> It is true that from what he writes it would appear that he is making everything depend almost exclusively upon the physical or physiological basis; but when you go into that with him you find there is a whole lot of additional stuff about mantras and various magical methods, including secret medicines and the like. In a letter I got from him a day or two ago Curwen talks about their sending him certain Salts from India and speaks of a great deal of magical work having been done in India. It is all very puzzling. Naturally I got in contact with this subject quite a lot while I was in India, and on the whole I was repelled, though I had no moral scruples on the subject. I came to the conclusion that the whole thing was not worth while. They do a sort of Cat and Mouse game with you: they give you the great secret, and then you find there is something left out, and you dig up this and go for a long while in a rather annoyed condition, and then you find there is yet another snag. And so on, apparently for ever.
>
> In any case it did not square with my ideas of initiation. I never wanted to do Hatha Yoga, "seek ye first the kingdom of God" etc.

> I am interested and a little surprised at the extent of your knowledge of all these subjects. You must have put in a great deal of hard work.[21]

To what extent, then, does the sexual magic of the OTO derive from Eastern tantric practices? The answer to this question needs to be searched for in two different places. First, the possibility of tantric influences on pre-Crowley OTO; and second, knowledge of tantric practices on the part of Crowley himself. In respect of the first, it must be stated that the available evidence is far too limited to draw any conclusive conclusions. Reuss asserted that he had not created the OTO on his own, but that he had been assisted in this project by the Austrian Freemason Carl Kellner (1850–1905) and the German theosophist Franz Hartmann (1838–1912). It is Kellner in particular who has been credited as the source of sexual magic of the Order, and his knowledge of yoga – and some would claim Tantra – allegedly stems from his meeting with two Indian gurus, Bheema Sena Pratapa and Mahatma Agamya Paramahamsa, and the Arab Hadji Soliman ben Aïsa.[22] The problem with this theory is that, first, it is highly unlikely that Kellner had anything to do with the formation of the OTO since the Order was founded after his death, and second, the surviving texts written by him show no familiarity with sexual magic or Tantra (Pasi 2005: 899). In a similar manner, the surviving evidence simply does not confirm the notion that Reuss had any deeper knowledge of tantric practices. It is an undeniable fact, though, that Reuss did connect the sexual magic of the OTO with Hindu yogic practices as the following passage from the Jubilee edition of *Der Oriflamme* (1912) shows:

> At the end of the previous article, it was explained that the key to opening up the secret, underlying all masonic symbols, is the doctrine of Sexual Magic …
>
> We say in our Manifesto that we supply the duly prepared Brother with the practical means to gain even in this terrestrial life proofs of his immortality.
>
> Well, one of these means is a certain Yoga exercise.
>
> Brother Dr. Kellner states in his publication on Yoga: Yoga is a very old doctrine, kept secret for a long time, and anyway little known, which gives its disciples, through certain exercises, the ability to evoke in himself at will the phenomena of artificial somnambulism.
>
> Depending upon the kind of technique used for the attainment of Yoga, one distinguishes different kinds of Yoga, and in this context the nerve centres (Nadis) and the 10 different kinds of breath (Vayus) play an important role.
>
> The old Indian physiological names for the 10 Vayus are Prana (in heart), Apana (in the area of the anus), Samâna (in the area of the navel), Udâna (in the throat), Vyâna (in the whole body), Napa (in

> the reproductive organ), Kurma (opens the eyelids), Krikara (causes sneezing), Devadatta (causes yawning), Dhananjaya (penetrates the outer course body).
>
> Now, sexual magic deals with the Vayus Napa (in the reproductive organ), specified in the sixth place. (Reuss 1912)[23]

In a short article entitled "Mystic Anatomy" published the following year in the *Oriflamme*, Reuss went into even greater detail in explaining the Eastern theory behind the sexual magic of the OTO, and in the text we find a rare direct reference to Tantra in relation to OTO: "The Sympathicus is played on by the Tantrikas, the writings of Sakti, or worship of female energy" (Reuss 1913).

The Eastern references notwithstanding, sources of Reuss's sexual magic point in another direction, namely The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor. This order had been founded in the early 1880s and had branches in the United States, England, France and Sweden. The Order was governed by Peter Davidson (1837–1915) and Thomas Henry Burgoyne (*c.*1855–*c.*1895) with Max Theon (Louis M. Bimstein, *c.*1848–1927) as Grand Master. The most conspicuous aspect of the teachings of H.B. of L. (as the Order was known) was a particular form of sexual magic, based on the teachings of Paschal Beverly Randolph (1825–75).[24] These teachings found their way via the Hermetic Brotherhood of Light into the OTO.[25]

It has been claimed that Crowley had first-hand knowledge of Tantra, or *vamacharya*, from the time of his travels in Asia, notably from his visit to Ceylon in 1901 (Sutin 2000: 141).[26] It seems highly unlikely, though, that Crowley's knowledge went beyond a mere superficial theoretical knowledge of the subject as there is nothing in his diaries from this period to suggest that he had been initiated into a tantric group. However, according to Gerald Yorke Crowley "did get Tantrik knowledge from Subhapati Swami [sic] in Madras, or so he told me".[27] It should be remembered, furthermore, that little had been published on Tantra at this point in any Western language, and that Crowley's knowledge of Sanskrit, the main language in which the tantras were recorded, was very limited. It is furthermore quite surprising that Crowley does not appear to have been familiar with the works of Sir John Woodroffe (1865–1936), whose books were the single most important sources of Tantra in the West during the first half of the twentieth century. By his own account, Crowley had studied Tantra through the works of authors such as Patanjali and Swami Vivekananda[28] (1863–1902):

> I also studied all the varieties of Asiatic philosophy, especially with regard to the practical question of spiritual development, the Sufi doctrines, the *Upanishads*, the *Sankhya*, *Veda* and *Vedanta*, the *Bhagarad-Gita* [*sic*] and *Purana*, *The Dhammapada*, and many other classics, together with numerous writings on the Tantra and Yoga of such men

> as Patanjali, Vivekananda, etc. etc. Not a few of these teachings are as yet wholly unknown to scholars. I made the scope of my studies as comprehensive as possible omitting no school of thought however unimportant or repugnant. (Crowley 1954: 157)

Even though Crowley recommended the use of yoga to his disciples and readers in books such as *Book Four*, *Part I* (1911) and *Eight Lectures on Yoga* (1939), he all but gave up the practice of yoga himself after he had immersed himself in various yogic practices around 1901 under the guidance of Shri Parananda, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan (1851–1930), Solicitor-General of Ceylon (Crowley 1989: 235–6). In a letter to Gerald Yorke Crowley explains his attitude towards yoga in connection with Curwen's tantric manuscript:

> I cannot agree that Asana and Pranayama are exclusively Hatha Yoga studies. The point surely lies in the motive. I have never wanted anything but spiritual enlightenment; and, if power, then only the power to confer a similar enlightenment on mankind at large.
>
> I think you are wrong about my history. I did practically no Yoga of any kind after my return from my first journey to India. I attempted to resume practices at Boleskine and elsewhere, and could not force myself to do them. The Samadhi is a sort of bye-product of the operation of Abramelin.[29]

It should come as no surprise that Crowley's general attitude towards Tantra was positive. In keeping with the theories of evolutionism that dominated thought on the history of religions during Crowley's formative period, he recognized Tantra as a primitive stage of what he called the "White school of Magick", the tradition with which he identified his own system.[30]

> Paradoxical as it may sound the Tantrics are in reality the most advanced of the Hindus. Their theory is, in its philosophical ultimatum, a primitive stage of the White tradition, for the essence of the Tantric cults is that by the performance of certain rites of Magick, one does not only escape disaster, but obtains positive benediction. The Tantric is not obsessed by the will-to-die. It is a difficult business, no doubt, to get any fun out of existence; but at least it is not impossible. In other words, he implicitly denies the fundamental proposition that existence is sorrow, and he formulates the essential postulate of the White School of Magick, that means exist by which the universal sorrow (apparent indeed to all ordinary observation) may be unmasked, even as at the initiatory rite of Isis in the ancient says of Khem.
>
> (Crowley 1954: 34–5)

To a certain extent the metaphysics of Tantra appeared congenial to Thelema, and Crowley went so far as to suggest that a few passages of *The Book of the Law* referred to the arousal of the *kundalini*.[31] As mentioned above, Reuss's main source for the OTO's sexual magic was probably the writings of Paschal Beverly Randolph and The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, and it is this tradition that lies at the heart of Crowley's sexual magic. It is significant that we find no references to tantric practices in the secret instructions that Crowley wrote for the members of the highest degrees of the OTO: *De Arte Magica*, *Agape vel Liber C vel Azoth*, and *Emblems and Mode of Use*, nor in the secret instructions he wrote for the seventh and eight degrees: *De Natura Deorum* and *De Nuptiis Secretis Deorum cum Hominibus*.[32] The symbols used by Crowley in these secret texts derive almost exclusively from Western esoteric traditions, most notably alchemy. The one notable exception to this being part XVI of *De Arte Magica*, entitled "Of certain Hindu theories". In this section Crowley discusses the belief that *Prana* (force) resides in the *Bindu* (semen), and the differences between mystical and magical use of the semen. The mystic withholds the semen, which is reabsorbed through the tissues of the body, whereas the magician produces an elixir which then is consumed (Crowley 1974b: xvi). The influence from The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor on the sexual magic of Crowley is evident in his secret instructions on the subject, as pointed out by Martin P. Starr (2003: 25n). In *Agape vel Liber C vel Azoth* Crowley states "Yet of all these powers I name but seven, the glories of Eulis; the stars upon the foreheads of the Brothers of Hermetic Light" (Crowley 1973: 215). *Eulis!* is the title of an important book published by Randolph in 1874 which contains references to sexual magic,[33] and the Brothers of Hermetic Light is probably a direct reference to The Hermetic Brotherhood of Light, mentioned above. It needs to be stressed that sexual magic was not something that Crowley openly propagated, but something which he reserved for his closest disciples. Throughout his published writings, however, there are innumerable more or less veiled references to sexual magic, such as in his so-called Gnostic Mass, *Ecclesiae Gnosticae Catholicae Canon Missae*, one of the texts praised by The Holy Order of Krishna in 1929.

Two years after Crowley's death, in 1949 Gerald Yorke published a short article called "Tantric Hedonism" in *The Occult Observer* in which it was stated that certain sexual techniques used by tantric yogis to make an Elixir, were known by the OTO:

> Tantric yogis who follow this path insist that physical processes are involved. For them semen (*bindhu*) is the gross form of a subtle essence called *ojas* which is the White Eagle of the Alchemists. *Amrita* is not normally present in the human body, but is produced by the marriage of the White and Red Eagles; yet its production is essential for that sublimation of the subtle body without which the final body of the soul or rather spirit (*atma*) with God (*Atman*) is impossible. Two methods

> are taught for making this Elixir, one by the three *oli mudras* of the Hathayogins, which are unknown to western tradition, the other in the *Kaula* circle of the Bhairavi Diksha, when the Suvacini dances naked. This latter technique is known in the west and is the treasured secret of an Hermetic Order known as the OTO. (Yorke 1949: 178–9)

Yorke was not alone in drawing a connection between the sexual practices of the OTO and Hindu Tantra. A few years later, in 1952, Kenneth Grant published a *Manifesto of the British Branch of the Ordo Templi Orientis* in which he claimed that, among other things, the Order promulgated the essential teachings of the Indian Shakta Tantra Shastra:

> In the OTO are promulgated the essential teachings of the Draconian Tradition of Ancient Egypt; the teachings of the Indian Shakta Tantra Shastra; the teachings of the pre-Christian Gnosis; the Initiated Western Tradition as enshrined in the mysteries of the Holy Qabalah, and the Alchemical Mystical and Magical Formulae of the Arcane Schools of the agelong past, as well as the mode of applying practically the essential principles underlying the Spagyric or Hermetic Sciences, the Orphic Mysteries and the use of the Ophidian Current. (Grant 1952a: [1])

A year after Crowley's death Grant was formally acknowledged as a Ninth Degree member by Karl J. Germer (1885–1962), who had succeeded Crowley as international head of the OTO, and on 5 March 1951 Germer issued a charter to Grant to open a camp of the order in London. As the New Isis Lodge was the only chartered OTO body in England at the time, it appears that Grant interpreted the charter as making him the head of the "Order in Britain",[34] although New Isis Lodge actually "did not get underway until 1955" (Grant & Grant 1998: 283, n. 92). However, on 20 July 1955, Germer formally revoked the charter and expelled Grant from the OTO because of a manifesto that Grant had issued the same year.[35]

The manifesto in question was an eight-page pamphlet entitled *Manifesto of New Isis Lodge OTO* in which Grant, through his OTO name Frater Aossic IX°, was identified as the Inner Head of the New Isis Lodge and the OTO (British Branch), using the name The Master Nodens X° for this function. Grant apparently thought little of Germer's letter of expulsion and continued to operate the New Isis Lodge on the basis of "inner Plane" powers.[36]

After Crowley's death, Grant took it upon himself to rework the sexual magic of the OTO along what he considered to be tantric principles. This is hardly surprising, given his growing preoccupation with different aspects of the religions of East Asia. At some time in the 1950s Grant is said to have become a follower of "the Sage of Arunachala", Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi (1879–1950), and during the period 1953–61 he immersed himself in Hindu philosophy and

religion, writing a number of articles on Advaita Vedanta for Indian journals such as *The Call Divine*, published in Bombay.[37]

The New Isis Lodge was active until 1962, and it was in this lodge that Indian Tantra was connected to the sexual magic of the OTO for the first time in a systematic manner.[38] The magical experiments carried out by the New Isis Lodge seem to have had a profound effect on Grant who later on would largely base his so-called Typhonian Trilogies on his time with the lodge. It was during this period that two key texts in the magical system of Kenneth Grant were received as results from rituals performed in New Isis Lodge: *Wisdom of S'lba* (Grant 1994: 166–81) and *OKBISh*, or *The Book of the Spider* (Grant 2002: 1–49). In the Typhonian Trilogies, moreover, Grant writes extensively on his system of sexual magic, particularly in *Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God* (1973) and *Cults of the Shadow* (1975). As with Crowley, the Eighth Degree deals with masturbation and the Ninth Degree with heterosexual sex while the Eleventh Degree in contrast with Crowley's system does not deal with anal sex, but with heterosexual sex during which the woman is menstruating.

According to Grant, Crowley was not aware of the tantric theories on the importance of the female sexual fluids, which Grant calls *kalas*. Grant describes the *kalas* as psycho-sexual secretions of the tantric *suvasini*, and goes on to state that there are sixteen different *kalas* that practitioners of sexual magic deal with and that these form the bases, together with the male fluids, of the Elixir. The *kalas* refers in the Tantras "specifically to the vaginal vibrations brought on by an intensification of ritual procedure during the performance of the Kaula rites" (Grant 1973: 211–12). It is interesting to note that Grant interpreted certain passages of *OKBISh*, or *The Book of the Spider* as referring to David Curwen, in which he is mentioned as "the Alchemist".[39] One of these passages is especially interesting as it intimates that Curwen was affiliated with Grant's New Isis Lodge and that the lodge met in the basement of Curwen's furrier shop on Baker Street.[40] Furthermore, it suggests that Curwen's guru, Swami Pareswara Bikhu, had expelled him from his circle on account of Curwen having broken a vow of celibacy.

> 592-15 *That hand! It wooed him to confess a stark sin, even Beneath Baker Street*
>
> The hand from a past karma charmed the Alchemist [David Curwen] to confess the 'dark' sin that had caused his Guru [Swami Pareswara Bikhu] to banish him from the Mystic Circle for breaking the vow of celibacy enjoined for the long period required to qualify the practitioner in the final phases of the Great Rite. When Frater Aossic [Kenneth Grant] introduced him to Clanda [Barbara Kindred], the Alchemist decided that he might well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb! But he *feared*—and failed. The incident occurred in the basement of a furrier's shop off Baker Street. (Grant 2002: 380)

CONCLUDING REMARK

In this chapter I have discussed how a particular occultist theme can assume new meanings when it is transferred into a new context. Using the example of the reinterpretation of Aleister Crowley's central motto of "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" by the Indian organization the Holy Order of Krishna, I have shown how this particular theme has been given a new understanding, based on the particular Hindu belief system of the Holy Order of Krishna. However, in order to fully understand the mechanisms and processes of transfer and reinterpretation of Crowley's dictum, it is necessary to make a fuller analysis of this Indian organization – a task which is beyond the limited scope of this chapter. Furthermore, I traced the reverse influence of the Holy Order of Krishna upon the British occultist Kenneth Grant and his understanding of sexual magic, through the enigmatic Swami Pareswara Bikshu (or Yogi Bhikshu), via David Curwen who had been a member of the Holy Order of Krishna in the 1930s. The basic aim of this chapter has been to show how occultism is in constant change, how the understanding of practices such as sexual magic or the interpretation of such a well-known occultist dictum as "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" need to be placed in their contexts.

NOTES

1. The name Bikshu, Swami Pareswara is given in the bibliography.
2. See http://www.latentlightculture.org/about.htm.
3. The extracts were taken from G… M… F.T.S. [Godolphin Mitford], "The 'Elixir of Life'", in [Theosophical Society, Madras, India], *Hints on Esoteric Theosophy, No. 1*., (Calcutta: Calcutta Central Press, 1882), Appendix, pp. 54–74. Reprinted from the *Theosophist*, nos. 6 & 7 (1882).
4. On the deveopment of the Craft degrees of Freemasonry, and the later proliferation of so-called High or additional degrees, see Bogdan (2007: 67–106).
5. Swamie A. P. Mukerji was the author of *Yoga Lessons for Developing Spiritual Consciousness* (1911), and *The Doctrine and Practice of Yoga* (1922). Significantly enough, both books were published by Yogi Publication Society, which also published Yogi Bhikshu's two books. The publisher was closely associated with William Walker Atkinson. For further information on Atkinson, see Philip Deslippe's introduction to Atkinson (2011).
6. For detailed discussions on Aleister Crowley and Western esotericism, see Bogdan and Starr (2012).
7. AL I(40): "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".
8. This is a paraphrase of [Aleister Crowley], "Liber LXXI", in *The Equinox* III(1) (1919) p. 87. Liber LXXI or "The Voice of the Silence" was reprinted by The Holy Order of Krishna in 1930 in *The Kalpaka*, with the "Sanskrit restored by Kondinna Bhikku 9-2" and with notes by "Karunananda 6-5". The title of the text is given erroneously as Liber LXXXI.
9. "Notes of the Month", in *The Kalpaka* XXIV(4) (1929): 116.
10. "Notes of the Month", in *The Kalpaka* XXIV(4) (1929): 118.

11. *The Occult* (December 1929): 420. I am indebted to Clive Harper for this information.
12. *The Kalpaka* XXVI(4–5) (1931): n.p. I am thankful to Mr Phil Hine for bringing my attention to this passage. See note 27 on Sri Sabhapaty Swami (b. 1840) and the connection to Crowley.
13. Philip Deslippe to Henrik Bogdan 31 May 2010. I am greatly indebted to Deslippe, who has shared important documents relating to The Holy Order of Krishna.
14. For example, Urban (2006: 128).
15. A.A.L. is short for "I trust in God" in Hebrew. See David Curwen to Aleister Crowley, 10 December 1945 (Bogdan 2010: 91–2).
16. For a discussion of this type of Tantra, see White (2003).
17. David Curwen to Aleister Crowley 1 September 1944.
18. Aleister Crowley to David Curwen 11 September 1945.
19. Gerald Yorke noted that this marginal note was absent from his copy of the manuscript: "My copy did not contain this marginal note. I got it from a ? near Baker St underground station but now forget his name. I met him with A.C.". Marginal note by Gerald Yorke on p. 102 in his copy of Grant's *Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God*, preserved at the Warburg Institute.
20. Aleister Crowley to Gerald Yorke, 16 October 1945.
21. Aleister Crowley to Gerald Yorke, 20 October 1945.
22. Mahatma Agamya Guru Paramahamsa (born c. 1841), author of *Śri Brahma Dhàrà, "Shower from the Highest"* (1905), was one of the first Indian propagators of advaita-vedanta in the West. He visited Europe several times, and met with Aleister Crowley, among others. The meeting is recorded in Crowley's diary for 1906–7. There is a humorous account of Paramahamsa by J. F. C. Fuller under the pseudonym Sam Hardy in "Half-Hours with Famous Mahatmas", in *The Equinox* I(4) (London: Equinox, September 1910), pp. 284–290. Bheema (or Bherma) Sena Pratapa (born c. 1872) was a less known Indian guru who visited Europe at the turn of the century. Hadji Soliman ben Aïssa (born c. 1865), "the invulnerable fakir", was described in the press as both an Arab and an East Indian fakir. He travelled around Europe in the mid-1890s and performed at the Panoptikum in Berlin, among other places. Allegedly, Hadji Soliman ben Aïsa belonged to the secret dervish Order of Saadi, founded by Saadeddin Dschebari in 1335. See also Kaczynski (2009: esp. 90–96).
23. I am indebted to Jan A. M. Snoek for help with the translation.
24. For the sexual magic of Randolph, see in particular P. B. Randolph, "The Ansairetic Mystery" and "The Mysteries of Eulis" in Deveney (1997: 311–26, 327–41).
25. On the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor and the teachings of Randolph, see Deveney (1997); "Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor" and "Paschal Beverly Randolph" in Hanegraaff *et al.* (2005: 486–7, 976–9); Godwin *et al.* (1995); Randolph and de Naglowska (2012). The influence of The Hermetic Brotherhood of Light upon the OTO is stated openly in the official journal of the OTO in which it is claimed that Carl Kellner came in contact with the organization on his travels in Europe, America and the Near East, *Jubilæums-Ausgabe Der Oriflamme* No. VII (September 1912), p. 15.
26. For a discussion on Crowley's relation to Tantra, see Urban (2003a: 138–92; 2003b: 215–23).
27. Marginal note by Gerald Yorke on p. 102 in his copy of Kenneth Grant's *Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God* (1973), preserved at the Warburg Institute. Sri Sabhapaty Swami (b. 1840) was the author of *The Philosophy of Science and Raja Yoga* (ed. S. C. Vasu, 1950) and *Vedantic Raj Yoga: Ancient Tantra Yoga of Rishies* (Lahore, 1880). Although Crowley refers to *Vedantic Raj Yoga* there is no evidence available that they ever met.
28. On Vivekananda's ambivalent attitude towards Tantra see Urban (2003b: 161–3).
29. Aleister Crowley to Gerald Yorke 7 November 1945.
30. In *Magick without Tears* (1954: 28–45), Crowley differentiates between three schools of magick: the Yellow, Black and White.
31. See in particular the "Old Comment" to *Liber AL vel Legis*, verses I:57, II:22 and II:26 in Crowley (1974a).

32. In the instruction for the eighth degree Crowley recommends the following Hindu books: *Shiva Sanhita*, *Hathayoga Pradipika*, *Kama Sutra*, *Ananga Ranga* (Crowley 1973: 202).
33. Only the second edition from 1874 survives. The date of the first edition is unknown (Deveney 1997: 479).
34. Kenneth Grant to Austin Osman Spare, 18 April 1952 (Grant & Grant 1998: 79).
35. Karl Germer to Kenneth Grant 20 July 1955.
36. Kenneth Grant to Bill Heidrick 28 January 1984.
37. These articles have been collected, together with a few later articles, and published as Kenneth Grant, *At the Feet of the Guru* (2006).
38. For further information about this lodge see Grant (1955). See "The Pyramid of Power" by Steffi Grant for the New Isis Lodge's degree system together with corresponding esoteric subjects. Significantly, Tantra is here connected to alchemy. "The Pyramid of Power" was originally printed together with *Key to the Pyramid* (1952b) by Kenneth Grant – three years prior to the formation of New Isis Lodge.
39. David Curwen is interpreted as being linked with the fictional character of Joseph Curwen, from H. P. Lovecraft's novel *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* (1927) (Grant 2002: 367, 389).
40. An acquaintance of Curwen in 1970s has told Tony Matthews that Curwen loaned a room to Grant's group in the 1950s. Tony Matthews to Henrik Bogdan 24 February 2010.

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CHAPTER 11

TRANSNATIONAL NECROMANCY

W. B. Yeats, Izumi Kyôka and *neo-nô* as occultic stagecraft

Emily Aoife Somers

W. B. Yeats's lifelong involvement in the occult – which entailed an enthusiasm of both the experiential and scholarly kinds – has been an item of embarrassment and bewilderment for his many critics. How could one of the twentieth century's most prominent and influential poets also be so continuously interested in such practices as séances, automatic writing, ritual initiation and necromancy? Whatever one's judgement of his esoteric interests might be, Yeats provides a definitive paradigm as to how poetics and occult speculation coincided in producing new stylistics in the modern period. Leon Surette has most vigorously argued the importance of this convergence in the development of literary modernism. In his view, the inception of modern literary praxis depended to a large extent on forms of an occult revival as the "birth of modernism" (Surette 1994: 36). His broad argument asserts the following: "although occultism is marginal to aesthetic culture", its overall role in modernism was to extract "esoteric meanings hidden or occluded beneath an exoteric surface" (*ibid*.: 11, 27). In restoring a sense of occultism – contentious term though it may be – as an inquiry worthy of scholarly attention, Surette highlights how it acted as an alternative hermeneutics for interpreting forms of historical continuity, as a problem of institutional narratives and falsified collective memory. Sympathetic to Surette's general claims, my analysis in this chapter focuses in particular on the ritual practices that W. B. Yeats and Izumi Kyôka established by re-imagining the other-worldly features of *mugen nô* (*nô* drama that frequently deal with ghosts and the supernatural) into a contemporary esoteric format. Since this practice is derived from classical *nô*, but has only a very tenuous connection to it, I term here as *neo-nô*.[1] I am intrigued as to how Yeats fashioned a new stylistics of genre, through occultism, in a kind of stagecraft of twilight that would come to have transnational implications. Yeats's *neo-nô*

imparted tremendous influence on one of Japan's foremost authors of *fushigi* (the mysterious), Izumi Kyôka (1873–1939). Like Yeats, Kyôka reformulated *nô* into a kind of folkloric occult whose necromantic staging of voices utilized such features as haunted geographies, mediumship and historical instabilities, in terms of the past relating to the present in unexpected ways that run against accepted narratives, as both theme and practice for ritualized performance. My more general sense is that, emboldened by a transnational exchange, Yeats and Kyôka critique, through a twilight dramaturgy, their respective nations-in-change, ones that were processing claims to nationalization through interpreting perceived patterns in local history. These two authors employ an occultic strategy in that they both emphasize the interventional power of necromancy as a kind of occultic re-imagining of time. Performed necromancy, in a ritualistic setting of an occultic drama, enacts a kind of transgressive epistemology for seeing beyond normative knowledge that history and politics propagates. The knowledge of the hidden – in this case, the discarded social past and its forms of alternative knowledge, creates a counter-normative magick of positions and movements that disrupts the theatrical metaphysics of time and space and their claims to *real* knowledge.

The purpose realized through this strategy is that, through the ghost's utterances, the autochtonic stability of accepted historiographies becomes challenged and alternative forms of knowledge are made accessible. In order for the dead to speak, there needs to be a dramatic milieu that not only locates their voices, but grants them credibility. Thus, the esoteric dimensions of Yeats and Kyôka's stragecraft developed a framework that was interdimensional in content and intercultural in concept so as to expose hidden and repressed tendencies, in the form of ancestral memory, within the national landscape's landmarks of memory. Specifically, I examine the striking relationships between Yeats's *At the Hawk's Well* and Kyôka's *Yasha ga ike* (*Demon Pond*). Both works exemplify modernist practices of conceiving *neo-nô* drama that was more willfully occultic in their emphasis on necromancy as a legitimate practice than the classical form of ghost-oriented *nô* (*mugen*). In the narrative of both these plays, a haunted site of water acts as a portal of transmutation through which present and past, persons and phantoms, intermingle through a twilight (*tasogare*) epistemology of occultic encounters.

The chronotopic features of both plays seek to enact multiple senses of time as overlapping, the sense of liminality re-imagines time not as a flow but as self-referring spiral, moving in both directions. Previously, Yeats developed a sensibility of *twilight* as representing an interphase through which ancestral voices communicate into the present moment, often through esoteric channels: voices are recovered through séances and necromancy, from fairies and ghosts, and so forth. His literary ethnography, *The Celtic Twilight* (1892, 1902), provides numerous examples of such channelling. Not long after its publication, Akutagawa Ryûnosuke (1892–1927) provided translations of several chapters of

Yeats's work in Japanese for a student magazine (*Dai-san-ji shin shichô*). In both English and Japanese versions, Yeats's formulation had tremendous influence on other authors such as Yanagita Kunio, Saijô Yaso and, as I examine here, on Izumi Kyôka.

With a sensibility that has perceivable similarities to his contemporary, W. B. Yeats, Kyôka would also develop *twilight* as a kind of esoteric hermeneutics for framing investigations into folk history as a secret archive of alternative knowledge. Kyôka formulates his understanding of these practices in his essay *Tasogare no aji* (*The Taste of Twilight*), an essay that contemplates the ways for making *twilight* into a tangible sensation. Like Yeats, Kyôka sought through dramaturgy a way of staging twilight in a manner that subverted the norms of realistic theatre. Rather than engaging with the occult through abstract theory or scholarship, they both advanced a performative sensibility of occultic stagecraft. Through this medium, staged necromantic principles involve the audience in an observatory relationship of narrative, magic and theurgic presentation.

Walter Benjamin identifies the capitalistic, rationalistic logic of *empty homogenous time* as a force for rendering a sense of chronology as synchronous, dependable and categorizable. The asynchronous nature of necromancy rejects this sense of how knowledge and information are transmitted. As an atmospheric concept, *twilight* – conceived of as a liminal space between the seen and the unseen – allowed a concept of in-between-ness for a form of staged interphasing between varying metaphysical states. In their *neo-nô* dramas, the twilight stage reinvents a cultural landscape upon which time and space coalesce in mysterious and disruptive fashions. In order to enact such a paranormal mode, one that outright rejects the norms of Aristotelian realism, Yeats and Kyôka reworked elements of classical Japanese *nô*, especially those subgenres that in particular emphasized ghosts, according to their more contemporary innovations. These two dramatists thus developed *twilight* (*tasogare*) from a theoretical ambience into a stagecraft of phantasmal stylization. Following Ezra Pound's modernistic exhortation to *make it new*, their broader strategy for twilight dramaturgy included aspects of ritual performance and mythopoetics as a means of summoning the dislocated spectres who haunt the local spaces of a nationalizing landscape.

Cognizant of the particular pressures of a forward-thinking modernism and modernity, this development of occultic *neo-nô* (*gendai nô*) utilized the alternative methodologies of occultism to critique the rapid transformation of the local, regional landscape, as motivated by post-Victorian technological rationalism. An anxiety for the possibility of ancestral erasure animates the ancestral presences, which becomes monstrous through historical neglect. But, through portals crafted out of twilight spaces, the cultural past emerges still intact, yet spectrally transfigured, as personae of uncanniness who return as revenants, threatening normative understandings of the historical record with their resonances of trauma and dislocation.

Leon Surrette's descriptive sense of the occult does not restrict it to a single genealogy. This approach informs my understanding of dramatic necromancy as a relationship between occultism and aesthetic culture: "Occultism, then, can reasonably be regarded as metaphysical speculation – speculation about the nature of ultimate reality and of our relationship to it" (Surrette 1994: 13). Necromancy thus plays an occultic function in its potential willingness to uncover historical knowledge that has been actively suppressed, or somehow made inaccessible, by empirical dogmatics. Kyôka and Yeats's interest in these practices enabled them to conceive of alternative performance modes for some of their dramas, which they connect in various ways to the folklore traditions of their regions. Concerned with a way to condense the span of time, and its relationship to historical progress of a community, they sought to enact paratemporal injunctions through which multiple modes of *seeing* could be actualized. Moreover, they both wanted dramatis personae of figures who were more-than-material, beings with a perspective that, while not entirely transcendent of space and time, nonetheless had access to information not empirically evident. In the works I select for discussion below, the phantasm has a political reproach to make, they being the personages related to a historical fissure now made cognizant and present. In this regard, Yeats and Kyôka took what had been parlour-room interests and dramatized them on the stage.

As has been amply documented, Yeats's involvement with H. P. Blavatsky and her Theosophical Society provided a range of influences to his work, with the notion of interdimensional contact being perhaps the most long-lasting. His interests – perhaps more excessive than most – were in alignment with trends in popular culture of the era: a fascination for the immaterial legacy of subjectivity, and the means to access it. Japan, likewise, experienced a similar boom in fascination for necromancy. As Michael Dylan Foster documents, *kokkuri*, a kind of *ouija* board type contraption, became an evening's entertainment in a manner reminiscent of parlour rooms in Europe. Mifune Chizuko, the kimono-wearing medium who would become a model for the Japanese horror film *Ringu* (*The Ring*, 1998) had much the same popularity (and infamy) of a film celebrity.[2] To some extent, an appetite for other-worldliness had taken hold in the modernist imagination. Yeats and Kyôka's emphasis on ephemereality certainly coincides with these trends; but what makes them distinctive, and therefore correlatively similar, is their insistence on willful disturbance of the norms of space and time, as Aristotelian features of good drama, for the purposes of conjuring up a paranormal event. The spectre is not a device incidental to the plot – the spectre is the necessary absence-made-presence that enables the plot to occur. Their concept of *neo-nô* drama requires an occultic formulation, in the form of necromancy, in which the rationally inaccessible is given form, voice, space and manifestation, all of which have powerful influence on the material world.

Spirit communication had a decidedly transnational sensibility to it: since occultism, in general, prefers to be experiential and non-dogmatic, seekers were

free to experiment (and appropriate) considered secret intuitions of metaphysics as perceived to be present in other cultures. And spirit-communication had been an integral practice in the promotion of more popular forms of occultism, as Hermetic societies slowly opened their doors to a wider membership in the modern period. The concept of immaterial presences, made accessible through mediumship, factored into revised models of the psyche that were being produced at the time. As Marina Warner notes, "Ideas of self, of body-soul integrity and personal stability, were remodeled in the violent and protracted encounter with the religious beliefs and rituals of cultures beyond the Empire makers' original countries" (Warner 2006: 277). In the two plays I select for discussion here, both of which employ metamorphic rituals, the phantasm is always linked to the folkloric record as a way of politicizing a sense of the past as a forgotten entity. The phantasm returns – not merely because it is recalled, but because it has a grievance to deliver – as a symptom of the dissipating historical record. Although restored through partial embodiment, it fluctuates in appearance through various interim presences, as a method of conveyance through which transgressive forms of epistemology become dramatized.

NEO-NÔ: TRADITION AS DEPENDENCE AND DEPARTURE

In order to evaluate how W. B. Yeats came to influence Izumi Kyôka in a shared sense of revised *nô* stylistics, I first identify those features of the classical form that influenced Yeats. As it is not necessary to the overall argument of this chapter, I will not provide here an extended review of the critical literature that critiques Yeat's lack of fidelity to classical *nô*. The classical *nô* artform has a long genealogy of performance troupes, private instruction and insular ownership that precluded most Japanese, not to mention Westerners, from accessing the authentic tradition, as claimed by various artistic authorities through proprietary vigilance. Overall, I sense that Yeats – like modernism in general – was not particularly concerned with replicating the static features of a premodern genre. What critics have not acknowledged is how Yeats came to influence Japanese dramatists who, in very similar fashions, broke from the prescriptive rules of *nô* to invent their own derivative dramaturgy. Their derivative stylistics also intentionally deviated from accepted parameters, precisely because they are necromantic and resistant to static, rational prescriptions.

But a measure of derivation from the classical form is obvious in their style and important to their logistics. Yeats and Kyôka were exponents of a contemporary dramatic form that adapted and revolutionized the patterned forms received through *nô* tradition. In particular, Yeats and Kyôka found in *mugen nô*, the subgenre of *nô* associated with dreams and visions, a rich, realized sensibility that enabled the auras of occult and twilight ambience. Classical Japanese drama includes, of course, a vast variety of themes and depictions of

reality, which the critic Konparu Kunio roughly divides between genres of the phenomenal and the phantasmal. *Mugen nô* is a form of phantasmal *nô* that invokes alternative agencies: spirits, god-forms, ancestors and such can speak and perform within and without of normative space and time, and thus be accessible for both recall and revelation. These distinctions for twilight preferences had always been a consideration for scholars. Japanese critics and theorists of nation and culture in the modern period, such as Haga Yaichi and Sakaki Nobutsuna, who edited the multi-volume of *nô*, *Kôchû yôkyoku sôsho* (1913–15), have also emphasized the spectral capabilities of *nô* in their commentaries and annotations. The overall breadth of *nô* categories includes of course foci other than ghosts. However, that a sub-genres such as *mugen* could incorporate a framework of twilight appealed to modernist playwrights with a temperament for the paranormal. In detailing how *nô* links varying time periods to the singularity of place, Konparu Kunio has shown that the actors can be situated in a complex stagecraft of multiple-dimensionality. *Neo-nô*, as a staged metaphysic, suggested thematic textures for encountering the paranormal, as voicing the vanishing or displaced, that could be brought into the present.

In assessing the occultic stagecraft of *mugen neo-nô*, I am not suggesting that the classical genre nor its early modern authors – such as Kan'ami or his renowned son, Zeami – were in any way occultists. Such a reading has been implied in Christopher Lehrich's *The Occult Mind*, a monograph that contains a stimulating (if controversial) section that investigates *nô* drama in relation to the political occultism of John Dee (Lehrich 2007: 61–81). Lehrich stages a comparison between John Dee and Zeami on several accounts. In Lehrich's presentation, Zeami's *nô* plays function variously as a performative cosmology for Buddhist ideals; an esoteric theatre of hieroglyphs; and a *kokugaku* [nativist studies] tool for Tokugawan elites. In terms of the latter, *nô*, in the hands of the state, propagates a visible spectacle of native origins, the glorious past, to ritualize the audience into obedience. But, through relating to Dee's alchemical procedures, an occultic undercurrent flows into Japan nativist prescriptions, as this *nô* genre acts as a restorative declaration of primieval purity. Therefore, politics, paranormal and performance join together in a collective presentation of antique world of truth to fortify power in the present. In Lehrich's view, *nô* also unites "mystical and political dimensions … that pierce the veil of contemporary history and allow access to the truth" (*ibid*.: 78).

In evaluating these trends in Japanese drama in relation to his central thesis, Lehrich is admirably careful and considerate. However, the methodology of this passage seems to position *nô* as directly explicative of Dee, his magic and the Elizabethan intellectual milieu. In Lehrich's view, Japanese artforms are not only directly informative as being relatable to Western occultism, but they can be also actively exegetical in cooperating with it, at least in terms of shared principles. Both Dee and Zeami, he argues, share a mutually identifiable initiatic sensibility, a theatre of hieroglyphs that invokes a trans-historical domain of

knowledge that resists (or even perhaps transcends) the usual discursive operations of normative semiotics through esoteric format.

The comparison is intriguing, but I cannot concur with Lehrich's interpretation of Zeami's relationship to the occult, and I personally find nothing in Zeami that so overtly fashioned *nô* with an occultic mindset. Indeed, such a comparative claim might be very misleading in its construing the sociopolitical ethos of Japanese premodern drama, through such assessments of Zeami's stagecraft and statecraft. However, in my understanding Lehrich's sense of *nô* might be more successfully applied to twentieth-century *neo-nô* in the manner of Yeats and Kyôka, who – unlike Zeami – had overt spiritualist paradigms in devising their compositional strategies. The possibilities for Yeats's deployment of a *nô*-derivative structure as enabling a form of performative occultism remains to be discussed. And a sense of his folkloric occultism formulated through communal theatre can be augmented by evaluating its direct influence, through trans-Pacific modernist channels, onto Izumi Kyôka. Likewise, then, Kyôka provides a more relevant examination, not Zeami, of Yeats's sense of the *nô* and its departure from the parameters of tradition.

In these kinds of ancestral exchanges, and literary intertextuality, Yeats's relationship to Japanese *nô* becomes most fully attested. Yeats's *Celtic Twilight* helped to establish in Japan the notion of *twilight* as a performative ontology and as an imaginative dimension. Conversely, *nô* later provided him with analogous concepts developing a theatre of the phantasm. There are intriguing similarities between Kyôka's *Yasha ga ike* (*Demon Pond*) and *At the Hawk's Well* that can be traced back to the more general transnational ideas and artistic discussions between Ireland and Japan at that time, particular on the concept of twilight. Kyôka and Yeats are examples of modernist authors turning to the twilight stage to further explore how the phantasm acts as a trace of those dislocated presences tenuously connected to a disappearing sense of the historical. Drama further optimized what Yeats and Kyôka had previously explored in prose narratives with mysterious inklings. Threshold dialogues, ones between the present and the ancestral, operate in spaces of between-ness that modernity had not yet fully erased. The mechanisms of Kyôka's and Yeats's *neo-nô* become apparent and compelling as performative necromancy, between nearsighted modernity and the problematic recovery of a distant perception of heritage.

I am arguing that the works of Kyôka and Yeats, as *neo-nô*, take on an occultic perspective through its deliberate use of necromancy, to achieve thematic effects both metaphysical and political. True, classical *nô* were entertainment for the elite, not having anything in particular to do with peasants, folklore or magic. Certainly, they had supernatural themes, but it would be an imposition to classify these under the rubrics of magic, as that cannot really be said to be the playwright's purpose. And, while Yeats has some air of snobbishness in his sense of an intimately-sized audience for which he conceived his *nô*, admission was not based on caste. The role of *mugen nô* becomes most apparent in

their approach. Both authors had previously experiments with fairy-tales and magical elements through prose tales, and – as they both turned to drama – *mugen* offered a similar sensibility of the spectral as personage. *Neo-nô* could both develop out of, but willfully diverge from following the genric capabilities of *nô*. On one hand, *mugen* positions the denizens of ghostlore – *jibakurei, ikiryô*, and *yûrei* – as participatory characters with equal stature to their mortal counterparts. Plot and character are realized through phantasmal mechanics that create this *chûkan* (in-between) space for encounters in which natural affects supernatural, and vice versa. But Yeats and Kyôka were not restricted to repeating received models. As their appetites for twilight sough more deliberate occult methodologies for invoking the unseen, they were freed to invent a contemporary kind of contemporary *mugen* that infused the modernist perspective of occultism, of the sort that Leon Surette documents. In their hands, the *neo-nô* stage-space allows for a folkloric epiphany, of communion with the ancestral presences, as the ancient becoming the present through the gates of shadow and light.

In thinking this way as to Yeats and Kyôka's theurgy of staged twilight, and its influence and confluences with other Japanese dramatists in the intertextual relationships of Ireland and Japan, we have a fresh way of appreciating the accomplishment of Yeats's drama in relation to similar efforts in modern Japan. *Neo-nô* was not so much a set of conventions, but could be a form of suggestive twilight ambience in which Yeats's sense of the ancestral might be made visible in a paratemporal stagecraft. The phantasm's capacity to cause discrepancies in the fabric of time had been one of its most potent features, as identified by Jacques Derrida: "It de-synchronizes, it recalls us to anachrony" (Derrida 1994: 25).

THE THEORY OF TWILIGHT STAGECRAFT: YEATS'S TURN TO THE SPECTRAL DRAMA

Yeats's concept of the theatre underwent considerable evolution and revolution during the period 1913–17; major influences on him during this time did include the traditional dramatics of Japan, as understood and presented by Ezra Pound and others. The interest in non-Western theatre traditions pervaded much of the avant-garde drama, throughout the early modern period, in such authors as Antonin Artaud and Bertolt Brecht. Like these contemporaries, Yeats had limited access to cultural information and observation of Asian performances. Their archaeology of dramatic performance could not attain any scholarly completeness.

Although limited in his resources, the concept of *nô*, at least as they interpreted it, had great influence on a number of Western authors and composers. In London, Yeats and Pound benefited from the presentations of Kayano Ni-jû-ichi

(Kôri Torahiko), Gun Torahiko and Kume Tamijurô, who chanted *utaibon* (*nô* texts) for their edification (1915).[3] In particular, the dancer Itô Michio had been an advisor to Yeats in regards to the movements and gestures that typify the bodily activity of *nô* execution. Itô was not a member of the *nô* establishment; he was, in fact, a proponent of modern drama and experimental choreography, and so provided a catalyzing influence on Yeats that a more dogmatic *nô* performer could not have. Itô believed in alternative theatrical possibilities in the spirit of comparativism, and so arranged Western and Japanese elements into a new choreographic aesthetics that, in some ways, anticipated the development of *butô* dance, an avant-garde style, in postmodern Japan. Since Itô had awareness of theatrical tradition, but was not entrenched in any overly orthodox codes, he helped Yeats in matters of creative departure.

Yeats seemed specifically drawn to *mugen nô* because of its aesthetical associations with dimness, mysteriousness (*yûgen*), ghosts and communication with the dead.[4] In Yeats's interpretation, this phantasmal *nô* made use of dramatic architecture and theatrical choreography that open up portals, both figuratively and perhaps literally, for the discarnate to appear. The phantasmal, the spectralization of the actor into a phase of twilight, is an important conceptual framework that both Yeats and Kyôka carried from prose into drama. Kyôka – especially in plays such as *Uta andon* (*The Lantern Song*) – works with elements of the *nô* in an avant-garde staging. A reinterpretation of *nô* might suggest a ceremonial, if also liturgical, relationship to space and time; and its origins in agrarian rituals of the countryside continued as folkish components in theme and scenario, even as the artform became the entertainment for warrior elite, as Konparu assesses in detail. Kyôka represents a reclaiming of the *fushigi* from those socio-historical situations that had turned folklore and mystery into a pastime for an exclusive club. Kyôka explored the ontological multiplicity that hints of *nô* could emphasize. This became another element for a thematic twilight/*tasogare* that employs the oneiromantic as a contrary strategy.

It is no accident that both Yeats and Kyôka, the premier developer of twilight drama in twentieth-century Japan, had initially started with the folktale as the platform for narrating their shadowy counterparts in the occultic continuum. Folkloric themes pervade the oeuvres of both authors, both in prose as well as drama. The concept of the folkloric voice entailed a kind of personification of peripheral traces and remnants of the historical continuum that evade historical documentation. In particular, the voice of the ghost, as connected to lore of locality, had always been for them a rebellious articulation against models of institutional authority. Yeats often describes apparitions as a rhetorical strategy:

> Because there is safety in derision
> I talk about an apparition,

I took no trouble to convince,
Or seem plausible to a man of sense.
(Yeats 1992: 391)

In this poem, the phantasmal, in its ancestral seriousness, stands against the mockery and rejection of utilitarianism. Folktales seek to operate on their own genre principles. Both Yeats and Kyôka developed from their earlier efforts at folktale collecting to engineering a kind of performance in which the folktale finds itself articulated through bodily action. In such a way, their twilight drama recontextualizes the lore by acknowledging the original location, presented through the enplacement strategy of the representative stage. The chronotropic attributes of the fantastic stage not only talk about an apparition, but allow the apparition to talk, from its vantage point in the past. The multi-metaphysical stage removes some demarcated periphery that separates rational cognition. The zones of the natural and supernatural are represented as contiguous and continuous, through the layering of twilight as theatrical ambience.

Izumi Kyôka was also aware that something more than mere imitation of the classical *nô* canon was required. Responsive innovation was more important than duplicating, exactly and mechanically, the older conventions. The developments of twentieth-century twilight drama did what Pound required: it made it new. And, while invoking the traces and methods of the past, this sensibility that is attuned to the older styles becomes renarrativized through the contemporary avant-garde. The perceptible voicing of movements of cross-metaphysical relationships could be staged in such a way as to make necromancy a testimonial encounter. Anachronism acted as a strategy for staging the blend of ancient and contemporary: the drama of a classical present, ancestral and modern in negotiation.

Thus, keeping in mind that Japanese authors such as Kyôka and Mishima had developed alternative *nô* formats, in relation to crossways communication between Irish and Japanese art, there is similarly no need to describe Yeats's plays as *nô* drama at all, especially if in doing so one is attempting to formulate a series of faithful correspondences. Irish *nô*, Celtic *nô*: such terms will invariably disappoint, mislead and indeed misconstrue the innovations and agendas that Yeats and his contemporaries had pursued. In fact, the argument that Yeats had intended any of his plays to be a genuine fusion of *Celtic nô* has become something of a red herring that diverts too much of our attention from the innovative structures of his drama.[5] Yeats employs the term "Noh" to his works only on a limited number of occasions, rather breezily, in his personal writing. Yet the phrase "Celtic Noh" or "Irish Noh" has become so utterly prevalent in English language criticism, and thus perpetuates the criticism in ascribing failure to Yeats's ability to match up exactly with a premodern genre. No doubt, Yeats found inspiration, and development, from classical drama in a way entirely similar to Japanese playwrights. But Yeats's *neo-nô* had no more

intention of obeying regulatory prescriptions than did Mishima Yukio's *kindai nôgaku* [modern *nô*] or Kyôka's *nô* influenced works. Indeed, most of Yeats's informants had no connection to contemporary dramatic forms, such as *shinpa*, or new style, drama.[6] In terms of probing the possibilities of contemporary art, the literary traffic was going both ways between Ireland and Japan in particular. Hinatsu Kônosuke developed a kind of Japanese Romanticism from Wilde and Poe. Saijô Yaso found in the Irish folk song a format for developing modern *min'yô* (folk song) lyrics. Much of Izumi Kyôka's theorization of twilight, discussed below, is informed by Yeats. A description that locates both Kyôka's and Yeats's drama in its proper innovative context: those conceptual theatrics that combined anachronism with contemporary twilight into new formats of performance that addressed modernist concerns of nation, history and dislocation.

THE PRACTICE OF TWILIGHT STAGECRAFT

Kyôka and Yeats's dramas are populated with folkloric personages – part collective memory, part alternative reality – who are situated at a temporal crossroads of past, present and future as located in the realm of twilight. This sensibility had been the central concern of one of Yeats's earliest sustained efforts, *The Celtic Twilight*. In many of the tales in this collection, ghosts are a species of the ancestor who exist in a state of metaphysical banishment, but forms of mediumship can negotiate with the spirits and, perhaps, bring revival and resolution. This notion is further developed in Yeats's plays. These dislocated entities now emerge, as confused revenants, in a stagecraft of twilight, and the necromantic encounter becomes performance. To examine this continuity between the so-called younger and older Yeats, *At the Hawk's Well* makes a useful case study. The overall design represents Yeats's initial attempt to consciously interpolate formulae partially derived from *nô* as well as the Ulster Cycle legends. As such, this first effort is the most noticeably syncretic, as combining Japanese theatrical conventions with Irish figures. The *nô*-derived qualities are most apparent in *At the Hawk's Well*'s stage schematics. The sparse design is intentionally reminiscent of bare, unadorned *hinoki* (*Chamaecyparis obtusa*) wood used for the classical stage. The architecture of the *nô* theatre suggested to Yeats a space both enclosed yet atmospherically uncluttered. The audience's point of view and the actor's performance are aligned to the same focalizing effect. In *At the Hawk's Well*, the well defines the apex of sight and action, representing both a real well in the Irish landscape, as well as a channel for the spectral. Narrative description informs us of both the well's legendary importance, as a sacred site, and marker of mytho-cartography of the Irish landscape. Movement and speech accord value and importance to it, so its artistic resemblance to a *real* well is not required. Indeed, early productions utilized a prop more suggestive than mimetic. Performances of *At the Hawk's Well* require a small cast of musicians

and actors, seated on stage, in a visual arrangement similar to *nô* performance. The musicians share the stage space, and furthermore act in the role of choral commentary. Yeats has swapped the traditional ensemble set of *nôkan* (flute), shoulder and hip drums (*ko-tsuzumi, ô-tsuzumi*) for gong, western dru, and zither. Thus, Yeats does not incorporate harp or any further stringed instruments that might divert from the *nô* example of percussion matched with solitary melody.

As indicated in the play's stage notes, the folding of the cloth acts as a kind of ritualistic symbol in which rational categories of time and space are creased and overlapped. The stage, likewise, will fold over various layers of time and history as a convergence in the twilight space. In this twilight-phased drama in which the word shadow appears six times, Yeats resets the optical textures of the mind's eye by first getting away from the figurative western theatrics of an opening and closing curtain. Of course, the folding of the cloth cannot be claimed as having a parallel in *nô*; however, as an ontological reshuffling, its symbolic value is conferred to the audience. Time and space are being crimped, bent and unpackaged. This space is now a re-defined domain in which the variable dimensions of imagination and imagining will be given freer licence for varieties of cognition. The area is declared as partly separate, partly in-between. As Konparu describes, the *nô* stage evolved from agricultural rites in which areas within the countryside were roped off for sacred purposes. Lafcadio Hearn and Yanagita Kunio, under the influence of *twilight*, likewise documented in their accounts of shamanic practices in Japan, natural terrain was encircled and marked out as consecrated, requiring particular etiquette and other forms of observance. This is sentimentality that leads to a religiosity of observing memory and ancestry as a response to the pressures of modernity.

A primary feature of classical *nô* that does resonate with Yeats's own literary practice is the preciseness in naming geographical settings and thematically building on a sites allusive qualities. Modernist authors were intrigued with the ways in which Zeami chose his settings with exacting precision. Certainly, Zeami's understanding of *space* and *meisho* (famous sites) respond to the socio-historical conditions of his era, including the specific of category of the nobility for whom the *nô* were performed. Yeats and Kyôka's revisioning of *nô* reflects the biases of their era, identifying a kind of topographic folklore in an understanding in a manner different from what Zeami intended. Twentieth-century playwrights, in reformulating stylistic qualities that Zeami represented to them, brought their own considerations of space and folklore to their interpretations. They set their plays, descriptively in toponymic *locations* chosen specifically for their allusive power, rather than, say, a generic focus. In their reinterpretation of Zeami, *neo-nô* could draw upon a collective cultural knowledge through the allusive qualities of a specific site in regards to cultural memory. Yeats in particular believed that such inferences and associations sound resonances that surround topography with folklore. To him, this feature is particularly

important in *mugen* drama, in which dramatic tension, and spectral articulation, is amplified through the uniqueness of the location. Scenery, in the form of material props, is secondary to the appositional effect of specific location and its cultural references. *Mugen* achieves rich, ambient nuances by drawing upon the thematic relevance embedded in the mythic topography of a *place*. A tree, well, altar or bridge may be implicative when a *specific* bridge has a tale attached. It acts as a nexus for narrative auras supported and shared through a folkloric collectivity.

Thus, one reason that the Second Musician states "I am afraid of this place" is the haunted pedigree of the location, as a conduit for the disturbing energies of the vanishing. As discussed previously, Yeats had selected Sligo locations for his Oisianic verse. Once more this county will offer local particularities to give his drama a *nô* like effect of the folkloric *mise-en-scène*. The actual, geographical Hawk's Well (Ir: *Tubber Tullaghan*) sits atop Tullaghan Hill in County Sligo, having a long, chronicled history from early historical manuscripts.[7] Associated with many things, including a beheading, this well is renowned for the peculiar taste of its waters. Alternating between bitter and sweet, the water has curative powers, instilling youth and health in the drinker. The well relates to the natural environment, with supernatural qualities, that serves to vitalize the body. For this reason, traditionally, Tubber Tullaghan was a favourite spot for celebrating Lughnadsadh, held at approximately mid-summer. In terms of setting, the jutting form of Hawk's Rock nearby matches the attributes that the play describes. The rock protrudes from gnarled hazel and drifting leaves, the scattering of scree and wind. The Hawk's Well, as an Irish *reijô* [a spirit-site], has a number of connotative meanings. And today, the theatre in Sligo Town, mindful of Yeats's attention to the local geography in his plays, is named *At the Hawk's Well*.

These demarcated areas of twilight, distinct but still contiguous with the general social landscape, were venues marked out for a hallowed presentation. Yeats's important stage direction – *OLD MAN enters through the audience* – maintains this sense that the communal transforms into the ritual through a people-originating power of interpolation. The stage is neither a hermitage nor an other-world, but a peripheral dimension detected in this world, confirmed through communion with spiritual–imaginative presences and settings. Twilight has been released. Assumptions as to what is a *realistic* character or scenario are distorted. The phantasmal atmosphere produces spectral effects that situate the conceptual shadows as physical and temporal in-between-ness:

> Night falls;
> The mountainside grows dark;
> The withered leaves of the hazel
> Half choke the dry bed of the well.
> (Yeats 2001: 298–9)

This is the language of the vanishing: suffocation, parched environment, a neglected hillside and an incoming dusk. The experiential conversion of stage into shadowscape makes material those elements and those phantasms that Yeats's prose described as a twilight passageway.

In terms of ancestral recall, of negotiating and discussing with the phantasm, trends in *nô* had provided spatial apparatus and dramatic techniques to create a theatrical transmutation of the time-space continuum. The actors and audience both participate in this emergent space of alternative realities. Using the descriptive category of *phantasmal nô*, Kyôka and Yeats base their stagecraft upon distorting phenomenon: oscillating time, reversed time, soul-body ruptures and so forth. Not surprisingly, Yeats was drawn to the *nô* categories that included mysterious interactions and shadowy textures (*mugen*), most often with a *genius loci*. These same elements and considerations coincided with formative atmospheres as developed in *The Celtic Twilight*, *The Wanderings of Oisin* and other of his earlier works. But dramaturgy could take the uncanny landscapes of a folkloric reference poetry and enplace it on a stage, endowed with a theatrical aspect. *Nô*, as phantasm, contained multiple intervals of spatial distance, chronological relationships and geographic references. These became an informative schematic for rethinking stagecraft. Konparu's terms for the metaphysical dynamics of *nô* thus follow closely some of Yanagita, Yeats and Kyôka's own theories for realizing *in-between-ness* (*chûkan*). For example, in a sense not altogether different from Yeats's gyres, Kyôka had theorized in his stories a kinetic model of time and space as overlapping circles.

The theoretical design of the *neo-nô* stage sought to address the fissure that separates the past from the present. Yanagita, under a Yeatsian influence, conceived of *kawatare-doki* (twilight time), in which necromantic frequencies became available for the present to access the ancestral. Kyôka, in a way suggestive of Yeats's *The Celtic Twilight*, excerpts of which were available in Japanese, developed his aesthetic of *tasogare no aji* (the taste of twilight). I present a brief excerpt, derived from Gerald Figal's translation, to give a sense of Kyôka's concept:

> Twilight is neither darkness nor light; nor is it a mixture of light and darkness. I think that twilight is a world of singularly subtle shades that exist solely in that momentary space of entering darkness from light, of entering night from day. Similar to the singularly subtle twilight world, existing is the space of entering darkness from light, there is a world of subtle shades called dawn on the boundary of entering light from darkness, in the momentary interval of moving to day from night.
>
> (Figal 1999: 1–2; Kyôka 1973a: 683)

The passage locates a "world (*sekai*)" of distinctive in-between-ness. For Kyôka, twilight's epistemological "singularity (*isshu tokubetsu*)" arises from its liminal

status of the intermediary, which is visually manifested in the uncanniness of its atmospheric colour, a very specialized hue of "singular subtlety (*isshu bimyô*)".

For both Yeats and Kyôka, the stage permits a *twilight phasing*. Twilight opens up a spectrum of shadows and light, ancestor and contemporary, heritage and modernity. *Neo-nô* exemplifies the chiaroscuro domain as the interplay between supernatural and natural, chronos and topos. The taste of twilight for Kyôka enables a feeling for twilight as contiguous presence to the flow of history, demanding our attention. We must, consciously, develop our supersensual capacity to feel out the shadows, to detect the phantasmal connections in physical settings – much in the manner of *The Celtic Twilight*. Twilight, is neither metaphor nor metonymy, but an aperture of in-between-ness. Kyôka's essay attempts to describe twilight as a colour (*iro*) that is neither night nor day. Yone Noguchi, as cited by Hakutani, had understood this difficulty in manifesting twilight as a perceptible *atmosphere*: "the most intense atmosphere of grayness, the most suggestive color in all Japanese art, which is the twilight soared out of time and place" (Hakutani 2001: 17). To taste the twilight, and thus have a form of occultic apprehension for its spectrum, is to enter into a non-empirical periphery of place, memory and community. In such a way, the allusive powers of place create a sense of aura through the historical resonances particularized to the location. The power of this aura, in twilight drama, derives from the psychical energies of entrapped entities bound to the specifics of space. On this principle, much of Yeats's work on the ancestral involves changelings, such as fairies, who enact a circumstantial ontology of dislocation. They are transformed entities of uncanniness, with a residual measure of the human turned into the monstrous, who are cast away into a space beyond the twilight. In *At the Hawk's Well*, the mountain witch is described as an "unappeasable shadow", a species of darkness whose metaphysical rage cannot be propitiated (Yeats 2001: 303).

Twilight exists between light and shadow as temporal rebellion, locates blurred points within chronological modules or cartographic modernity. The imagination, the *aji*, intervenes to uncover the vanished. Yeats's early lyrics poems, and his later drama, are hermeneutics as well as performances of shadows and ancestry as an interchangeable dynamic, interfacing with space and time. What Yeats emphasizes in *At the Hawk's Well* is the wrathful nature of the banished spirits who, jealous of the world they once inhabited, threaten to overwhelm the twilight with the force of their grudge: they inflict a kind delusional cantrip that confounds "human faces" with "accursed shadows" (*ibid.*: 306, 305). However, through the interactivity of twilight, the intercessionary capability of the mortal to close off the ruptured gaps of the historical past – of which the fairies occupy their angst – becomes realized.

In his productions of Yeats and Kyôka, and it is telling that he studied both playwrights, Itô Michio employed innovative techniques of movement to

convey the requisite haunting atmosphere crucial to both production's occult ambience. Itô may not have been an expert on *nô,* an insider with a lineage to certify him; however, his versatility as a performer was exactly the kind of support most useful to Yeats's and Kyôka's own spectral experiments. As his biography shows, Itô Michio produced the premier of *Tenshu monogatari* (*The Legend of the Castle Tower*) in 1951, one of Izumi Kyôka's most renowned plays. Moreover, Itô's use of unsettling costumes, and unorthodox choreography, can be seen a predecessor to what would become the angelogy of Tatsumi Hijikata's concepts of surrealistic dance. Another important aspect of Itô's aesthetics was his sense of the *dance poem*, in which stylized movements articulate, through gesture, a kind of verse narrative through which the uncanny voices of the discarnate achieve a semblance of visibility. Thus, from concept to performance, the *neo-nô* depends upon not just the words of the script, but the function of somatic gestures, to invoke a ritualistic sensibility.

"Haunted" entails liminality, the performance of in-between-ness. Haunted is the potential for ancestral access. Yeats's drama works with multiple layers of not just space, but narrative connections that span time. Thus, in specifying a *Heroic Age* for the modern audience of *At the Hawk's Well*, Yeats enables a sense of the folkloric present. The actions and situations suggest someone or somewhere ancient, culturally remembered but too distant in time. They occur however, at a specific location that, for now, can still be accessed in the present. *Heroic Age* thus is not a chronological isolate, but is perpetuated through resonances still grounded in place. To use St Thomas Aquinas's term, the *Heroic Age* in Yeats's plays is an *aeviternity*: a twilight temporal node that exists in-between eternity and normative time. It is not something to be recovered, but something that recedes into the irrecoverable. The ancestral becomes epistemologically refracted through the haunting's aura, as resonating from a specific event-site of trauma. The ghostly mystique continues through prolonged witnessing, an ongoing legacy of interactions between the seen and unseen in twilight. This has material connotations to culture and heritage, vested in ruins, shrines and wells, as ancestral monuments.

For *At the Hawk's Well* to fully realize its thematic backdrop of twilight, its principles depends to a certain extent on an informed audience aware of the play's locative allusions to Ireland and Irish mythology. Yeats had interpreted how this effect worked in such classical *nô* plays as *Izutsu* (*The Well Cradle*). This particular drama begins with a monk announcing he is on pilgrimage to Hatsuse, the site of the Hase Temple, dedicated to the Bodhisatva of mercy, Kannon-sama. En route, the major activity occurs at Ariwara Temple, said to have been built by a character whose misdeeds are the source of the play's premises of betrayal and guilt. The specific setting, and specific destination, is imbued with meaningful circumstances and legendary content. The location is itself a character who must be negotiated. The mind's eye sees a staged landscape marked by thematic correlations. Yeats likewise develops a format

in which minimalist staging becomes semiotically valid through a theatrical presentation of local knowledge. The spatial setting of the drama connects to mythic content, co-creating a vivid kind of topopoesis: "the form I am adapting for European purposes may excite once more, whether in Gaelic or in English, under the slope of Slieve-na-mon or Croagh Patrick, ancient memories; for this form has no need of scenery that runs away with money nor a theatre building" (Yeats 1968: 236).

Landscape is a heightened sensitivity. Yeats's specific nativist purpose included a communal strategy, as Andrew Parkin has described: "Yeats wished to celebrate the haunted landscape of Ireland" (Parkin 1978: 118). The *haunting* that Yeats saw was more than a Gothic thrill; *haunting* entails those resonant traces of ancestral voices to be recalled, so as to know what investments have made *place* what it is.

In Japan, volumes of *Zenkoku reijô daijiten* (*Dictionary of Sacred Places Throughout Japan*) document thousands of shrines, temples and natural features that have supernatural connections, festival importance or other manifestations of legend. Folk beliefs imbue topography with specific meanings and allusions: mountain-ranges become feared because of wandering dead. Certain sites require ceremonial observances to offset diabolical influence. For the occultic dramatists, not only does the particularized space have importance in itself, but it is augmented through the resonant revenants who occupy that space. The discarnate troubles locales with its paratemporal perspective.

A specific occult dimension to *At the Hawk's Well* is its focus on the interrelationship between the natural and supernatural as mutually capable of cause and effect between the dead among the living, and the living in contact with the dead. In an essay on Swedenborg that he contributed to Lady Gregory's volume *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland*, Yeats recounts the occasions of Irish folk belief as to the possibilities in intervening in the affairs of ghosts: "I remember that Aran story of lovers who came after death to the priest for marriage. It is not uncommon for a ghost, a 'control' as we say, to come to a medium to discover some old earthly link to fit into a new chain" (Gregory 1920: 337).

What interested Yeats on this subject, especially in his *neo-nô*, is a kind of performative necromancy in which, through occult communication, the spirit realm intermingles with the physical present. The priest, in the Aran story, enables the trapped lovers to ascend to a higher plane of being through the efficacy of his prayers.

The forms of knowledge transmitted from living to dead, and vice versa, had also been thematically important in classical *nô*. Not surprisingly then, in his own style of *neo-nô*, Kyôka scried in these remnants of the past as experientially suggestive of ancestral resonances: ruined stone, relics, sacred sites, bits of statue, abandoned shrines, all of these reverberate with individual character and historical event. The landscape acquires a like lustre of time through an

imprinting, a process occurring in broader geography in the same manner Tanizaki Jun'ichirô describes on physical objects in his essay *In'ei raisan* (*In Praise of Shadows*). When Tanizaki employs the word *kahô* (heirloom), he emphasizes that this word combines the characters for *home* with *treasure*. As individual objects can acquire such a gloss through domestication, so on the larger scale do localized areas. *The lustre of time* (*jidai no tsuya*) is the grit of continued accessibility. Thus topopoesis requires community as continuity. The features of a haunted landscape arise from the apposition of individuals who interact with the terrain. The purpose of the occultic *neo-nô* is to access in a ritualized manner the haunting as it has come to be imbued into a particular item or location.

Although written four years before *At the Hawk's Well*, Izumi Kyôka's *Yasha ga ike* (*Demon Pond*), reveals intriguing similarities in theme and subject in terms of a shared conceptual framework these playwrights developed for *neo-nô* as folkloric and occultic enactments of local history in the form of a disgruntled spectre. The correspondences between these works are striking, and demonstrate that some Japanese *shinpa* (new style) drama developed out of *nô* along the same strategies that Yeats had also pursued. *Yasha ga ike* concerns a wanderer who approaches a haunted, secluded site: a belfry at twilight. Like *At the Hawk's Well*, the geographic setting is given precisely: "Kotohiki Valley, village of Shimaki in the county of Ono, Echizen Province" (Poulton 2001: 119). There, the traveller, Gakuen, swaps old stories with the vigilant bellkeeper, Akira. The latter relates a local legend to the traveller about the demon pond, a nexus of mystery, which draws in travellers with a black-hole like gravity. Gakuen responds with his own fantastic tale, heard along the road, which unwittingly happens to be about Akira. Thus, the bellkeeper says, concerning the relationship of storytellers to stories, "I've gone a step further. I myself have become one of those tales [*monogatari*]" (Poulton 2001: 129; Kyôka 1973a: 527). Meanwhile, also acting like a *kyôgen* – the comical interlude in a *nô* sequence – a group of nearby goblins give their version of events, nonplussed as *yôkai* (monster) beings, pushed off to the peripheries. The final act depicts how the multiple folk elements of the play conclude in an ontological conflation of monster and human, legendary past and present. Akira and the maiden Yuri experience a narrative metempsychosis: their personal stories are transfused into a new, second generation of legends. Just as the Well Guardian has passed away into the immateriality of lost legend, Akira and Yuri both experience discarnation of personhood. However, this leads to a transmigration into new ancestral forms, even being born again (*umarekawaru*) as the legendary. The belfry remains intact, the story continues in a new form, but the resonance remains as a sign of lastingness.

Kyôka's ouevre regularly emphasizes that time, language and place are themselves species of *bakemono*, fantastic changelings, which are caught between quasi-empirical states. Manifestations of *oni* or *yûrei*, spirits and ghosts, are

shifts and disturbances in the substance of experience. He can draw upon, in the name of tradition, stylistic conventions from Japanese aesthetics and religiosity for his methods. These precedents can include a number of terms to describe how artists envision the fleetingness of the spectral: *go-ryôe* festivals for communion with departed spirits; or *mono no ke*, spirit possession, which has been the subject of paintings and literature, including *Genji monogatari*. Zeami may have codified and canonized *mugen* as having specific, stylistic expectations. However, with modernism we can see a further development of oneiric dramaturgies, which negotiate tradition through and working with it. Hence, necromancy, reckoning with ghosts as ancestors, had a practical, contemporary agenda. Retrocognitions, therefore, were conversations with the ancestral past, an interrogative intervention against pressing questions of the present. In Kyôka's play, modernity is synonymous with ancestral neglect and the encroachment of a collective ignorance. Folklore reasserts itself in the form of an angry ancestral spirit, disturbed by the selfish view of forward-thinking societies that prioritize development over community. For Yeats, the personages of his places – the pantheon of Celtic heroes called up – suggest claims to Irish nationhood, through its personification of a nativist mythology. But these personifications do not readily submit to tidy templates of nationalistic characterization.

If Yeats scholars have been somewhat chagrined by his enthusiasm for the occult, those studying Kyôka seem rather enamoured with this author's peculiar superstitions. Kyôka was known to burn manuscripts before a household altar that held a photograph of his mentor, as a means of warding off infections diseases (Minakami 1985: 86–96). Even in personal attitudes to the paranormal, Yeats and Kyôka share similarities in temperament. Kyôka's *Yasha ga ike* involves a fairly large cast of characters, elaborate dialogue, and rather chaotic sequences of interjection and debate. As will be elaborated below, Yeats had experimented with maintaining the importance of masks [*nômen*] in his contemporary drama. Kyôka did not readily share this desire. But what makes a play like *Yasha ga ike* resemblant of *nô* is its interpolation of a phantom world that, through its manifestation, troubles the rational world with its dimensions of occultic influence as otherworldly intervention. In terms of presentation and performance, the play's semblances of *mugen nô* act as a resonance for the twilight time. Akira, the hero, attempts to access the secret history of the area first through folkloric narrative, and then later through figurative encounters with the phantoms.

Although the play is thoroughly modernist in its staging, the script enacts *neo-nô* features to enhance a sense that there are multiple time periods operating, contiguously, through the demon pond as a portal. The occultic stagecraft eventually leads to the unifying of the various times, realms and personages who have been fragmented through neglect and narrow-mindedness: "AKIRA: I went on about the legend [*densetsu*] the old man told me, how their ancestors

had commanded [*senzo no yuigon*] it and such like. The villagers burst out laughing (Poulton 2001: 132; Kyôka 1973a: 602).

The phrase *senzo no yuigon* has a sense of ghostly probate to it: the term implies an ancestral request that has been enshrined as a will and testament. Akira describes the maintenance of the bell as tradition (*densetsu*), while the mocking villagers deride the custom as *mukashi banashi*, or mere folktale (Kyôka 1973a: 602). There is a deliberate contrast here in attitude and perception. The general psychical indifferences to the abiding presences, the *genius loci* of the region, will eventually leads to the massacre of the villagers – symbolic of the self-defeating nature of obstinate rationalism – in the play's concluding apotheosis. The dual symbols of *Demon Pond* – the bell and the lake – both operate as ancestral relics whose power, if properly accessed, controls fertility and famine for the countryside and its populace.

Demon Pond and *At the Hawk's Well* both rely on an intertwining of heroic figure, one willing to cross the bridge into the twilight worldview, with a contextual background legend that eventually reveals the spiritualistic understanding as to the true powers that govern life and death for the locale. In both plays, a body of water acts as a figurative source of a mystical liquid that has the power to both resurrect as well as destroy. Sekine Masaru and Christopher Murray link *At the Hawk's Well* to the classical *nô* play *Yôrô*, although no version of this work appears in either Arthur Waley's or Ernest Fenollosa's editions, the main source of English language materials in the early twentieth century. Dorothy Pound produced a typescript based on Fenollosa's notebooks, which Yeats had access to, but the text remained unpublished until printed in an issue of *Paideuma* (1975). There are certainly enough similarities between *Yôrô* and *At the Hawk's Well* (and, moreover, to *Demon Pond*) to find analogous components.

In Yeats's play, the Hawk-Woman, as animated combination of bird and person, has a certain resemblance to the feather mantle of *Hagoromo*. Animal–human hybrids feature often in Irish and Scottish tales, including *lost home* narratives such as the *selkie*, the seal-women of Scottish folklore. These connections are suggestive, but need not be taken as exact correlations. Overemphasizing perceived similarities can also lead to missing out on the uniqueness of *At the Hawk's Well* itself. *Yôrô*'s plot concerns the relationship between a God and the emperor, who receives from the heavens a drink of immortality. The beverage is a potent alcohol known as *kikusui*, which literally means *chrysanthemum water*, and is symbolic of the imperial throne. Cú Chulainn also desires a beverage of longevity; and, like an emperor, his legendary stature is related to his dynastic status. As chief hero of the Ulster Cycle, Cú Chulainn occupies a figurehead position as a personification of an ancestral *zeitgeist*. So, before reading *Yôrô*, Yeats had long imagined the means in which the vanishing legend might resuscitate itself from degeneration and final oblivion. The elixir that causes both regeneration and destruction figures as the central motif of both *Demon Pond* and *At the Hawk's Well*: as a renewable source of the Earth itself, the waters

revitalize both the personal as well as the communal. Required of the aspirant are appropriate attitude, informed consent and initiatic attunements. The climax of *Demon Pond* affirms that the primary cause of downfall for the villagers is a willful ignorance of Buddhist precepts: "So I spoke out, thinking I'd find among you gentlemen fellows in the same faith [*shûmon*: doctrine], even some of like mind [*dôjô*: sympathy]" (Poulton 2001: 153; Kyôka 1973b: 637). Rather than following the established tradition of bell-ringing, to facilitate the redemptive waters of the demon pond, the villagers instead have decided that human sacrifice will appease the matter.

Twilight stagecraft dramatizes the alchemical recovery, by imbibing the sacramental liquid, of regeneration and recovery as a cyclical event of renewal and return. Although the script to *Yasha ga ike* does not include the usual words for twilight – *tasogare* or *yoiyami* – there are many references to gloom and darkness (*usugurai*). Both Yeats and Kyôka involve a sense of mythic time through the narration of legend as a way of destablizing diachonic time. The folklore, in combination with a specific geographic site, layers resonances of word, ritual and occultic power in a specific nexus in which place and magic converge. Sangû Makoto has also described this commonality between Kyôka and Yeats. The former, he judged, would be more successful if he had "drawn upon myths and legends worth writing about, as Yeats does" (Poulton 2001: 163).[8] This might be somewhat unfair, as a worthy legend would require appraisal from artistic as well as political grounds. Certainly, Yeats's choices reflected the increased sense of Irish independence. But Kyôka's selections are no less meaningful, addressing as they do overlooked regions of Japanese geography. Kyôka and Yeats were both interested in renarrativizing folkloric material so as to show their influence and impact on contemporary circumstances. A drama derivative from phantasmal *nô*, not as a replication of the old form, permitted forms of ancestral intercommunication, of recalling tales and ghosts connected to place, as a modernist practice. Many critics have argued that *Demon Pond* develops along the plot progression that typifies the pace and development somewhat reminiscent of Zeami (Muramatsu 1974: 7). But, as discussed with Yeats, Kyôka's relationship to *nô* does not need to be evaluated according to its degree of fidelity. The modernist impulse to innovation could interpolate *nô* texts and conventions as a conceptual strategy. Kyôka's more general theory of *chûkan*, in dramatic form, utilized *nô*-like sequences for twilight effect: inverted time, dream interpretation, as well as the meeting of the legendary with the contemporary. Through the necromantic perspective, it is the rational, orthodox world that becomes dim and the time that is out of joint. The peripheries restore what the centrifugal centre has been shuffling away.

The Swedish poet Anders Österling, via Bramsbäck's translation, declared that Yeats's "'reverence for folklore' … must to a large extent be attributed to his 'fundamental susceptibility to every kind of mystical suggestion'" (Bramsbäck 1984: 1). Instead of susceptibility, perhaps we might call it a sensitivity. As Yeats

describes his work, "All these stories are such as to unite man more closely to the woods and hills and waters about him" (Yeats 1993: 88). Legends can be both referential and motivational. Superstition, tutelary spirits, ghosts – as entities configured by cultural situation and geographical setting – had relevance, and presence, to modern society in Kyôka and Yeats. Yeats's ongoing hermeneutics of the shadows investigate the contentious communications between the ethereal and the tangible in relation to communal order in spatial contexts. The uncanny in *CT*, and in *TM*, are figurations of the *fushigi* as resultant textures that are forms of character which/whom inhabit a special, local place. Lady Wilde, in *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland*, repeatedly shows the necessary connection between the oral tradition and the spatial specific: "Near the great mountain of Croagh-Patrick there is lake called *Clovencagh*, or the Lake of Revenge, to which evil-disposed persons used to resort in order to imprecate maledictions on their enemy" (Wilde 1887).[9]

The *haunted* does not need to be an unmoored, vague principle of eeriness. Local historical sites radiate very particular kinds of *genius loci* that are particular to visible features, and folkloric attunements, of their social conditions. A staged recreation, while not the real geography, can emphasize how that landscape contains the luster of time. Drama can re-enact how centuries of interaction enhance a legendary site. *Iseki* (ruins, relics) are distinctive on account of the direct associations that shaped their tactile, and thus also ambient, properties. However, twilight, as the atmospheric content for the stage, is a strategy for drawing attention to mythic auras as realizable presences. Elements of nature can attain the same power of significance. A twilight performance, which uses reflections of communal ritual to establish its dramatic feeling, reminds an audience of those ancestral attributes that are outside, meaningfully embedded into the terrain.

VOICING TWILIGHT: THE MASK OF THE ANCESTRAL

In regards to classical Greek drama, Tony Harrison describes the mask's potential function this way in "Facing up to the Muses": "The mask reinforces that primacy [of language] by continuing to speak in situations that 'normally' or in realistic or naturalistic drama would render a person speechless' (Harrison 1988: 27).

In W. B. Yeats's *neo-nô*, the most important instrument for occultic communication with the dead are the stylized masks that act in a necromantic way. The twilight conversations between different realms of being and time are facilitated through his strategy of theatrical masks, which connote the access of alternative persona. In this device, Yeats found the interface for the meeting of mortality and eternity, between flesh and disembodiment, and the restoration of face to

faceless forms. The mask mouths a prosopopoeia through which the discarnate ancestral voice becomes articulated, performatively, with the mask as a channel that transmits ancestral voices in a necromantic fashion. The mask situates a form of confrontation between alternate epistemologies.

In modernist *mugen*, occult language allows for an amplification in volume for vanishing discourse, channelled through the mediumship of the mouthpiece in the mask. The theatrical incarnation of Cú Chulainn is enabled through that en-facing that shapes an animate face out of the blurriness in twilight. The mask can have *ouija* board-like effects. Yeats's masks were a kind of *mono no ke* (spirit possession) for allocating presentational form to the legendary. For Yeats, the ancestral comes into presence through the mask's instillation of figured ancestrality. Yeatsian prosopopoeia not only speaks for the ghost, but returns a mouthpiece so the ghost can speak for itself. The immaterial becomes embodiment, through the re-inscribing of reviving of the ancestral inscription, marked by the mask.[10] More generally, Yeats had developed a theory of mask that was psychological, as he outlines this in several places, including *Autobiographies*:

> As I look backward upon my own writing, I take pleasure alone in those verses where it seems to me I have found something hard and cold, some articulation of the Image, which is the opposite of all that I am in my daily life, and all that my country is; yet man or nation can no more make this Mask or Image that seed can be made by the soil into which it is cast. (Yeats 1999: 218)

But the performative sensibility of the masked marvel can be a form of agency within a cultural multi-spatiality, in the chronotope created through *mugen*. Thus, as Yeats notes, imbedded in the occult psychology is a framework for an alternative theatrical premise: "the mask … is linked with another age, historical or imaginary" (*ibid*.: 139).

To emphasize the peculiar interrelationship between ancestral time and the present, Yeats, in his play notes, stipulates that *At the Hawk's Well* occurs in a multitemporal framework known as *Heroic Time*. The manifestation of the ancestral, its ghostly voices as representative of preceding eras, occurs through stylized masks. The means through which twilight time allowed for the articulation of the ancestral, as personage, is a crucial theme for *At the Hawk's Well*. Yeats found in *nô* concepts for the multiplying of selfhood, for reviving variations of a legendary character. Although not realized as naturalistic *persons*, emblematic characters such as Oisín or Cú Chulainn are interlocutors who occupy a unique perspective on history and heritage. Yeats found suggestive in *nô* the ways in which a heroic personage acts as a paradigmatic point of view.[11]

In regards to *At the Hawk's Well*, to evaluate the nature of the hero, Cú Chulainn, and what his eventual dissipation, the audience must also confront

who is the Well Guardian, and what/whom has taken over her body previously. The conflict in this play arises over cycles in which one epoch overwrites the next. The *sídhe* have possessed the Well Guardian, and they too are a species of legendary disappearance. Associated with ancient races that once occupied Ireland, they became metaphysically deported, made invisible, through a dynastic succession of newcomers, of whom Cuchulain (to use Yeats's anglicized spelling in his play) is one. As vanished peoples, displaced communities who have been usurped through radical change, they prefigure Cuchulain's own fate as the next to disappear. Cuchulain recognizes that he will also fall in this series of dissipation, in which one era conquers (and erases) another. He hopes, in spite of this, that the well water can offer an antidote to this fate of vanishing. The Old Man, to him, demonstrates how youth will come to decay – which is to say, how contemporary events become neglected relics:

> You seem as dried up as the leaves and sticks,
> As though you had no part in life.
> (Yeats 2001: 303)

But the paratemporal well, just like the overflowing Demon Pond, can offer immortality and fertility, if properly regarded and ritually addressed.

Then what motivates the Well Guardian, as combination of marginalized spirit and natural elements, to keep the next generation from achieving what the *sídhe* could not? Possibly, as in many *nô* dramas, the answer is madness or jealousy. In a necromantic drama, the jealousy is directed toward the living. Yeats, recognizing *sídhe* as exiled ancestral spirits, perceives their potential as influential spiritual phenomena. In this case, this influence is harsh and retributive. Their status is of restless revenants and poltergeists who exact revenge on the present world.[12] In *At the Hawk's Well*, the soul-less quality of the *sídhe* results from banishment, not birth. Yeats's poetry had attempted to find a kind of soteriology of the fairy. How can they, being entrapped discarnateness, be revived or exorcized?

Cuchulain allows himself to be distracted by the *danse macabre* of the Guardian. The hypnotic rhythms of her possessed state arise from the traumatic mania of covariant spirits in a single body. The dance depicts the fought-over interstices between lost time and disappearing present. Being in the *sídhe*'s presence causes feelings of amnesia and effacement in the audience. Likewise, Cuchulain's own identity turns into confusion. When the young man announces his name, he is met with confusion:

> OLD MAN I have never heard that name.
> YOUNG MAN It is not unknown.
> I have an ancient house beyond the sea.
> (Yeats 2001: 300)

But can the ancient house, the ancestral house in *Meditations in Time of Civil War*, survive? Without the beverage, Cuchulain returns once more to the cyclical flux of destructive history. He will be crowned king of Ulster. He will be tricked into murdering his own son. He will be disposed of and displaced, like Yoshitsune, by an ignoble betrayal. A blind man will behead him for twelve pennies. Without the taste of the immortal water to sustain him – and to sustain the Ulster Legends – the encroaching powers of progress will overwrite his body and spirit. The well bubbles up, occasionally, but distractions cause the waters to go by unnoticed or undrinkable. Food, as intimately tied to agricultural production and thus material soil, is connected to physical sustenance. Hungry ghosts or mischievous fairies have previously stolen what they themselves cannot consume. For both Kyôka and Yeats, immortality never really transcends space or time. While the ancestral characters maintain some kind of longevity through their heroic stature, their ability to enact immortality as a meaningful attainment is too constrained by the physical world to which they are bound – in the case of both plays, a fluctuating body of water.

Yeats and Kyôka's stagecraft cannot be said to be accurate renditions of classical *nô*, nor can they be automatically construed to aspire to such. But that does not mean that Yeats and Kyôka's sensibilities do not have certain resonances with contemporary *nô* performers who do follow more traditional formats. For example, at a recent lecture and performance by the Uzawa Noh Troupe in Vancouver, Uzawa Hise emphasized the phantasmal semiotics that constitute the *nô* stage as a ritualized space.[13] She argues that the architectural framework is intentionally reminiscent of a Shinto shrine. The bridge leading onto the *nô* stage (*hashigakari*) demarcates a transition into a liminal world in which time behaves more freely. The *torii*-like entryway, which resembles the gate found at the entrance to Shinto shrines, is a portal through which phenomenon and phantasm can cross freely. Bridge and gate mark off the stage as metaphysical in-between-ness.

It seems that the anachronistic versatility of both Yeats and Kyôka's work is part of their ongoing appeal. Mishima Yukio, while working in an aircraft factory, translated Yeats's *At the Hawk's Well* into a kind of classical Japanese and considered this project as one of his most useful during the war years. Yokomichi Mario developed two adaptations of *At the Hawk's Well* so as to demonstrate the intricate dimensions of its performative ambience. His first version, *Izumi* (1949), staged the play in a faithfully *nô* production. The later version, *Takahime* (1967), in a freer format, explores the play's equally suggestive versatility and avant-garde possibilities. This practice remonstrates with the aesthetic purposes, generally speaking of the modernist style. Perhaps Natsume Sôseki locates the uniqueness of the twilight atmosphere in his praise for Izumi Kyôka's ability to render vividly an environment with a painterly-like perspicacity: "Kyôka impacts people [*hito ni inshô o ataeru koto*] in a manner that is profound and lasting. When a single brushstroke renders so skillfully the

heart of a scene, a vivid and fascinating picture comes to one's mind" (Sôseki 1906). But the vividness of Kyôka's style is more than an impressionist's knack to render palatable a central element of the scene. His paranormal aesthetics infuse a mood of exceeding interest (*hijô ni omoshiromi ga aru*) to capture the mind's eye; and material relics are ongoing linked with spirit anima. In this relationship on both theme and method, Yeats and Kyôka's formulations on the situating of liminality develop the zone of twilight as textual ambience that hearkens to occultism, inviting a performative operation of invocation and intercession with the ancestral through alternative forms of communication.

NOTES

1. In using this term, I am following Mishima Yukio's sense of his own contemporary *nô* as *gendai nô*, a term that implies a modern artform both divergent as well as derived from its classical predecessor. I have consulted the original Japanese texts, and I am indebted to Gerald Figal's and M. Cody Poulton's published translations of Izumi Kyôka. Unless otherwise so noted, translations from the Japanese are my own.
2. See Nihon "Reinô-sha" retsuden (2005) for a detailed account of this rather tragic clairvoyant and her relationship to mainstream adulation.
3. See Kodama (1987) for a collection of Kume's notes and essays in regards to his friendship with Pound and Yeats. Kume had a considerable knowledge of classical *nô*, and evidently assisted Pound in translation and other editorial matters.
4. *Yûgen*, a difficult Japanese aesthetic term, suggests the hidden, dim depths, mystery, and also the occultic. Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner have established through their research a working definition in English of "mystery and depth" (Brower & Miner 1961: 265). This passage from their *Japanese Court Poetry* is worth studying in detail, as it examines the historical complexity of this term.
5. In private correspondences, as in a letter to John Quinn (23 July 1918), Yeats casually refers to certain plays of his as "noh" (Yeats 1954: 651). See also a letter to Lady Gregory (8 September 1917). But this does not necessarily mean he saw his drama as point for point pure reproductions. Itô's production of *At the Hawk's Well* in New York gave Yeats mixed feelings. On one hand, as he wrote to John Quinn on 23 July 1918, the conventional American theatre did not match his ideal of a venue (*ibid.*: 651–2). But, Yeats adds, "Ito and his Japanese players should be interesting" (*ibid.*: 651). Emund Dulac provided a brief review of the performance, noting that "rightly or wrongly" the Japanese cast inspired a certain kind of confidence. Itô's *At the Hawk's Well*, neither endorsed nor forbidden, aroused Yeats's curiosity with the possibility of his drama being adopted interculturally, arranged innovatively and therefore further adopted by contemporary aesthetics, even at the expense of his own personal views. *At the Hawk's Well* continues to be restaged in many different forums. In correspondence, in fact, Yeats would use the word "noh" only a few other times in reference to himself, again to Lady Gregory (10 April 1921), and lastly to Edmund Dulac (14 October 1923): "perhaps produce a Noh play if Civil War does not start again" (*ibid.*: 700). Thus, Yeats only applied *nô* suggestively to his drama in limited, private usage. After only a brief period of imagining with this conceptual label, Yeats seemingly abandoned any further self-references to his work as *nô* since the early 1920s.
6. *Shinpa*, more technically, was a modernist movement that combined elements from *kabuki* with contemporary developments in drama. As a transitional movement, *shinpa* notably combined the classical tradition with innovations, including influences from the European

nineteenth-century stage. Kyôka, essentially, wrote for the *shinpa* stage – but its producers were very reluctant to produce his more interesting plays, which were so different from the cloying sentimentality that was in vogue.

7. Jim McGarry of Collooney wrote an interesting description of this area in *The Sligo Weekender* newspaper (8 April 2003): "On the right-hand-side going from Coolaney to Skreen is Tullaghan Hill with the Holy Well attributes to St. Patrick, known as the Hawk's Well. Listed as one of the *mirabilia* [miracles, wonders] of Ireland by writers from the 9th century onwards. The reason is because of the tradition that the water in the well rises and falls with the tide although the Ox Mountains lie between it and the sea. A short distance further on the same side is the striking Carraig na Seabhach, the Hawk's Rock, referred to in the works of W. B. Yeats and the origin of the name of the Hawk's Well Theatre in Sligo."
8. As first cited by Muramatsu in *Izumi Kyôka* (312). Poulton is suggestively sympathetic to a Yeats–Kyôka link, being one of fortuitous correspondences. I believe that there are sufficient chains of connections to suggest a measure of influence, particularly arising from the *Celtic Twilight* and circulating among Japanese literati. Along with translations of Yeats, Sangû also published a small study of Hearn in English: "Lafcadio Hearn in Japan" (Makoto 1959).
9. From "The Lake of Revenge". Much of Lady Wilde's important work *Legend, Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland* concern the interactivity between these legends and superstitions as specific connections to local spaces. Tober n-Alt (Well in the Cliff) in Sligo, an important religious and heritage site, was famed for its delicious waters and curative powers. A popular site for devotions on Garland Sunday, the well probably had also been a site of pagan observances, evidenced by the continued practice of tying wishing rags nearby. Sadly, during recent land development in Sligo, a septic tank used by builders broke open and contaminated the ground and spring waters. Also, in terms of the undrinkable, the tap water in Galway City is now so unhealthy that it requires treatment in order to be digestible.
10. In a recent online interview, Slavoj Žižek offered his views on Japanese characteristics and customs: "the Japanese are well aware that something which may appear superficial and unnecessary has a much deeper structural function … Surfaces do matter. If you disturb the surfaces you may lose a lot more than you think. You shouldn't play with rituals. Masks are never simply mere masks. Perhaps that's why Brecht became close to Japan" (Žižek & Lovink 1995).
11. Shimazaki Chifumi's translations of *nô* include the categories *Warrior Ghost Plays* and *Restless Spirits Plays*.
12. Yeats did not develop a systematic definition for fairies or ghosts. He presents a varied spectrum of occultic spirit presences that form relationships with human imaginations, and that they can coincide with social shifts in collective imaginations. Likewise, *kappa*, in Japan, have been various depicted, first as terrifying creatures in Edô tales, as a satirical device for Akutagawa, or used in cucumber adverts, as well as soft toys for children. The ways in which the folkloric bestiary, as mirroring society, can be both friend and foe informs much of Yeats's writing.
13. Uzawa Hisa, leader of the Uzawa troupe, is one of the few female *nô* actors in what had been, for centuries, a male-only profession. Uzawa represents how *nô* today can be faithful to the model of tradition, while still incorporating innovation and adaptation. As such, she is a passionate promoter who has staged performances across North America as well as Japan, as well as lectures and educational workshops.

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CHAPTER 12

AN AUSTRALIAN ORIGINAL

Rosaleen Norton and her magical cosmology

Nevill Drury

During the 1950s and 1960s the Australian trance occultist and visionary artist Rosaleen Norton was well known in Sydney as a colourful and "wicked" bohemian figure from the city's red-light district. Slight in build with flashing eyes, curly black hair and a smile that revealed irregular teeth, she had a magnetic presence that made her stand out in the crowd. Norton was invariably described as a pagan rebel and portrayed in such ungracious terms as "the notorious, Pan-worshipping Witch of Kings Cross … a person known to the police through two prosecutions for obscenity" (Salter 1999: 17). Most of her mainstream print-media coverage was generated by popular gossip-driven magazines like *The Australasian Post*, *People*, *Truth* and *Squire* that inclined towards sensationalist articles, and tabloid newspapers like *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Daily Mirror* and *Sun*.[1] But all of this salacious media interest in Norton has to be seen in an historical context. During the immediate post-Second World War period Australia was both socially and politically conservative, ruled by the highly traditional Sir Robert Menzies, an "ultraconservative prime minister, who reigned supreme in the 1950s with his anti-communist manifesto and harsh stance on censorship" (Johnson 2002). Norton was portrayed in the media as a Devil-worshipping harpy, ever eager to flaunt accepted social conventions at a time when the appropriate place for a woman was perceived to be within the home, focusing on domestic concerns and attending to the needs of husband and children. As Marguerite Johnson has observed, "Rosaleen was presented as society's scapegoat, the witch on the outskirts of the community, a demon required to reinforce family values and Christian morality" (*ibid*.: 1). During the 1960s, with its increasing intake of migrants from many European and Asian countries, Australia began a process of becoming a multicultural, multi-faith society associated in turn with a range of new religions (Cusack

2003: 1). However, from the 1860s up until the period immediately after the Second World War, Australia's religious profile remained relatively stable. In 1947 Anglicans, Presbyterians and Methodists collectively comprised over 60 per cent of the population and Roman Catholics made up an additional 20.7 per cent,[2] which meant that in the immediate post-war environment Australia was more than 80 per cent Christian. Norton's worship of the Great God Pan in the 1950s and 1960s was perceived by the public at large not only as heathen but as specifically anti-Christian and probably "demonic".

Norton's approach to pagan occultism remains unique within an Australian context, but the country itself has not been without its esoteric practitioners over the years. In the late 1850s spiritualism had been introduced to Australia by English migrants – taking hold first in the regional town of Ballarat, Victoria, where there was goldrush exploration, and soon afterwards in the city of Melbourne itself, theosophy also had an early presence in Australia. A group associated with American astrologer W. H. Chainey, known as the Gnostic Theosophical Society, came into being after Chainey toured Australia in 1886. Meanwhile, the co-founder of the New York and later Adyar (India)-based Theosophical Society, Colonel Henry Olcott, visited Australia in 1891. By 1895 there were lodges of the Australasian Section of the Theosophical Society with lodges in Melbourne, Hobart and Wellington, New Zealand.[3] While Norton was a self-initiated witch and trance magician and to that extent not part of an esoteric tradition of any sort she was certainly conversant with theosophical literature, and titles by Madame H. P. Blavatsky were listed in the bibliography of her 1952 publication, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*. There was also a small branch of the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO) in Sydney, led by Vyvyan Deacon and active in the 1920s, but its principal activities were associated not with Aleister Crowley's Thelemic sex magick but Masonic rituals, Rosicrucianism and the exploration of aphrodisiacs and "astral projection",[4] Norton had no contact with the OTO in Sydney – she was only seven years old when she migrated with her family from New Zealand to Australia in 1925.[5]

During the 1950s Norton's controversial paintings and drawings embodied a deep-seated pagan impulse that ran counter to orthodox religious sensibilities. What was less well known to readers of the tabloid newspapers and popular magazines published in Sydney during the 1950s was that Norton was also a natural trance artist. She began experimenting with self-hypnosis at the age of twenty-three, and as a result of her visionary explorations of trance states portrayed a wide range of supernatural beings in her paintings and drawings. A selection of these extraordinary artworks was published in 1952, in a controversial limited-edition publication, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*.[6] Norton depicted naked women wrestling with reptilean elementals or flying on the backs of winged griffins, gods who were both male and female, and demonic forms with menacing claw-tipped wings. But central to her magical cosmology was the

figure of the Great God Pan, who for her was an essentially benign figure – the all-pervasive life-force of the Universe.

Norton believed that Pan was not simply a figure from ancient Greek mythology but a vibrant and living archetypal "presence" in the world. By paying ritual homage to Pan, Norton believed that she was responding to the Earth as a sacred, living organism. To this extent she can be considered a significant precursor of those members of the environmental and Goddess spirituality movements who, since the late 1970s, have affirmed the need to "re-sacralize" the planet. Any evaluation of Norton must necessarily consider these aspects of her magical philosophy as well.

A MAGICAL LIFE

Rosaleen Miriam Norton was born in Dunedin, New Zealand, in 1917, the third of three sisters. Her father, Albert, was a captain in the merchant navy and a cousin of composer Vaughan Williams. The Nortons migrated to Australia from New Zealand in 1925 and settled in the Sydney suburb of Lindfield on the city's north shore. As a teenager Norton was expelled from high school because of her allegedly "depraved nature" which her headmistress claimed "would corrupt the innocence of the other girls". She then studied for two years at East Sydney Technical College under the noted sculptor Rayner Hoff (1894–1937). During this time she became interested in studying everything she could find about witchcraft, sorcery and magic and she was soon well versed in the occult writings of notable magical practitioners like Dion Fortune (Violet Mary Firth Evans, 1890–1946), Aleister Crowley (1875–1947) and Eliphas Lévi (Alphonse Louis Constant, 1810–75).

In 1940 Norton began to experiment with self-hypnosis as a means of inducing automatic drawing. She was already familiar with the trance methods of the Surrealists and especially admired the work of Salvador Dalí (1904–89) and Yves Tanguy (1900–1955) who, like the other artists in their movement, had explored techniques of encouraging the subconscious mind to manifest its visionary contents. Sometimes the Surrealists drew rapidly so that forms came through unimpeded by the intellect. Others experimented with drugs or documented their dream experiences with great detail in order to develop a greater knowledge of the "alternative reality" of the subconscious mind. Norton adopted a different approach, finding that she could shut off her normal consciousness using self-hypnosis, thereby transferring her attention to an inner plane of awareness. As she noted in a lengthy interview conducted with psychologist L. J. Murphy, at the University of Melbourne in 1949: "These experiments [with self-hypnosis] produced a number of peculiar and unexpected results … and culminated in a period of extra-sensory perception, together with a prolonged series of symbolic visions."[7] Norton spent several years after this

studying various systems of occult and mystical thought, including Buddhist and other examples of Eastern literature as well as standard works on the Kabbalah, Theosophy and Western magic.

During this period Norton also began to focus more specifically on the magical forces associated with the Great God Pan, whose spirit she felt pervaded the entire Earth. Her studies had taught her that the ancient Greeks regarded Pan as lord of all things – symbolizing the totality of the elements and all forms of manifest being. He was therefore, in a very real sense, the true god of the world. Pan was a maintainer of the balance of Nature and also had at his command an invisible hierarchy of lesser spirits who could help him in his work of ruling and sustaining the Earth.

Norton painted a large-scale interpretation of Pan, complete with horns, pointed ears, cloven hooves and musical pipes, and mounted it on the wall of her Kings Cross flat, where it effectively became the focal point of her magical altar. She also conducted magical ceremonies dressed in a tiger-skin robe to honour his presence, and would often experience him as a living reality when she entered a trance state. Meanwhile, her art continued to reflect the entities she encountered in her visions, including a variety of devilish creatures, half animal/half human pagan deities, and various supernatural motifs. Norton lived in a world populated by magical and astral entities whose presence pervaded her paintings and drawings in varying degrees. For her, the ancient gods and goddesses were a living presence in the world, and one could deny their call only at great personal cost.

NORTON'S PERSONA AS A WITCH

When Rosaleen Norton reflected on her youth and discussed her magical background in several interviews conducted with a Sydney journalist in the mid-1950s, she maintained that she had been born a witch and was essentially self-taught: "If you are a witch nobody has to teach you", she explained to her interviewer. "In my case, it came naturally, and nobody had to teach me" (Barnes 1956: 8). Asked if she had a "Devil's mark" on her body, Norton confirmed that she had some atypical physical attributes that she associated with her persona as a witch: "My bodily peculiarities include a pair of freak muscles (extending from armpit to pelvic bone on either side) not normally found in the human body [and] a rare, atavistic formation of the upper ears known as 'Darwin's Peak'". Norton also alluded to two small blue dots on her left knee, which she had always assumed were a sign that she was a traditional witch (Norton 1957a: 4).

A defining moment in Norton's life came when, as an adolescent, she first discovered the figure of Pan in books on ancient Greek mythology. She was intrigued to learn that Pan was part man, part goat, and was represented with

the horns, tail, hind legs and hoofs of a goat. Pan also had a flat snub nose and beard.[8] Fond of music and dancing, Pan was also associated with shepherds and the woods and possessed prophetic powers. Because the woods were considered a place of fear at night, and because he often frightened unwary travellers in the countryside, Pan himself was considered unpredictable, lascivious and lecherous.[9] Norton also discovered that Pan's name literally meant "all" and she would later learn that the philosophical and religious concept of pantheism (which derives from the Greek *pan* = all, and *theos* = god) conveyed the idea that the universe as a whole is divine and that Nature is innately sacred. This was a concept that would shape Norton's perception of the magical universe (Harrison 1999: 1).

According to an interview conducted in 1965, Norton's attraction to the ancient Greek god Pan coincided with her rejection of her family's conventional Christian beliefs and specifically with her parents' wish that she should be confirmed into the Anglican faith at the age of twelve (Norton 1965: 41–2). Norton's interest in Pan led instead to improvised magical rituals using robes, Chinese joss sticks and wine taken from secret stock hidden by her parents:

> My first act of ceremonial magic was in honour of the horned god, whose pipes are symbol of magic and mystery, and whose horns and hooves stand for natural energies and fleet-footed freedom: And this rite was also my oath of allegiance and my confirmation as a witch. I remember my feelings on that occasion well, and they are valid today. (*Ibid.*)

Even at this early stage Norton accepted Pan as the true ruler of the world, although she would later acknowledge the magical significance of other deities as well – among them Hecate, Lilith and Lucifer.

As noted earlier, Norton's cosmology was based on an understanding that Nature and the Cosmos are innately sacred. For her, divinity could be "divided" into a number of gods and goddesses and these ruling deities – headed by Pan – were able to exist and function in more than one dimension of reality. Even as an adolescent, Norton was well aware that Pan would be regarded by the more "orthodox" Christian members of her family and community as a manifestation of the Devil himself, and yet she felt a distinct sense of excitement embarking on this magical adventure. Already in her teenage years there were clear signs of the rebellious, *antinomian* spirit that would align her with the Left-Hand Path of "black" or "dark" magic later in her career.[10]

HECATE, LILITH AND LUCIFER

Throughout her life Pan remained the supreme deity in Norton's magical pantheon – she would later refer to herself as the "High Priestess at the Altar of

Pan".[11] However other ancient deities and supernatural entities also provided inspiration and guidance. Prominent among them were Hecate, Lilith and Lucifer – the latter in his role as "the Adversary".

In classical Greek mythology, Hecate, or Hekate, was goddess of the night and darkness, and ruler of the hidden aspects of Nature. As a goddess of transitions, Hecate was associated with birth and death, and from the fifth century BCE onwards, she is also specifically associated with ghosts; Hecate could also cause nightmares.[12] Accompanied by barking dogs (von Rudloff 1999: 121) and hordes of spirits of the "restless dead" – those people unable to find their way to Hades (*ibid*.: 123) – Hecate was sometimes called *kleidophoros* ("key-bearer") and as a gate-keeper of Hades she was able to let spirits in and out of the Underworld (*ibid*.: 95–6). Hecate was only worshipped at night; dogs and black lambs were offered to her as sacrifices.[13] Often shown entwined in coils of snakes, which in ancient Greece were associated with the dead, Hecate was a goddess also associated with the crossroads, especially three-way intersections – such crossroads being in turn considered supernatural places and associated with magic and spirits.[14]

In an interview I conducted with Norton in Sydney in 1977, two years before her death, she told me that she regarded Hecate as an even more imposing deity than Pan. Norton acknowledged that Hecate was often very frightening because she was a shadowy goddess flanked by cohorts of ghouls and night-forms – as well as a dealer in death and curses. However Hecate could also be a protector. If ever Norton sought to curse people with her "witch current" in order to redress what she believed to be an unfair "balance of events", Norton called on Hecate's hexing powers and believed this was a legitimate use of the magical art (Drury 2000: 138).

Although Norton invariably linked Hecate and Lilith in her pantheon of ancient female magical deities, Lilith's mythic and cultural origins are quite different to Hecate's. Lilith is an exotic she-devil who first appears in Sumerian mythology in the middle of the third millennium BCE before entering the Jewish tradition during the Talmudic period (second to fifth centuries CE) and then finally emerging as a queenly consort at God's side during the Kabbalistic era (Patai 1990: 221). In the Sumerian tradition Lilith was acknowledged as a "beautiful maiden" but she was also regarded as a harlot and vampire who would never willingly let her lover depart (*ibid*.: 222). During the Talmudic period Lilith was known as Adam's first wife but their relationship was deeply troubled and when Lilith came to believe that Adam intended to overpower her, she uttered the magical name of God, rose into the air, and flew off to the Red Sea, a place believed to be full of lascivious demons. There she indulged herself in unbridled promiscuity giving rise to more than a hundred demonic offspring each day (*ibid*.: 223).

Norton discovered references to Lilith in Carl Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious* (1919) and quoted from Jung's text in the unpublished notes that

accompanied her illustrations in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* – a controversial collection of drawings and poems, co-authored with her lover and partner in magic, Gavin Greenlees (1930–83):

> Adam, before Eve, already possessed a demon wife, by name Lilith, with whom he quarrelled for mastership. But Lilith raised herself into the air through the magic of the name of God and hid herself in the sea. Adam forced her back with the help of three angels. Lilith became a nightmare, a Lamia, who threatened those with child and who kidnapped the modern child. (Jung 1919: 153–4)

Greenlees, whose poem on Lilith accompanied Norton's drawing in the publication, referred to Lilith as "the Queen of Night and Sympathy", describing her as an "image of the Unconscious with its power to align images and draw together those spirits who have the true affinity – holding man by the soul image" (*ibid.*). For Norton, however, Lilith was "Queen of Air and Darkness – symbol of Night" and mirrored Hecate's chthonic role as Goddess of the Underworld and the secret forces of Nature.[15]

LUCIFER/THE ADVERSARY

The figure of Lucifer/The Adversary completes the triad in Norton's magical cosmology. For Norton, Lucifer was closely associated with the spirit of rebellion and the quest for secret knowledge. In her illuminating essay, *A Vision* (*c.*1940s, published in a small publication titled *The Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, 1984), Norton reminds her readers that "we seek knowledge and truth and … 'Lucifer' means 'Light Bringer' … our greatest reward is in the eternal adventure of the search itself".[16]

At least two major artworks relating to Lucifer form part of Norton's *oeuvre* – a painting titled *Lucifer*, which was exhibited in 1949 in Melbourne, and a drawing titled *The Adversary*, reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* in 1952.[17] In the Judaeo–Christian tradition Lucifer (Latin: "light-bearer") is another name for Satan. In Isaiah 14.12 the reference to Lucifer relates to the King of Babylon but was misunderstood to refer to a fallen angel and subsequently passed into Judeo–Christian theology as a name for the Devil.[18] In heaven Lucifer had sought to be sufficient unto himself, refusing to admit that he was dependent on God. His sin was therefore one of pride, his ensuing punishment being cast headlong from Heaven for all eternity. As a consequence of his fall from grace Lucifer was filled with hatred for God.

In my 1977 interview with the artist, referred to earlier, Norton told me that although she considered Lucifer's role to be that of an adversary, this did not necessarily make him "evil". As Norton noted at the time: "He binds and limits

man when it appears that he is growing too big for his boots. He tries to trick man, not with malicious intent, so much as exposing the limitations of the ego and man's pride in his own existence" (Drury 1979: 106).

OTHER MAGICAL ENTITIES IN NORTON'S COSMOLOGY

In addition to Pan, Hecate, Lilith and Lucifer, who collectively represent the major figures in Norton's pantheon, a range of other magical and mythic entities are referred to in her writings and in her art. Because Norton claimed an existential reality for several of these entities they should also be considered as significant, contributing to both her artistic *oeuvre* and also to her personal magical cosmology.

In the glossary included in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* there are references to a number of magical beings from different cultural traditions, a reflection of Norton's eclectic and idiosyncratic occult interests. They include Bucentauro, whom Norton describes as a "type of eidolon" or phantasm; Eloi, the "phantasy spirit of Jupiter";[19] Makalath, the Laugher, described as "an archangel who expresses himself cosmically through the power that manifests itself in this world as humour"; Fohat, "the dynamic energy of cosmic ideation" – an entity referred to in theosophical literature;[20] Erzulie, a "voodoo Priestess of Mamaloi";[21] and The Dubouros, whom Norton identifies as "a being representing Mind … similar to the Egyptian god Thoth as the detached, enigmatic Recorder".[22] Norton also lists Val, Kephena, Borzorygmus and Mwystingel as "imaginary beings of Twizzari", the latter her name for the "Dreamworld … an aspect of the Astral Plane", and she makes reference also to Trudgepig, whom she describes as "another imaginary creature … [a] symbol of hypocritical gravity and gloom" (Norton [1952] 1982: 78).

In addition to this eclectic assortment of mythical entities, there is also an important magical figure whom Norton refers to as her "Familiar Spirit-in-Chief" – a being she knew by many different names, including the Monk, Frater Asmodeus and Brother Hilarian. This particular magical servitor, however, was more generally known as Janicot – Norton gives his name as Jannicot – and he in turn has fascinating occult connections, for his origins derive from Basque cosmology and witchcraft.

THE POWERS OF JANICOT

Norton's magical journals indicate that she regarded Janicot as the guardian of all portals leading to magical awareness. In the text accompanying her drawing *At Home*, reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Norton says that Janicot "manages most of my occult activities, supervises trances, escorts me into

other planes of Being, and sometimes assists the Sphynx in selecting visions for me". In traditional Basque witchcraft Janicot, or Jaincoa, was depicted as the Horned God – *Basa-jaun*, the "Goat-man" – otherwise known as the Lord of the Woods. Janicot was the Basque god of the oak and also god of doorways and the Wheel of the Year. Janicot was a satyr-like being with a human torso and the legs and feet of a goat. There is an immediate affinity here with the figure of Pan, but the mythic connection is more specifically with Dianus or Janus, the Roman two-headed God of the Oak Tree. Janus has been described as "the Door God, the God of the Hidden Portals into the Netherworld, and the 'portal' or gate between one time and the next", and this would seem to be how Norton regarded him as well. The Basque witches of France and northern Spain traditionally paid homage to Janicot in graveyards or forests, dancing around an altar of rock on which a goat's skull had been placed with a glowing candle positioned between the horns. Contemporary Wiccan author Timothy Roderick describes Janicot's powers in terms that resonate with the way in which Norton may well have viewed him – as a servitor and guardian of the gateways opening to magical awareness: "When you tap into the ancient archetypal energies of Janicot", writes Roderick, "you evoke your ability to see the big picture, to understand the true nature of things … [Janicot] also evokes your ability to see the true nature of your spirit … to see each moment in time as a doorway" (Roderick 2005: 284).

THE KABBALISTIC TREE AND THE QLIPHOTH

Both in her writings and in her art, Rosaleen Norton makes frequent reference to the Kabbalah as one of her principal maps of magical consciousness, and in her glossary listings she reveals her detailed knowledge of the ten spheres of consciousness, or *sephiroth*, associated with the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. Drawing on Dion Fortune's classic text, *The Mystical Qabalah* ([1935] 1957), a work that heads the list of esoteric publications in her bibliography (Norton [1952] 1982: 79), Norton refers to Binah, representing the sphere of the "Supernal Mother", and Geburah, the sphere of "Rightful Destruction" on the Kabbalistic Tree.[23]

Norton also makes frequent allusions – both in her captions and also in her journal entries and imagery – to the "dark" or negative aspects of the Tree. As noted earlier, these realms are known as the *Qliphoth*: Norton seems to have had several experiences involving these "dark" energies and draws on excerpts from her personal diary to provide a commentary in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*.[24] The Thelemic magician Kenneth Grant (1924–2011) describes the *Qliphoth* – the plural form of the Hebrew *Qlipha*, meaning "harlot" or "strange woman" – as "shells" and "shades" of the dead (Grant 1980: 287). According to Grant the *Qliphoth* signify "otherness" and refer to "the shadowy world of shells or reflections … power zones [that] form the Tree of Death" (Grant 1977: 275–6).

It is within the magical domain of the *Qliphoth* that Norton claims to have encountered the threatening magical entity she calls the Werplon, a hostile humanoid insect-creature illustrated in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (Norton [1952] 1982: 44). The Werplon[25] is by far the most hostile and confronting creature in Norton's magical cosmology.[26] An entry from her magical journal describes her encounter with this terrifying entity:

> I realised that my consciousness was united with that of a totally different Order of Being. Temporarily I was experiencing the sensations of one of those great – and to this world terrible – entities called Werplons … Sensation was intense; swift vibrant power and precision, and awareness below the surface, of some constant danger … Deep purple predominated with overtones of black, lit by splashes of varicoloured [*sic*] light at certain of the power points … Suddenly a shock of apprehension electrified the Werplon. That needle-keen precision of operation seemed to waver, to become slightly clumsy. A wave of fright and disgust swept me as one of the Werplon's senses registered the loathsome human vibration … I knew terror … Waves of pain invaded my aetheric body. My mind screamed. (*Ibid.*)

As several art-works in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* clearly indicate,[27] Norton was fascinated by these "dark" polarities of magical consciousness. What is especially significant about Norton's magical encounter with the Werplon is that she claimed it occurred while she was utilizing her "aetheric body", a reference to her out-of-the-body exploration of the "astral planes" accessed through trance and self-hypnosis.

SELF-HYPNOSIS AND TRANCE

As noted earlier, Norton's interest in "multiple consciousness" and "other planes or dimensions of being" had led her to experiment with self-hypnosis when she was just twenty-three years old.[28] At this stage Norton had already begun reading widely in the field of witchcraft, occultism and demonology and she was convinced that hypnotic trance states offered practical experiential access to a vast realm of heightened inner awareness that she wanted to explore firsthand (Norton 1950: 30).

Norton began her experiments by meditating in a darkened room,[29] restricting her normal consciousness in an effort to induce automatic drawing and allowing an "abnormal mode of consciousness" to take over (*ibid.*). This produced "a number of peculiar and unexpected results and some drawings which were later exhibited" (*ibid.*). Norton's experiments in states of consciousness culminated in what she referred to as "a period of extra-sensory perception,

together with a prolonged series of symbolic visions" (*ibid.*). Norton records her trance method in quite explicit terms, combining ritual elements and meditative techniques in order to facilitate an altered state of consciousness:

> I decided to experiment in self-induced trance; the idea being to induce an abnormal state of consciousness and manifest the results, if any, in drawing. My aim was to delve down into the subconscious and, if possible, through and beyond it.
>
> I had a feeling (intuitional rather than intellectual) that somewhere in the depths of the unconscious, the individual would contain, in essence, the accumulated knowledge of mankind: just as his physical body manifests the aggregate of racial experience in the form of instinct or automatic reaction to stimulus.
>
> In order to contact this hypothetical source, I decided to apply psychic stimulus to the subconscious : stimulus that the conscious reasoning mind might reject, yet which would appeal to the buried instincts as old as man, and would (I hoped) cause psychic "automatic reflexes" (Religious cults use ritual, incense etc. for the same reason). Consequently, I collected together a variety of things such as aromatic leaves, wine, a lighted fire, a mummified hoof, etc … all potent stimuli to the part of the subconscious that I wished to invoke. I darkened the room, and focusing my eyes upon the hoof I crushed the pungent leaves, drank some wine, and tried to clear my mind of all conscious thought. This was the beginning (and I made many other experiments which were progressively successful).[30]

During a period of around five months spent exploring self-hypnosis, Norton's consciousness became "extremely exalted" and her dissociative states of mind gave rise to increased perceptual acuity and feelings of enhanced personal power:

> I seemed, while experiencing a great intensification of intellectual, creative and intuitional faculties, to have become detached in a curiously timeless fashion from the world around me, and yet to be seeing things with a greater clarity and awareness than normally. I was working day and night, having very little sleep or rest, yet a supply of inexhaustible power seemed to flow through me.[31]

Norton experienced a sense of detachment accompanied by a feeling of clarity and potency. She now began to combine magical techniques of invocation[32] with her trance method of self-hypnosis, resulting in the spontaneous creation of a magical symbol, or *sigil*, which she associated with the ancient Egyptian figure of Thoth: "One night I felt impelled, quite apart from conscious volition,

to perform a kind of ritual of invocation; after which I executed a peculiar waking 'automatic' drawing, the composition of which assumed the form of the symbol  ."

The upper figure is the sign of Thoth – impersonality and balanced force – while the lunar crescent can represent several things, but chiefly (as applied to the individual) receptivity to occult powers; the personality; and, according to the Kabbalists, an emblem of the sphere of magic. I once read of magic defined as 'The science and art of causing supernormal change to occur in conformity with will', which seems a fairly comprehensive description.[33]

NORTON'S CONCEPTION OF THE MAGICAL UNIVERSE

One of Norton's earliest findings in relation to what she referred to as "the other Realm of Being" was that the contents of this domain seemed to be directed by thought itself, almost as if one were consciously entering a dream-world. According to Norton, in the magical realm thoughts become tangible and visible and often assume an anthropomorphic form. Visual images and metaphysical "entities" also morph from one form into another, subject to conscious or "willed" intent:

> "thought" in those realms is very different from that which is normally understood by the word. There, "thought" – or rather the energy generated by such – is felt as a tangible thing, a current of living force which assumes palpable and visual form. I had been told, earlier, that "entities in the Plane assumed form at will". This is literally true; one actually changes shape very frequently, since the new "sense" referred to is that which could be described as "being". Just as one can see, feel, hear a thing, state or person; and when this occurs one realises and is the very essence of its nature. This sense, if one can call it that, covers a vastly wider field than anything comparable to human life; for in addition to becoming the essence of male, female, or neither, and beings of other orders of Existence, one can "become" a living embodiment of abstract Ideas of all descriptions.[34]

According to Norton, many of the familiar "god-forms" and mythic images from the world's various mythological and religious traditions could be regarded as projections of human consciousness. However, this did not make them any less "real" when experienced in an altered state of consciousness; these powerful mythic images would still have a tangible presence on the magical plane when an individual encountered them in trance. Norton maintained that *the actual gods or "intelligences" themselves* could not be constrained by the cultural forms imposed by mythological or religious traditions because

these were only human constructs; that is to say, the gods were "greater" than the "god-forms" through which they manifested. In this regard Norton emphasized that many metaphysical entities perceived in the trance realm were projections from intelligences whose origins lay far beyond the sphere of human awareness:

> In the other Realm, the structure of phenomena is based on other lines. Intelligences are not confined to one form as here; also the consciousness pertaining to each type of form bears a far closer relationship to its material vehicle. The latter, as I have said, being fluid plasmic matter, can and does alter its form to any image appropriate to circumstances. Since, however, the form assumed is a direct reflection of the content or state of consciousness, it is an automatic result of the latter. So, in this Realm also "form follows function", but in an utterly different way; as function in this sense is synonymous with "being" or content …
>
> I have spoken of individual mind working upon and moulding plasmic material. Consider the power, then, of this unconscious mass-concentration of human beings, throughout the ages, upon certain idealisations of forms – the God-forms (a generic name for all such forms, including Demons, Faery creatures, "angels" etc.). This unconscious creative thought concentration has built up images in the aether, moulding raw plasmic matter to the form of these images, and providing vehicles for other intelligences to manifest through, relative to humanity. I do not mean that these intelligences are either confined to any or all of these forms, or that they are the product of human thought, conscious or otherwise. The vehicles, or God-forms, yes, or largely so, but not the intelligences themselves. These vehicles, however, form a useful medium of communication, but naturally their visual form is, to a certain extent, anthropomorphic.[35]

According to Norton, the fluid, "plasmic" nature of the astral realm ensured that metaphysical entities and intelligences from higher planes of existence could manifest themselves, or "incarnate", at lower levels of the astral plane and at this time they would appear in anthropomorphic god-forms culturally appropriate to the consciousness of the beholder. Norton believed that the god-forms themselves provided a mediating link between different levels of reality – the metaphysical and the human – and that human beings could approach the gods by "rising" through the astral planes towards the manifested god-forms while in a state of trance. Conversely, the gods could "incarnate" or "descend" into the astral realms by manifesting in an appropriate form.

Norton came to regard the astral plane – the altered state of consciousness accessed through trance – as a type of "mediating domain" between the

gods and goddesses on the one hand, and human consciousness (functioning through the vehicle of the plasmic body) on the other. She also formed the view – on the basis of her trance experiences in the plasmic body – that a number of inner-plane "intelligences" pervaded all aspects of the known universe. These intelligences in turn confirmed the nature of their existence through a range of anthropomorphic images – manifesting as gods and goddesses, demons and archangels, as portrayed in the world's various religions and mythologies.

NORTON'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GODS AND GODDESSES

Norton's exploration of trance states provided access to a dimension of conscious awareness that was completely unfamiliar territory to most of her contemporaries in 1940s and 1950s Australia. Her ventures into trance states were essentially solitary affairs where her privacy was safeguarded by close family members like her husband, Beresford,[36] and her elder sister, Cecily.[37] Norton noted in various interviews that her trance journeys often took place during a period of three to five days. This situation suggests that a substantial part of Norton's magical practice was private in nature, and that it was based on a series of personal trance encounters with the god-forms of Pan, Hecate, Lilith and Lucifer and other metaphysical entities, whose images then found their way into her paintings and drawings.

A key discovery made by Norton herself and which distinguishes her from many other occultists operating within the Western esoteric tradition – especially those espousing the philosophy that magic is based, essentially, on directing the will – was that Norton did not believe she was fully in control of the magical energies she was encountering. When I interviewed Norton in 1977 she emphasized that the archetypal gods and cosmic beings she had contacted in trance existed *in their own right*. In their own particular magical realms they held the upper hand – *not she*.[38] To this extent Norton differed from thinkers like Carl Jung, who regarded the sacred archetypes as universal forces deep within the collective human psyche, and not as entities with their own separate existence beyond the mind. While Norton admitted to being influenced by Jung and refers to Jungian archetypes in the 1949 L. J. Murphy interview, for Jung, the archetypes – the ancient gods and goddesses of religion and mythology – were ultimately sacred personifications of the self.[39] On the basis of what she experienced during her trance explorations, Norton did not share this view. For her, magical deities such as Pan, Hecate, Lilith and Lucifer, as well as other magical entities like the Werplon, were not projections or extensions of her own spiritual consciousness but powerful (and occasionally terrifying) entities who would grace her with their presence *only if it pleased them,* and not as a consequence of her own personal will or intent.[40] Norton believed she could

only depict in her paintings and drawings those qualities and attributes that the god or goddess in question *chose to reveal*, and that those energies would then filter through her "like a funnel".[41] Norton maintained that she did nothing other than transmit the magical current. If the gods and goddesses were alive *in her* and *through her*, their presence would manifest in her art and through her ceremonial magical practice.[42]

NORTON'S LATER YEARS

During the mid-to-late 1970s Rosaleen Norton lived in a shadowy basement apartment in an ageing block of flats close to the El Alamein fountain in Sydney's Kings Cross district. She was now already withdrawing into obscurity and restricting her day-to-day contacts to just a few close friends and her older sister Cecily, who lived down the corridor in the same block of flats. It was an increasingly private existence, and that was the way she liked it. As Cecily later told me, Rosaleen was quite happy living by herself. Accompanied by her two pet cats, she lived among a litter of easels, paintings and books, and liked to watch the fish swimming gracefully in her aquarium. She also spent a lot of time listening to classical music – Mozart, Stravinsky, Beethoven, Bach and Sibelius were among her favourites. And although her flat had a dark and somewhat gloomy sitting room, it did open out onto a courtyard and a profusion of greenery – a secluded corner of Nature. During the summer months she loved sitting in the sun near her French windows, beside a red pot containing an umbrella plant, reading her books on magic and mysticism. She had also retained her youthful habit of spending long hours in the bath in the evenings. Ever a "night" person, she loved lying in the soap suds sucking oranges, drinking endless cups of tea, or alternatively sipping Italian Strega liqueur. These, for her, were the true luxuries of life.

Nevertheless, in recent years she had suffered from intermittent bouts of sickness. This had not alarmed her unduly, even though she sometimes felt down on her energy. But towards the end of 1978 she suddenly became sick, and required hospital tests. Her doctor subsequently told her that she had cancerous growths in her colon and there would have to be an operation. At first it was thought that the surgery was totally successful, but this proved not to be so, and the cancer quickly recurred.

Late in November 1979 Norton was taken to the Roman Catholic Sacred Heart Hospice for the Dying at Sydney's St Vincents Hospital, the end clearly in sight. Shortly before she died she told her friend Victor Wain: "I came into this world bravely; I'll go out bravely." Unrepentant in her worship of Pan, unfazed by all the crucifixes surrounding her in the hospice, and a pagan to the end, she departed this life on 5 December 1979.

NORTON AND THE LEFT-HAND PATH

When one considers the various perspectives across the spectrum of twentieth-century Western magical belief it is clear that Norton's approach is markedly different, for example, from the ritualized theurgy found in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn – the influential magical organization whose approach to ceremonial magic focused ultimately on the quest for spiritual rebirth and mystical transcendence (Drury 2009b). Here the ritual magician would invoke an archetypal deity within a consecrated setting and seek to incarnate and embody the sacred qualities associated with a particular god or goddess – a practice known as "assuming the god-form".[43] Norton's approach also differs from the ritualism of Eliphas Lévi and Aleister Crowley – Lévi and Crowley both believed they could bend Heaven and Earth to the dictates of the magical will. Only the contemporary American Left-Hand Path organization, the Temple of Set, begins to approach Norton's unique magical cosmology – in the sense that here the principal deity (in this case, Set) – is *set apart* from the rest of humanity. And yet even in the Temple of Set, great emphasis is placed on the potency of the magical will. An invocation included in Michael Aquino's *Crystal Tablet of Set* (1986) – a central text for members of the Temple of Set – begins: "In the name of Set, the Prince of Darkness, I enter into the Realm of Creation to Work My Will upon the Universe" (Aquino 1986: 36).

In the Temple of Set considerable emphasis is placed on the notion that the magical psyche is forced to operate in a universe where it is innately *alien*, "separate", and doesn't belong (*ibid*.: 16). The appeal of Set for his contemporary followers is that he represents the "Principle of *Isolate* Intelligence". Norton never makes this particular claim, or anything remotely like it, and in some ways adopts a position that is exactly the reverse. According to Norton, Pan *sustains* the universe energetically – he is the very *essence* of the Cosmos – and on a local level he is regarded by Norton as a *living presence* able to re-sacralize the world. In the *Crystal Tablet of Set* Aquino describes pantheism as a form of "monistic idealism" and categorically rejects it because it suggests that "God and the Universe are one and the same substance" (*ibid*.: 10). Norton, meanwhile, accepts pantheism for precisely this reason. As Norton expresses it: "I think the God Pan is the spirit whose body – or such of it as can be seen in these four dimensions (the fourth being time) – is the planet Earth, and who, therefore, in a very real sense, is the ruler and god of this world" (Norton 1957d).

Although I believe Norton is essentially aligned with the Left-Hand Path in modern Western magic – on the basis of her *antinomian* social attitudes, her *libertine* approach to sex-magic, her *Qliphothic* artistic orientation, and the essentially *chthonic* nature of her magical quest – she is atypical of the Left-Hand Path in other ways. Many Left-Hand Path practitioners place considerable emphasis on *individual* self-mastery and *self*-empowerment. For example, the focus in Aleister Crowley's doctrine of *Thelema* is on *individual* communication

with the Holy Guardian Angel (the magician's "true self") – so that, in due course the "self" becomes God. Similarly, members of the Swedish Dragon Rouge and the San Francisco-based Temple of Set have as one of their principal aims the magical quest for *self-deification*.[44] Norton, however, at no time seeks self-deification – she does not wish to "*become* the God" and unlike members of the Temple of Set does not believe that she has been born into an "unnatural" or "alien" world. Instead, Norton acknowledges Pan as Lord of the Universe – regarding him as the foundation of humanity's existence – and at no point seeks to challenge his control or dominance. Norton's personal expression of *gnosis* is based instead on her inner-plane journeys, for it is here that she enters the realm of Pan and the other gods and goddesses who collectively guide and inspire the world as we know it. From Norton's perspective, it is Pan who is ultimately in control of the world and it is her function to operate as "High Priestess at the Altar of Pan" – as a willing and dedicated subject in Pan's domain. At the same time it is Norton's specific role as a visionary magician to document her discovery of Pan's "secret" inner-plane universe and to record details of her visionary experiences in her paintings and drawings.

WAS NORTON A SATANIST?

When Norton exhibited her paintings and drawings at the Apollyon and Kashmir coffee-shops in Sydney's Kings Cross district during the 1950s, both locations were described in the tabloid press as the haunt of the "Devil's cult" and on occasions visitors to these coffee-shops would mischievously request a cup of "bat's blood".[45] New Zealand migrant Anna Hoffmann's claim in September 1955 that she had attended a Black Mass with Norton in Kings Cross, created sensationalist headlines on page one of a daily Sydney newspaper.[46] Even though Hoffmann's charges were later found to be fabrications and Hoffmann herself was jailed for two months and described as a "menace" by the presiding magistrate,[47] the image of Norton as a "satanist" or "Devil-worshipper" persisted during the 1950s, and even up into more recent times. For her own part, Norton went to great lengths, both during media interviews and sometimes also during various court proceedings, to explain that the "horned god", Pan, was a pagan deity from the tradition of ancient Greek mythology and that her practice of witchcraft had no connection with the Christian Devil.[48] Nevertheless, it is easy to see how members of the public may have misconstrued Norton's occult imagery in the conservative social climate of post-World War Two Australia.

Norton was unquestionably drawn to the "night" side of the psyche and she herself described her art in those terms.[49] Her drawing of *The Master*,[50] which depicts a horned deity controlling the forces of destiny, is a confronting image that could easily be mistaken for an image of the Devil, while *Black Magic*,[51] one of several controversial artworks exhibited at the University of Melbourne in

1949, and against which charges of obscenity were subsequently brought, could easily cause offence to any practising Christian, with its imagery of bestial lust, a winking nun, and a bare-breasted woman mounted on a crucifix.

However, while many of Norton's paintings and drawings feature provocative and irreverent subject matter, it is quite another matter to assume they promote a satanic perspective. When Norton was accused of conducting blood-sacrifice rituals during a "Kings Cross Black Mass" she was deeply offended.[52] Norton had always had a strong affinity with Nature, and with animals in particular, since her early childhood. As visitors to her apartment invariably attested, Norton was always accompanied by numerous pets, including cats, lizards, frogs, turtles and mice (Barnes 1952: 7), and she always maintained that she would never cause harm to animals.[53] The very notion of ritualistic, satanic "blood sacrifice" was completely abhorrent to her.[54] The evidence provided by her own artistic work and comments made to the popular press and in journalistic articles strongly suggests that while Norton was unquestionably both pagan and "heathen"[55] – and often provocative in her presentation of "images of the night" – she was not a practising satanist. Norton's pagan practice in Kings Cross featured ceremonial altars dedicated specifically to Pan and Hecate, and her coven rituals made no reference to the Christian Devil. It is also significant that the symbol depicted on the forehead of the goat-headed deity in *The Master*, a representation of Pan, was a Kabbalistic hexagram – a symbol showing the interconnection between Spirit and Cosmos, the Macrocosm and Microcosm – and not the inverted pentagram associated with contemporary satanism.[56]

NORTON AND THE SACRED ASPECTS OF NATURE

From the late 1970s onwards influential American feminist witches began to speak of the Earth as the "body" of the Goddess. In her book *Rebirth of the Goddess*, Carol P. Christ writes that "the Goddess as earth is the firm foundation of changing life" (Christ 1997: 90). She also observes that "when the earth is the body of Goddess … the female body and the earth, which have been devalued and dominated together, are re-sacralized. Our understanding of divine power is transformed as it is clearly recognized as present within the finite and changing world" (*ibid*.: 91). The influential Goddess worshipper, Starhawk (aka Miriam Simos), similarly states in *The Spiral Dance* (Starhawk [1979] 1999) – a source-book which has become a neo-pagan bible for many feminist witches – that "the model of the Goddess, who is immanent in Nature, fosters respect for the sacredness of all living things. Witchcraft can be seen as a religion of ecology" (*ibid*.: 34–5).

During the pre-feminist 1950s Norton similarly drew attention to the sacred qualities of Nature, but ascribed them instead to Pan, whom she

regarded as an embodiment of the divine essence of Nature, as noted above. When I interviewed Norton in 1977 she emphasized that Pan was very much a deity for the present day, and not simply an archetypal figure from antiquity. For her, Pan was the creative force in the universe that protected the natural beauty of the planet and conserved the resources of the environment. Like Starhawk, who for many years has combined Goddess spirituality with political activism, Norton believed that magic had political consequences. For her, Pan was alive and well in the anti-pollution lobbies, and among the Friends of the Earth (Drury 2013: 288). That being so, it is reasonable to argue that in addition to being a trance-magician and visionary explorer Norton was also a significant precursor of those feminist witches and practitioners of Goddess spirituality who would later proclaim, from the late 1970s onwards, that the Earth was innately sacred and should be honoured as a manifestation of deity. Vivienne Crowley, a well known advocate of Wicca in Britain, maintains that the Earth should not be symbolized by the Goddess alone, pointing out that witchcraft "worships the Great Mother Goddess and Horned God as representations of all Goddesses and Gods that the human heart has worshipped" (Crowley 2001: 1). Crowley adds the further observation that "many people are attracted to the Earth Traditions because the Divine is found in the form of Goddess as well as God" (*ibid*.: 2). These are sentiments which Norton would surely have shared.

In summarizing Norton's unique contribution to twentieth-century occultism, one particular point should perhaps be emphasized: so far as I am aware, Rosaleen Norton is the only woman to have formulated a magical cosmology based on her own, personal trance-explorations of the "inner planes" of the psyche and to have depicted these deities in her art. This, it seems to me, will be her lasting legacy to the Western esoteric tradition, and she is likely to gain wider international recognition in the future as her contribution is better understood.[57]

By way of a final observation, I would like to conclude by noting that while Norton is best known for her visionary pagan imagery she was also an evocative poet. She regarded the following poem, *Dance of Life*, as an expression of her magical credo:

> In the spiral horns of the Ram,
> In the deep ascent of midnight,
> In the dance of atoms weaving the planes of matter
> is Life.
> Life spins on the dream of a planet,
> Life leaps in the lithe precision of the cat,
> Life flames in the thousandth Name,
> Life laughs in the thing that is 'I'.
> I live in the green blood of the forest,

I live in the white fire of Powers,
I live in the scarlet blossom of Magic,
I live. (Norton 1957b: 11)

NOTES

1. Norton received more serious critiques of her visionary art and pagan symbolism in small literary magazines like *Pertinent* and *Arna* but these were specialist publications with low print runs and did not reach the mainstream Australian public.
2. Data from Cahill *et al*. (2004: 41).
3. See Drury and Tillett, (1980: 15, 20).
4. See Drury and Tillett (1980: 29–30.
5. As Marguerite Johnson has observed in her conference presentation, "The Witch of Kings Cross: Rosaleen Norton and the Australian Media" (2002), "Rosaleen was presented as society's scapegoat, the witch on the outskirts of the community, a demon required to reinforce family values and Christian morality." During the 1960s, with its increasing intake of migrants from many European and Asian countries, Australia began a process of becoming a multicultural, multi-faith society associated in turn with a range of new religions.
6. For a complete account of Norton's approach to trance-based magical and visionary art, see Drury (2013).
7. The full transcript of Norton's interview with L. J. Murphy is included in my recent biography, *Homage to Pan: The Life, Art and Magic of Rosaleen Norton* (2009).
8. See Guiley (1989: 262), and "Pan" in Turner and Coulter (2000: 371).
9. See "Pan" in Zimmerman (1964: 190).
10. For a more detailed exploration of Norton's association with the magic of the Left-Hand Path, interested readers are referred to Drury (2009a; 2011), where this topic is discussed in detail.
11. *The Bulletin*, Sydney, 27 January 1981.
12. See von Rudloff (1999: 95, 123). Patricia A. Marquardt notes that, prior to the fifth century BCE, Hecate was not especially chthonic in nature but that her identification with witchcraft and black magic in literature dates from Euripedes' *Medea*. Marquardt also notes that Hecate may have become identified around this time with the Thessalian goddess Einoda, who was similarly associated with witchcraft. See Marquardt (1981: 252).
13. See "Hecate", in Turner and Coulter (2000: 208). According to Rabinowitz, other offerings to Hecate included bread, eels and mullet. See Rabinowitz (1998: 62).
14. See von Rudloff (1999: 113, 122).
15. From unpublished notes accompanying Norton's illustration *Lilith*, reproduced in Norton ([1952] 1982).
16. Norton, "A Vision", included in Norton (1984).
17. A painting of *The Adversary*, comparable in all major details, had also been exhibited at the Rowden White Gallery in Melbourne in 1949
18. See "Lucifer" in *The New Columbia Encyclopedia* (Columbia 1975: 1626).
19. Despite its resemblance to a Jewish god-name, Eloi is not strictly Kabbalistic. The god-name of Chesed, the fourth sphere upon the Tree of Life associated with Jupiter in Dion Fortune's *The Mystical Qabalah* ([1935] 1957: 161), is given as El and not Eloi. It is likely that Norton derived the reference to Eloi from Madame H. P. Blavatsky who refers to the Eloi of Jupiter in *The Secret Doctrine* ([1897] 1962: ii: 301 and iv: 108). Blavatsky ascribes this reference to the planetary spirit of Jupiter to the early Christian theologian Origen, who in turn is said to have ascribed it to the Gnostics.

20. See Blavatsky ([1897] 1962). Blavatsky refers specifically to Fohat as the "dynamic energy of Cosmic Ideation" and "the guiding power of all manifestation" (81) and later describes him as "the personified electric vital power, the transcendental binding unity of all cosmic energies, on the unseen as on the manifested planes, the action of which resembles – on an immense scale – that of a living Force created by Will … Fohat is not only the living Symbol and Container of that Force, but is looked upon by the Occultists as an Entity; the forces he acts upon being cosmic, human and terrestrial, and exercising their influence on all these planes respectively" (170–71). (Capital letters in Blavatsky's text.)
21. In Haiti Erzulie is revered as the Voodoo goddess of love, beauty, flowers and jewellery. She also enjoys dancing and fine clothes. See Deren (1953: 62). During her lifetime Norton could have had access to this well-known book, a classic study of voodoo, although it was first published a year after *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*. It is likely that Norton drew at least part of her enthusiasm for voodoo from William B. Seabrook's *Magic Island* (1929) which she lists in the bibliography in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (Norton [1952] 1982: 79) as a reference under the heading "witchcraft and demonology". Norton lists its title incorrectly as *The Magic Isle* in her bibliography.
22. For all of these metaphysical beings see Norton ([1952] 1982: 78).
23. The Kabbalah and its central motif, the Tree of Life, were significant elements in the magic of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.
24. See Plate XV, *Qlipha*, in Norton ([1952] 1982: 44), which is accompanied by an extract from Norton's personal journal.
25. "Werplon" appears to be a concocted term combining "were-" as in werewolf, with *plon*, the Scandinavian term for a dragon.
26. It is more confronting even than the Djinn, a being which it superficially resembles and which is depicted in the painting *The Djinn,* which is reproduced in Norton (1984: 28). Both the Werplon and the Djinn are shown grabbing helpless human beings in their clawed fingers.
27. The most confronting examples from *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* ([1952] 1982) include Plate V, *Panic*; Plate XIV, *Rites of Baron Samedi*; Plate XV, *Qlipha*; Plate XVII, *Black Magic*; Plate XIX, *Fohat*; Plate XXIV, *Symphony in 3 Movements*; Plate XXVIII, *Dinner Time*; and Plate XXXI, *The Master*.
28. The date is confirmed in the Norton article "She hates Figleaf Morality" (Norton 1950: 30).
29. See Norton's personal statement to L. J. Murphy in Drury (2009a).
30. Extract from Norton's personal statement to L. J. Murphy in Drury (2009a: 227–38).
31. Extract from Norton's personal statement to L. J. Murphy in Drury (2009a: 227–38).
32. It is important to distinguish between magical invocation and evocation. In *Magic: Its Ritual Power and Purpose* (1958: 41), Dion Fortune's colleague W. E. Butler (1898–1978) writes: "In invocation we act in such a way as to attract the attention of some Being of a superior nature to our own, or some cosmic force of a higher order. In evocation we impose our will upon beings of a lesser order of existence and compel them to execute our wishes. In both cases the actual contact takes place through our mental channel."
33. Extract from Norton's personal statement to L. J. Murphy in Drury (2009a: 227–38).
34. Extract from Norton's personal statement to L. J. Murphy in Drury (2009a: 227–38).
35. Extract from Norton's personal statement to L. J. Murphy in Drury (2009a: 227–38).
36. Norton was married to Beresford Conroy from 1940 to 1951.
37. Cecily Boothman remained Norton's closest family member and friend, throughout her life, and ensured Norton's privacy during the trance sessions: personal communication from Boothman to the author, 1982.
38. Interview with Norton at Roslyn Gardens, Kings Cross, Sydney 1977.
39. See Jung (1919, 1956, 1959, 1968).
40. Interview with Norton at Roslyn Gardens, Kings Cross, Sydney 1977.
41. Interview with Norton at Roslyn Gardens, Kings Cross, Sydney 1977.

42. Interview with Norton at Roslyn Gardens, Kings Cross, Sydney 1977.
43. See Stavish (n.d.). Stavish's article describes Golden Dawn ceremonial procedures.
44. For a lengthy description of variations in the magic of the Left-Hand Path see Drury (2009a).
45. See "Some bat's blood please!" *The Sun*, Sydney, 26 September 1955.
46. *The Sun*, Sydney, 22 September 1955. The front-page headline read: "'Black Masses' in Sydney, says girl".
47. *The Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 3 October 1955.
48. See *The Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 31 May 1956, for a report of court proceedings related to the Honer/Ager obscenity charges which included her defence of witchcraft.
49. The following observations are included in the introduction to *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*: "There is … a similarity of attitude to Norman Lindsay, but no similarity of style. Lindsay's Pantheism is of a different kind; his is a Daylight world and the satirical element is used as a foil rather than admitted as another form of beauty. The vision of Rosaleen Norton is one of Night; she dislikes any of the stereotypes of beauty and finds the 'Daylight' world in general does not make good subject matter." See Norton ([1952] 1982: 12–13).
50. Plate XXXI, Norton ([1952] 1982: 77).
51. Plate XVII, Norton ([1952] 1982: 49). This is a graphic reworking of the painting exhibited in Melbourne under the title *Witches' Sabbath*.
52. Shortly after Anna Hoffmann made her false "Black Mass" claims in September 1955, two Sydney newspaper reporters published a detailed eye-witness account of how they had visited a Black Mass in Kings Cross and observed a gowned witch and wizard performing a mock imitation of the Christian Mass during which a rooster was sacrificed. It later emerged that the incident had been totally fabricated: the participants in the "Black Mass" were university students who had donned ceremonial robes and used specimen bones from the Anatomy Department to create a bizarre, satanic atmosphere of "sacrifice". Such episodes only served to fuel public interest in Rosaleen Norton, and newspaper coverage of alleged "witchcraft and black magic" activities in Kings Cross continued to appear.
53. In her autobiographical article "I Was Born a Witch", Norton writes: "Instinctive kinship and sympathy with animals … is an inherent part of me. I hate to see them abused in any way, while cruelty to them is one of the few things that literally makes me see red" (Norton 1957a: 5).
54. In 1956 Norton was asked by journalist Dave Barnes: "Have you ever attended ceremonies at which there have been blood sacrifices?" Her response was: "No, and I've never drunk bats' blood either" (Barnes 1956: 9).
55. In the sense that she did not align her spiritual beliefs with any major religion, such as Christianity.
56. Both the Church of Satan, established by Anton LaVey (1930–97) in San Francisco in 1966, and its major offshoot, The Temple of Set, employ an inverted pentagram as their defining symbol.
57. A British edition of my book, *Pan's Daughter*, was published by Mandrake of Oxford (UK) in 1993, and Norton's image *Nightmare*, depicting her "astral projection" technique, was reproduced alongside an image by Austin Spare in Wallis (2003: 27).

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