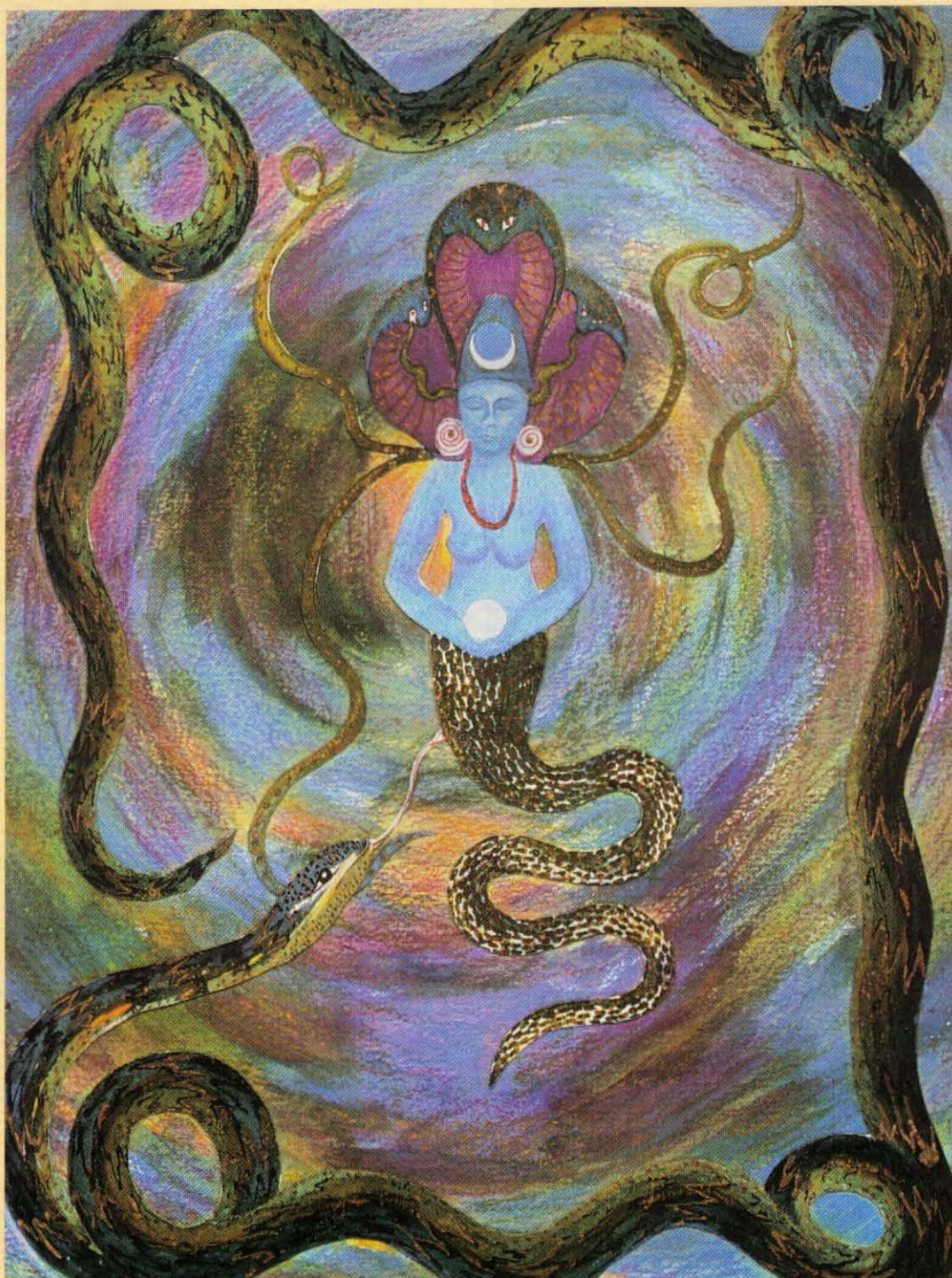


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AND WEST**
EZIO ALBRILE

**THE ENGLISH
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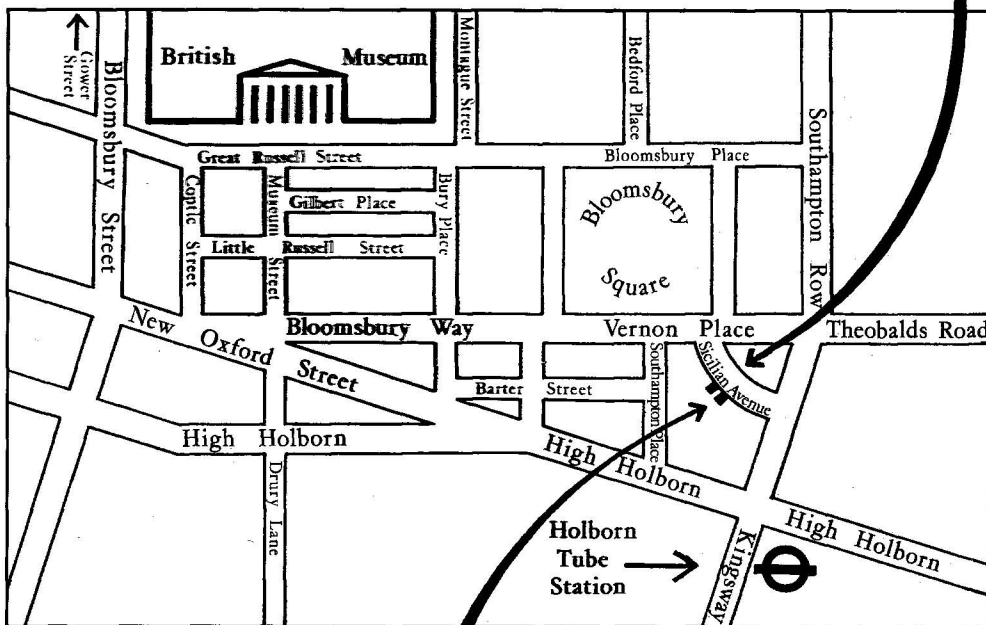
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Produced by: Skoob Books Publishing Limited
Editors: Christopher Johnson and Caroline Wise
Typesetting by: Ian Read
Cover Illustration: Chesca Potter
Managing Director: Ike Ong

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**'THE PHILOSOPHERS ON THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT ATHOS TAKING OBSERVATIONS OF THE STARS
AND WRITING WORDS IN THE DUST'**

Illumination from the Travels of Sir John Mandeville. 15th century

ECSTASY IN EAST AND WEST

Ezio Albrile

*"...Awake, brethren, chosen ones,
on this day of spiritual salvation,
the 14th day of the month of Mihr,
when Jesus, the Son of God, entered
into parinirovana..."*

Manichaeon Hymn from Turfan

Ecstasy and dream can express what discursive reasoning cannot: a certain awareness that God is revealing himself in a symbol, and yet is beyond that imagery. The Eastern Church has admitted this in stating that the monks of Mount Athos in Greece could behold the uncreated primordial Light, whereas the essence of the deity remained inscrutable. From Gregory of Nyssa to Dionysius Areopagita, from John Klimakos to Symeon the Neotheologian, we find in the Oriental faith a continuity of ideas and experiences grafted on to Platonic and Neoplatonic mystical tradition, revived and assimilated through the new Christian spirituality. We find again the old Platonic conceptions of the soul divinified by the purification of the passions and the contemplation of God, variously modulated, in a goodly part of Byzantine mysticism.

We find more especially in the Sinaitic Fathers such as Nilus, John Klimakos and Symeon the Neotheologian a religious intimacy and immediacy that are a prelude and preparation for that hesychasm whose origins are to be sought among them. Hesychasm is derived from the Greek *hesychia*, it means the peace and

repose we shall have when "nature rests without movement, without action, without memory of terrestrial things". It consists, therefore, in an inner quietism, in a kind of divine rapture, in other words in an *ekstasis*, an *excessus mentis*.

Hesychasm had not at first that special meaning it was to acquire later on. It only designated one seeking solitude, who is conscious of an irresistible vocation for the hermitical and contemplative life. Such a one could isolate himself in a little cell where he could steep his soul in that peace and serenity required for successful contemplation. Therefore the term *hesychast* was used before it denoted the followers of a special technique and method of mystical revelation, to designate a group of coenobites who lived in monasteries, but isolated from the other monks. Thus, in the great monastic communities of the Eastern Church a whole science of contemplation grew up gradually, which could assure, within the limits of possibility, the control of the mystical experience and the possibility of repeating it.

Later on, when political conditions made the situation of the great Asian monasteries more and more precarious, hesychasm was definitely established on Mount Athos. Introduced, or rather restored there, by Gregory the Sinaite at the beginning of the 14th century, we can follow its traces

to the present day, when it is still practised in the monasteries of Mount Athos and is not unknown to the Eastern Church generally.

The means used by the hesychast may be summed up as follows: *omphalosopia*, the control of respiration, and the continuous recitation of the "Jesus prayer": *Kyrie Iesou Christe eleison me* = "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us". This prayer, mentally repeated, was to be synotised with the rhythm of respiration. Through these practices the hesychasts found at last the "Place of the Heart" where they perceived the Ineffable Light seen by the Apostles on Mount Tabor during the Transfiguration (Taboric Light). The heart, animated by respiration, is the instrument best suited to achieve our union with the Divine World. In the heart arises, and in it is centred, our spiritual life. In the heart, according to Macarius of Egypt, reside: "God, the Angels, Life, the Kingdom, the Light, the Apostles, the Treasure of Grace". There is a special expression that designates the importance of the heart during the mental prayer and the mystical experience in general: it is the "Custody of the Heart" (*kardiake prosoche*). Synonyms for it are, according to Nicephorus, "observation of the Mind, sober circumspection, mental quietude (*noera hesyikia*)". The custody of the heart, in the words of Nicephorus, is "the beginning,

or rather the foundation of contemplation". We must, therefore, pray "in the silence of our lips", thus projecting, so to say, the prayer into our heart; in which then arises an ardour, an intrinsic heat, which sets it aflame. The Divine Light then bursts on the heart filling it with ineffable joy.

"After a long time" - says Nicetas Sthetatos - "this Light gradually withdrew and he returned to his body, to his cell, and found his heart full of ineffable joy". In the opinions of other witnesses, the purpose of respiration is to temper the burning heat of the heart. Thus Nicephorus says:

"...You know that the breath we breathe is the air. The organ through which we breathe is no other than the heart. There is the source of heat and life for the body. The heart therefore draws the breath (pneuma) to itself so as to temper by respiration its intrinsic heat (...) therefore sit you down, collect your spirit and introduce it, that is to say the spirit, in the nasal duct through which the air you have inhaled enters the heart; drive it and compel it to penetrate, along with the air you have inhaled, into the heart. When it has reached there, all will be Grace and Delight (...) You must know this also: when your spirit has entered there, you must not remain silent and inactive, but must study to repeat uninterruptedly 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us'...". Hesy-chasm is above all the science of prayer. The mystical means of which it makes use serve the sole purpose of achieving perfect mental prayer when, as Isaac Syriacus powerfully expresses it, "all that is prayer ceases and the soul prays beyond prayer". Another author says: "But more than this,

indeed more than all, if success crown this spiritual combat, it will be due above all to Divine Grace. Grace that arises from the invocation, pure and undisturbed (arrembastou) of our Lord Jesus Christ; in a believing heart it arises from that, and not from the method we have set forth, which consists of inhaling through the nose, or in sitting in a dark and silent place. That would be an error! All this has been explained to us by the inspired Fathers only because those are means suited for acquiring the capacity of reflection, for freeing from the usual distractions, and concentrating it as we have said. This gives rise in the spirit to enduring prayer, pure and free from distractions...". These practices demand, of course, an apprenticeship of varying length. Before arriving from the darkness of this world to the dazzling light of the Transfiguration, the Taboric Light, we must, in a certain sense, live over again the Passion of Christ. This leads us from the initial

dismay to the joy arising from the vision of the uncreated light.

Probably the first document that teaches a real and systematic method of prayer, is the Methodos ascribed to Symeon the Neotheologian (9th century), which says on these themes: "...when thou art alone in thy cell shut thy door, and seat thyself in a corner; raise thy mind above all things vain and transitory; recline thy beard and chin on thy breast; turn thine eyes and thy thought towards the middle of the belly, the region of the navel, and search the place of the heart, the seat of the soul, so as to compress the inhalation of the air that passes through the nose and reduce thy respiration, and explore with thy mind the viscera to find there the seat of thy heart, where all the powers of the soul are accustomed to dwell. At first, all will be dark and comfortless, but if thou persevere day and night thou wilt feel an ineffable joy, and no sooner has the soul discovered the place of the heart



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than it is involved in a mystic and ethereal Light..."

The description of the methods and techniques practised by the hesychasts reveals an undoubted affinity and connection between them and the similar process of contemplation in yoga. We can indeed find again in the hesychast technique (and posture) of prayer, almost all the motives of Indian speculative mysticism. Just as the Christ Prayer must be synotised with the process of respiration, so the ritual formulae of yoga must be pronounced rhythmically with the act of breathing which in the phases of exhaling and inhaling alternates from the heart to the nostrils and vice-versa. Likewise, the whole cosmos is gathered in the heart. We read in the Paratrimika: "...As a great tree is potentially present in the banyan seed, so the whole of this cosmos is in the seed of the heart...". In the heart is hidden the living energy of the primordial word, without which prayer is but an empty sound formed of illusory and transitory conventions. The aim of concentration and meditation is therefore to suppress all mental distraction (viksepa), the distraction that is matched precisely by the Greek word *rembasmos*, and to prepare the mind and the intellect for contemplation in the full meaning of the expression, which consists in the steady uniformity of mental pictures.

According to the *Yogasutra* (III.1) concentration is nothing but fixing the mind on one clear, definite and localised object. One of the more usual forms of concentration is that obtained by fixing attention on the navel. In some Tantric texts we find references to the so-called "igneous contemplation", which is obtained by gazing at the middle of the

belly (cf *Svacchandatantra* III.38). By concentrating, and meditating our thoughts on the navel we acquire a knowledge of the whole organization of the body and consequently of the whole universe. The navel is the centre from which all subsequent bodily developments emanate, just as by concentrating on the Polar Star (the cosmic mandala) a knowledge of the whole series of sidereal revolutions is acquired.

But the themes held in common are not limited to these purely technical details such as gazing at the navel, reducing the number of breaths and so forth. They extend to more general notions, to the significance of prayer, to the symbolism of the heart, and such like. Moreover these notions, be it noted, have been elaborated independently, in India and in the Eastern Church, and their historical evolution and background have followed quite different paths. So, the explanation of this phenomena could be found as much in the history, as in the mind, of man.

This does not of course, imply that the Greek monastic world may not have had any knowledge of the Indian doctrines, which may perhaps have filtered in through the mystic currents of Islamic thought (sufism and ismailism). In this connection, a great Spanish Jewish mystic and kabbalist of the 13th century, Abraham Abulafia, the initiator of the "ecstatic kabbalah", on his return from a journey in the ancient Near East, wrote religious works setting forth doctrines that recall similar intuitions to the yoga doctrine, especially on respiration. In the same manner Abulafia used the letters of the Divine Name rather than the initials of the names of the constellations.

Viewed in this way, it is clear that according to his approach the navel is no more than one of the nine points of the human body, and that there is no special significance to its contemplation. It is worth mentioning here the magical character of the technique of pronouncing the name of the organ and the letter appointed over it. In one of his works called *Hayye ha'Olam ha-Ba*, Abulafia says:

"...Head and belly and torso, that is, the head, beginning inside the end. The "head" is the first point that you imagine in it; the "end" is the purpose of the head, and is like a tail to it, and the belly is likewise like a tail to the head, and is the image of the torso, wherein the heart is located. And the image that you ought to imagine at the time of pronunciation, in order to change within that image the nature of one part of the bodies, alone or with others, is: think in your heart the name of that thing, and if it is composed of two letters, such as sea (*yam*), and you wish to invert it, and the name of the reversal is dry land (*yabashah*), the companion of *yam* (sea) with *yabashah* (dry land), and this is "beginning and end", *yah...*", and in another passage says again: "...And likewise imagine as if there are three points on your torso, which is the place of your heart: the head, which is the centre of the middle; the middle, which is the middle of the middle, which is but one point in its centre; and the behind, which is the end of the end. And likewise imagine that there are three points in your belly: the front, which is the point of your navel, the head of the end; the middle, which is point of your entrails; the middle of the end, and

behind, which is point of the end of your spine, which is the place of the kidneys where the spinal cord is completed, the end of the end...".

Were they already known to Jewish mysticism, or did Abraham Abulafia hear of them during his journey in the ancient East? Gregory the Sinaï, who reintroduced hesychasm on Mount Athos, also came from the East. Nor can we exclude the possibility that some features of the Gnostic (and Manichaean) teachings may have contributed to the formation of hesychasm, features which, even if corrupt and impoverished, may have survived in the Messalian Heresy (a.k.a. Euchites), and have been incorporated from them in the Orthodox faith.

The practice of breathing exercises must not have been unknown to the Gnostic (and Manichaean) schools, as is shown by several references, and for example the *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* ascribed to Hippolytus (cf Ref V.14.8). So, now, it may be said that the historical origins of hesychasm are lost in the night of time. In any case it arose first in the Christian communities of the East, whence it moved later to Mount Athos. At first sight it would seem to be an autonomous product of Christian ascetic mysticism, gradually elaborated in the course of centuries and strengthened perhaps by accounts of similar methods more widely spread in the ancient Near East than is commonly believed, and whose origin may be probably be

sought in the Indian yoga. In the mystic-theological approach which it espouses to Dionysus Areopagita, the Mystic Father of the hesychasts, the ecstatic experiences in terms of an uncontaminated Divine Love: "...We must dare to say also this in behalf of the truth: that also the Cause of all things, by the noble love of all things and by means of a superabundance of erotic goodness, goes out of Himself (exo eautou ginetai), by extending His providential cares (pronoiais) to all kinds of being, and that He so to speak is captivated by His goodness, affection and Love..." (De div. nom. IV.13), and this, in the last analysis, is the unique and the real essence of Love for the uncreated Light.

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ENGLISH ADVENTURE

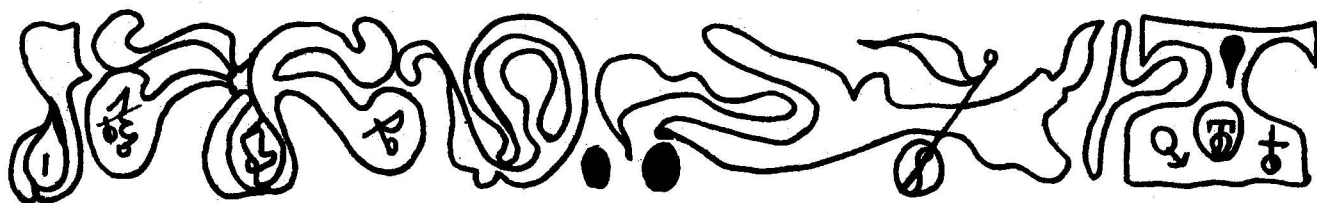
Part Five

Jonathan Wood

I enter this cathedral across a causeway of once underwater standing stones, ancient and rune infested, weatherbeaten but throbbing with century upon century of nature. The ghost skies above begin to mutate in colour, deepening livid emeralds and scarlets, summoning forth voices from my past, unwelcome guests calling upon my ear. The hollow utterance of "LIBER SAMEKH" echoing through the ramparts, intoned in a ghastly reedy voice of colliding emptiness....."Devour thou me. Thou dost devour me!"

in this silence and drown myself in a mountain of sleep, staring up to the spiral darkness of the central spire, masonry and simplicity of carving parting together, away into the natural darkness, testing my capacity for vision itself, attacking the infirmity of my eyes, letting me accustom them to a different reality, my eyes wandering ever upwards towards the source of this darkness of this light. And now in this darkness I am truly blind and bound by silent monks with finest chords of golden thread. Upon

plying the sense of my body, causing choirs to emerge from out these walls. Choirs with voices so high pitched that only the cat within the centre of the smoke filled room can hear and appreciate them. The cat? The room? Oh yes! The vision has burst around my head in that one split second of a failed concentration. The promise of the opening of the groves of paradise, the eternal astral skies opening unto further vistas has gone at the very sound of a sonorous bell rung in the distance, my mind falling back to



And so it was thus with this voice and high pitched giggle in my ear that I entered this place, leaving its jarring crapulousity outside like the last-ditch vibration of a ritual gone bad. But I am too unjust. Within the hallowed walls there is complete emptiness save for a block, a slab of coldest marble. No adornments upon the walls, no artifacts or symbols, merely the greatest sense of the completeness of peace and non-being, of being part of the architecture and yet of not existing at all. I lie me down upon this slab

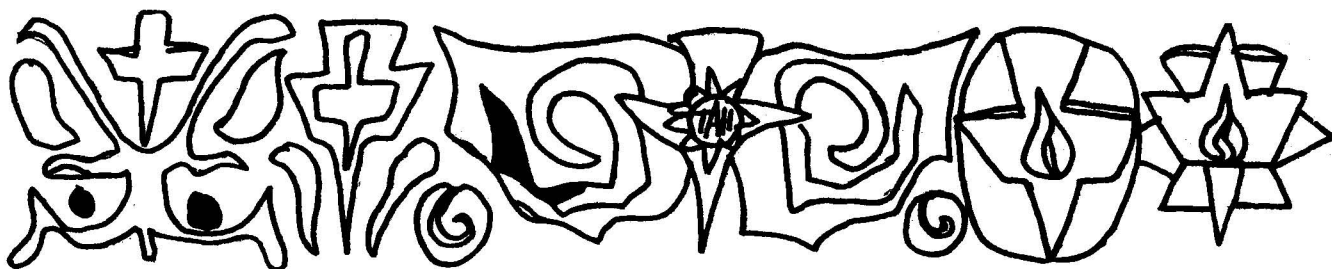
my eyes are painted heiroglyphs of THOTH, my face becomes a free-for-all of lines and curves and in this senseless darkness upon my chest is painted the sacred heart within a circle within an inverted triangle. I can see through the gossamer texture of my eyelids to the sweetness of these symbols, can smell the honey of fascination upon the breeze as my tongue inserts itself once more into the cleft of night that is the Goddess of all things and once more I am transported a thousand miles nowhere, multi-

earth like the dissolutionment of a false messiah after agnostic crucifixion, words crumbling on my tongue, turning to mould and decay; I spit them out like remnants of rotting food brought up after a sour banquet. I am within my room once more, the smoke is clearing and the cat, his eyes have become dry against receding smoke. He wanders in between my feet bewildered by this vacuum, this turning of the tables. There is an armchair within the top left corner of my room filled with a strangely familiar occu-

pant; the yellowing dry dome headed figure of an ancient long dead poet and debaucher, his skin like that of a polished sickly reptile. Flakey smooth skin burning around the faintly golden lustre of his eyes, staring at me through the half light. He is well dressed as if about to consume some fabulous dinner, a lolloping silk tie spilling out under his neck. He seems not to see me, rather he stares at a photograph within a book that changes every second as if there is a fine jet of fire under its surface, bubbling, contracting, expanding and turning brown. I advance to where he sits. It is a woman's face he stares at, young and old together, Eng-

tion. For now I am naked within my youthfulness that flows upon virgin paper. I am his creation in totality and for me he has cleared away the wreckage of the human perception of symbolism, rather than the symbolism itself. There are a hundred naked figures of me multiplying each second, stepping out upon the beautiful dew covered turf of this country of ours. I am imagined in his head as some kind of young almost grecian warrior standing with my mate upon the thought of the horizon, our lean shadows evolving from out the touch of the Sun upon our bodies, casting themselves down and over the virgin plains upon his paper. I feel

warpaint and sword. I am walking faster now amongst the groves; the giant tuberous oaks, their trunks festooned and cut with potent carvings of a whole race of ancient faces surrounded by hair, spinning in their power, made by the finest intricate skills. I walk amongst the perfumed hills, scented by these crackling bonfires upon the balmiest of evenings that you can imagine to have taken place in the dawn of the past. It is the emergence of a beautiful early evening twilight, midge clouds surrounding my ecstatic head as I cross the top of a range of wild and rough hewn hills and then down to settle my feet upon the brow of a beautiful



ish, Chinese, Turkish, Egyptian, African, Indian, and always returning to the one luscious amalgam of Francesca and her daughter. He opens his mind up to my invisibility like the parting of the crisp pages of a book and ushers forth the closing of the Sicilian Temple of Diana, the ancient fossil filled rocks contracting, cracking into nothingness upon the sun kissed earth, for this is the emergent birth of the aeon of unborn THOTH, that lies sleeping upon pillars awaiting the kindling of some seed of that which is universally creative like the infinity of spirals upon a nautilus, a stepping into the intoxication of childhood and its privileged keys into other horizonless planes of utter astral devotion and evolu-

myself becoming, filling out the skeletal framework of a landscape that is becoming green. This poet is working hard, is feverishly involved in his act of creation for it is the last shadow of the swing of the pendulum in the fresh land where reverberations and x-ray images of London a hundred thousand years hence fill the crackling electric skies. I am now to be initiated by his pen within this verdant land of smoking embering bonfires that pinprick the hanging air, smoke rising from natural hollowed sculpted altars. Smoke fills my nostrils and the sounds of birds beginning to catch the power of speech and I am set loose by the poet for my initiation must come and by no crude ritual of pen and paper or

white horse and rider cut from out the hillside, newly found and visible to the naked eye for lovely mile upon mile in this wilderness of green plains and monoliths and forests and the preordained imaginings of dwellings I have dropped into through vacant and open skylights. I remember what I knew before I opened up this land within the poet's head. I am filled with the ecstasy of the mystic Richard Jefferies, Mad Dick, lying amongst the great tumuli, the land below and beside him reverberating with the memory and slip-back of existence that lay beneath his feet. I am surprised by the poet's own understanding of the effortless gossamer quality of eternity. I have no need to close my eyes to

witness those around me that climb this escarpment to celebrate upon the prow of this grassy tumulus. Jefferies stated that "to me everything is supernatural" and thus it is as it was then. I can but sit and wait.

And after some hours by chance I met a youth upon that hill with mad chaotic heaven filled eyes whose golden hair and downy beard belied the advancement of his years and his wisdom. For he was far wiser than I amongst this landscape; had given himself far more readily to the involvement and illumination of the mysteries, had truly built a funeral pyre within his head

shook me to my roots. He pointed down the grassy way to where he had left his camp of Savernack, where upon a Friday he had sacrificed himself to be born once more, to reunite with as he put it, "older things". And with him he brought a lush flourish and accumulation of the surroundings. And now I remember it being whispered within my head by the poet that "you will definitely meet someone younger than yourself, a fellow traveller". He pointed all down through the fast darkening plain to the positions of his former camps now smoking up into the evening sky. "This is nearer to the way, for you will

the drug of the emotion of change of the spirit and you shall by it become exalted". I drew heavily inward upon this lovely cigarette, the fumes of which bit like ancient new formed icicles into the core of my eyes and the tree trunk of my brain, as he shuffled his tarot, well thumbbed grubby images of some 78 universes within one, each one's flitting magick evading the fullness of my understanding. There was the Eight of Wands, the Five of Cups and the Three of Wands establishing the rigidity of the movement and evolution of OLD energy and the significance of the body of this land we were in, omnipotent over



without fear of the hundreds of miles that he had travelled to get to where he was. He had few belongings; merely a notebook, tarot pack and the equipment for making his dope and his tobacco both. He had a beautiful fluidity of face as if the inner mental turmoil and exactitude and revelation would break out upon him at any moment. I smiled at him from where I stood and he joined with me in a second, confirming the thoughts of long dead and unborn Richard Jefferies, by stating that he liked the thoughts within my head, as we stared out across this beautiful dusk bound plain. He greeted me as "Old Man" as if he had known me for all my lives, a sad and close meaning within his utterance that

have strengthened it. I have trodden through your dreams and visions and now together we have reached the silence". He pulled from his pocket the fossil mollusc and nautilus that he had picked up down there within the body of the plain. His smile was gravely disturbing, gap teeth, strong teeth like the memory of the last vestiges of Francesca, wide toothy grin as he rolled his fat generous joints sitting staring down into the darkness lit only by the reflection of the moon on this silent picture, bouncing out and soaking into the pure white of the carved and static horse and rider. Not even a dog barked to break the magickal silence of this scene as his matches opened the spell of the burning of his weed. "This is

the fragility of our beliefs. And again I can feel the eternity of energy that this tumulus affords, laying my head down to the vision of the stars above, the Moon showing up the Eight of Pentacles and its symbolism of the establishment of the TREE that grows now within my brain sprouting and becoming strong on the energy that it has now evolved; I stare up into the Moon's rays that glow and phosphoresce with the splendour of its timeless smiling solar resources, making my face a living fluid bath of pale dancing bornless fire. He looks at me and smiles and whispers, "soon, so very soon I will dwell amidst the stones that we seek and as the Sun does rise and as the Earth does wake again

beyond this tumult, then shall we all be one under the Sun that likewise this last morning gave me strength, gave me the invisibility of pure communion with all, all this.....and he stretches his pointing finger and hand out and down across the

buzzing shifting spectral ancient pagan plain. There is the scent of sea breeze within our nostrils, thin exacting capering fingers of it through our hair. We move by darkness now amidst the trails and trees and boulders for that is the purest time to travel. When surroundings are lost to sight and live only in the exaggerations of imagination, where rocks and pathways shine with flint and half exposed fossils, where escarpments, hills and tumps appear like the slumbering bodies of long dead ancient giant kings and priests set to rest upon the very living rock where one treads with a heightened reverence against the temptation in my head to run screaming down the plain, across the natural emerging sand covered estuaries to the sea yet some miles off. Our minds were aflame now with the resonances of his ritual cigarettes, the mixture now lying dormant and settled within the pouch around his neck that is covered with the necklaces of those long dead, handed down English ancestral symbols of wood and stone and crude metal. The heads of ancient Gods and Goddesses lost in the paraphernalia of the transmutation of hounded down myth and heavenly hearsay do fall on their chain about his neck, their faces caught in the light of the fast travelling moon that checks our progress, lights our jaunt into the innocence of the search for some English fire.

I am aware of the purity of his

flaming eyes and face, the shifting childish madness of years upon his cheeks and lips; a veritably face that dances now with the memory sketches of all the unadulterated silent isolated seekers after light and the source of the heavensent fire. There is no scent of the avaricious unexplorable perversion of mere magick. For here was the young magician who never had to explain himself, apotheosize himself. Do you understand? NEVER had to explain himself, expose himself and here in the firefly night of a backdrop nestling in the birth pangs of the poet's imaginings, here is the best of the TRIBE; the lone young sage and philosopher of the silence that converses and pontificates with the natural world only. And in his eyes I can see that the poet too is not yet born but lies spreadeagled out across a belt of glittering stars, points of fire that flame with the promise of what he is later to write down as line 3 of his own Master Stroke, unveiled to him so many hundreds of years later, the resonant literary gildings of an invaded densely populated mind. And now here under the raw shifting ancient English sky he points across the reddening of the promise of dawn, to a gaunt collection of stones that I have never seen before. Tall, thick moss covered slabs of erected monolith almost seeming to be separate from the ground they have fused with, in this new uninvaded light of dawn. Beautiful untouched heaven-hewn rocks emerging from out the darkness like guardians of the link between the terrestrial and that deluge of black and starlit depth that falls from all directions out of space. This was Nature before the green ran red with humanity's tread

and the sickly glint of the search for earthly power amidst the natural lamplit depths of history. He shakes me by the hand, calls me "Old Man". "Hello Old Man" he calls as he smiles as I follow him. The poet in his head, in his journey through this belt of stars acknowledges with his own brand of smile this title of mine, this address. "We are early my friend, early to come to these stones, the white horse and rider by his vision long engrained within the face of that hill has borne us to the stones, nothing can allay ourselves within the defences of these stones. We advance unto the central slab that lies down horizontal, the child of those long dead knights mouldering upon the hills. He lays out his cards; The Chariot, the Ten of Disks and the Five of Cups that smile and congeal into the reality of the energy of dreams within this place and then the Six of Wands that draws my mind together like the stalks of corn within a druid's hand. Unity of dream and the energy of discovered inspiration that sends my former experiences into chaff; dead seeds cast into the vacuum silo beneath the earth itself in her rotation, the dark leprous channel sucking all to annihilation of stasis. The air around us now is the purest liqueur, the coolest densest expression of the deeper concentration of the natural forces at work. The air becomes pregnant with the memories of the English Adventure, making the air globulous, blizzarding in divine strength.....and now as my strange friend that calls me "Old Man" lays down a card I do not recognise, so beyond these stones does the first furnaced cut of the wondrous Sun show itself above the horizon of the plain; scarlet

ochrous brown and nascent, swimming its way from out the painted vision in our heads. Rising now like a burnished golden melting coin turning the far off white horse to the colour of my friend's golden eyes as he sits upon the slab laughing, calling to AYINA MAZDA, banishing with the help of the centre of the universe all that is unfinished and perverted. But there is a twinkle in his eye and in the eye laid out upon the last card that he has dealt. A burning solar eye so old and majestic within a vesica piscis blinking up at me from off the rock, its surface turning to scarlet embers as I stare; his mouth now quivering, widening, growing feminine and gap toothed and twisting, beginning to laugh as the flaming burning backdrop breaks off from the horizon, a million pollen particles swirling and scorching in its wake. The tongues of livid banner-like flames, do touch the stones casting monolithic sentinel shadows that grow into their surfaces making them black and dense and disappearing. "Old Man, I have to laugh at you. Do you not recognise me, your own forgotten Holy Guardian Angel TAH whom you called upon in former days? Do you really not know me now here amidst the English Ideal in the sight of all this glory"? But as I turned to him in the presence of this solar blaze of silence and pounding air, he stepped back across the body of this stone, his necklace jangling, his eyes grown cold and hostile and yet full of sadness. "Do you not know me now in this perfection with me holding now the key to all you have experienced". I turned once more back to the Sun to shade my eyes from his burning anger and revelation and behind my back

thus he did fade away to nothingness upon the heat, joining the shimmering levels of this mirage; bravely smiling into nothing, hurriedly discarding his leather pouch upon the ground, his laughter becoming but a hollow echo on my ear, my failed vision, my mundane consciousness. In blindness amidst the light I grabbed his pouch cursing him as "Bastard" and pulled from it a strangely familiar vellum notebook. It fell open at the rear and upon the pastedown were inscribed the words that I had read so long ago in Sicily..

*Send yourself at once a spell
Back into the English Hell
There to seek and there to find
Someone of the selfsame mind...."*

*In the very north of the very nearly
south
There is a place that will resound
With the scream of the blessed ruby
mouth
A chapel of the human sound."*

*Once and only once I did
Was-I within this precinct hid
There to leave a lusty light
A very beacon of the night"*

*North in south and black in white
Burning under this sacred sight
The first is D the last is N
The number-yes is five times ten"*

*Within this place below the ground
Will you retrieve the ancient sound
Both of you will know the heat
A burning red of heart to beat"*

*And here's the clue-the second of six
Strange histories and heads will mix
Take the last and put it first
Soon you within will be immersed"*

*The place is there upon the slope
A place of burning searing hope*

*A chapel of the sacred feast
Of this our lord-the Great Wild
Beast"*

*Tah is in this Sicilian place
But this rhyme is for an English Face
Conjure him so and list of him well
And he will point to English Hell"*

666 To Mega Therion

My sense of joy and wonder turned to bitter tears, my mouth did harden, my eyes did shine forth. I sit and droop my head upon my chest divested of everything I know. The Sun is rising in the sky and I am amongst the shadow stones now watching at my unmasking, my short circuited entry into the path of initiation and perfection of delight. I raise my head once more to the funeral sound of traffic, the vibrating engine of a double decker bus and I am back in English Hell of London City with drizzle upon my brow, the evening cold and biting into my flesh, newspapers mingling around my feet like horrid imitations of young animals fighting for warmth. A vagrant opposite me spews up his dry blackthorn



breakfast that flows fast and acid to my shoes, welcoming me back with an odorous vengeance into London. There is a final horrid ironic "TA TAH" upon my inner ear and the shriek of disappointed mocking laughter. London with its blurred concrete symbols congeals to solidity before my eyes. There is familiar Charing Cross Rd filled with people on their way home. Dark shop awnings flapping in the wind, the sound of torn material like the flagging wings of ancient pterodactyls drawing me back, coaxing me on into the mill once more. There is that dark lit bookshop on the right, its volumes facing out from behind the sickly uncleaned glass and from out the side a thick fingered hand grabs the volume I have been searching for all this time. It is held open by elastic bands exposing that frontispiece I

saw so clearly all that time before. There is her face in sepia now obscured by sweating pudgy fingers, lifted out and purchased in the blinking of an eye. I follow now a swiftly moving figure walking up Charing Cross Rd against the push of the crowd. He is dressed in a familiar green waist length canvas coat, a slightly plump figure wearing a grey suit beneath it. He makes for the bustle, the congestion of the tube at this horrid melting wet rush hour amidst the rancid sweat of bodies and frayed tempers, onto the Northern Line, the horrid entry back into the silo. I catch sight of his plump and bearded face; beard close cropped below a shock of greasy dark brown hair. He has wide and piercing eyes that stare back into mine above the half smile he raises to his lips. His Doctor Martens are all bat-

tered up and scuffed and he appears to grimly shuffle up the carriage as it worms its blind way north, him clutching onto this priceless tome, his footsteps growing louder in my head, his exhalations beating a cold vibration upon my brain. I am following him now off the tube and up into Highgate on the top of London's famous northern hills staring back at the neon twinklings of a thousand open offices and shops far behind. The evening draws itself in and around like jetting ink from a thousand expiring stamped-on squids, each step up to Highgate Hill like the clangour of a thousand heads on concrete. I follow him up and past the two Highgate cemeteries, alive now to all within this darkness, crowding with single floating eyes, the babble of nauseous spewed out verse pulsating with the generation of featureless masks that push themselves from out the gothic stonework, their mouthless fishlike voices splurging slow motion curses in my wake, popping like boiling sores into my consciousness, being carried off by half chewed owls unbanished by a North London Magus all those years ago that spread their wings across my brow to bite and tear. We are moving now through the dark and silent streets diverting to the right and up and ever up into the grim facades of Church Street Stoke Newington. The junkies are all dead, they lie about like litter amidst the tombstones of that forgotten graveyard. I freeze in my tracks as two figures in dark shoulder length capes and hats pass me by oblivious of my presence. I catch the definitive distinct Welsh accent of one and scent of tobacco and Yorkshire Stingo upon his breath, mingling

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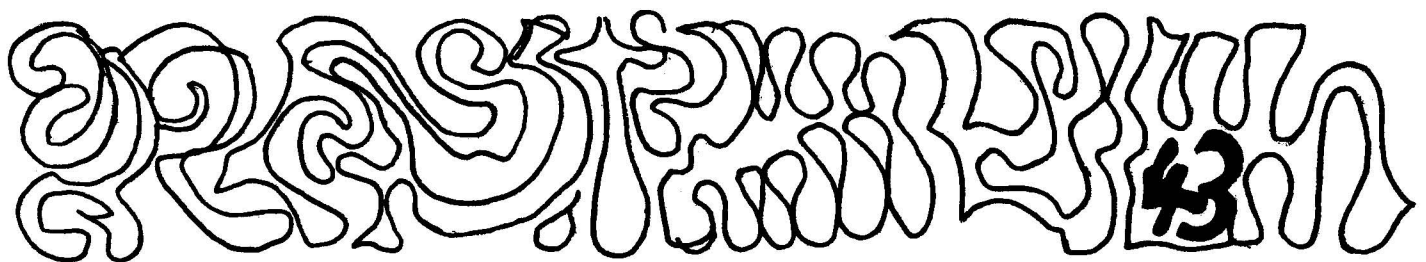
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with the quiet measured tones of his true companion, spoken through whiskered lips that do not move at all. And here I am now amidst the clogging cobwebs of the past, the former theatre of my revelation, watching this green bearded figure turn his face into the visage of an ancient woman, spitting, intoning in harshest old world Sicilian, mocking me, beckoning me into the inevitable fever of her breast; and in the black nest of her smouldering breast I see the neon icing tinkling battery burning view of old Palermo down from the Pelegrino, numerous electric bulbs licking out across the plain of this city. I see the face of my hotelier engraved upon her ochrous sulphur nipples. I see the procession of feet around the greek cross of TAH, I.....

and I am on the floor within the darkness of this high Pelegrino Chapel, cut off from the neon bonfires many feet below. There is now the slamming of giant wooden doors, the atonal beat of door after door after door, locking, bolting, sealing within this place. Like the pushing over of a human mile-long representation

itself out of the naked atoms, swirling and sidwinding like a monstrous ancient Chinese firework being lit. There is no mocking laughter, no sound at all, no sacred longed for "RED MARTYDOM" as one I had read about had gained; and like one poet a million times better than myself I smile and say "I would not care to read that book again", for I am lost. There is no sanctified revelation and embrace of glory in this old harlot's arms of blackness, rotting blackness. And far above my head there is the surge and pound of London Traffic, of footsteps in spastic frantic rush, the verbal gonorrhoea of a multitude of bedsit gurus spattering out their vagrant discharge at my feet and somewhere in this cold and blazing city a cat runs into a hellish spider's web, black and dusty and as old and strong as Death itself, his eyes fast losing their shine against the black globulous shadow of the heavily pregnant guardian of that foul and sticky symmetry, its hidden stripey black Mediterranean body poised to sting and suck and make lifeless in its pulsing onslaught of spinning sickly black

the corner and is gone from sight and in the blackness of my tomb beneath the raucous savage Sicilian night winking with the vacant eyes of electric mad Madonnas in their static glory, I hear the foul familiar rustle of skirts upon the ground and the insistency of footsteps. My face revealed in blackened stone is truly old, my beard is full of grey and I am sucked out and away into the crushing crimson blush of the lips of the Virgin Guardian of the mystery and oblivion of the Sangraal, never to be unveiled again. Through my sockets pours the blood red wine of desolation, drunk by the 43 lotus mouths of the Dark English Goddess, my number, my emblem transposed from ancient eastern love, my thieftom come home to roost. My dear old head of me, the "OLD MAN" is lifted into blackest heights of the arch of night beyond where no Gods dare peer. I can but vanish so far now from my quest, my excitement and endeavour, the merest speck upon the wrong side of the black oak door of the vault of night. I drop as rain into a furnace...Gone. I am swallowed, the entrée to the



of the Tarot in all its knowledge, falling into one another, door after door sealing arcana with trump with an infinity of noise. And now in this place there is a horrid blackness, a diminishing of the soul and body, nothing but black and deeper black drawing

ingestion. And in North London, a bespectacled woman emerges from her Dalston lair, no.50 B—Rd and smiles clutching her black book, breathing in the cold autumn London air, her facial hair straight and black, her eyes intent on travel. And she turns

blackest magick. GONE. All is silence in London now. All is as it always is. London slumbers amidst the secret industry of the company of the English, borne away in their dreams, letting their minds dive into the freezing rains of silence and night. All is waiting

on crouched knees in the corners of shop doorways, watching upon the architecture of church and stately home, through the eyes of infant mages bathing in the secondary gleam of the eyes of the God they spy each time they peer into their mirrors. All is swirling, gathering to the low guttural mantra of the God of shadows, the Prince of Isolation, the Traveller of Stairless Towers, the Unleashed Walker of the Bedroom Ceiling, the Blackened Lodger of a Squat First Floor Flat, face as black as burnt out car and eyes as red as clowns, that wink not, but burn their hideous spiral pathways winding long and livid, stretching out in all directions in a foul tattoo of a dead straight line that casts its burning imprint now across your brows, you neophytes swallowed in the crackling livid avalanche of the armoured invincibility of the pounding heart hunt of this the English Adventure. It is red and full of blood. It yearns for life. It has truly come to life and passed me on my way to Death.

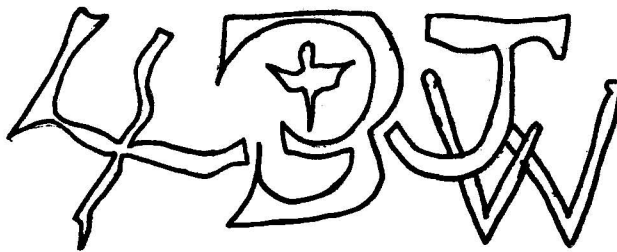
BEWARE.
"It is a fatal web your fingers spin.
(*Raise la lourde criniere!*)
Let our love end as other loves begin,
Or, slay me in a moment unaware!
Nay? Kiss in double death-pang, if
you Dare!
Or one day I will strangle you within
My heavy hair!"

Last stanza of the great
Epiloque to ACELDAMA
By Edward Alexander Crowley.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of the inspirational writings of Arthur Machen, that most eloquent and modest tenant of

The House of The Hidden Light, and to the sage and occult Guardian of The Secret Velvet Horsemen who saw some worth in this; to the Connoisseur and his Accomplice for epistolatory friendship and encouragement, and to KIZ the mad English unthroned King now lost forever in the hills; and also very grudgingly to Frater Perdurabo who has helped me lay to rest the remnants of his ghost amidst the longed for body of my first love SILVERLIP now resting in pastures new. And finally to ONE real Strange Person who can but remain truly nameless in her mystery.



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PRIESTESS OF PAN

The Magical World of Rosaleen Norton

Nevill Drury

Rosaleen Norton has been described as Australia's best known witch but she was also one of the most remarkable painters of supernatural themes that this country has produced. Until her death in 1979 she lived in a shadowy basement apartment in an aging block of flats close to the El Alamein fountain in Sydney's Kings Cross. In one of her rooms she had erected a sacred altar in honour of the horned god Pan, the ancient Greek patron of pastoral life and spirit of nature, but she kept her deepest beliefs and ideas very much to herself. A recluse from the exuberant night-life which surrounded her, Rosaleen Norton lived in a world populated with the spirit beings and astral entities which manifested in her paintings. In recent years she decided that she didn't like people very much any more and expressed a belief in the superiority of cats, whom she felt embodied the spiritual sensitivity lacking in mankind as a whole.

There was a time when Rosaleen Norton's murals and decorative motifs spanned the walls of several popular coffee bars in Kings Cross, but these are long gone; the well known Apollyon yielded to the bypass which now takes the main flow of traffic out to the Eastern suburbs. Her heyday was in fact the late 1940s and 1950s. She was known to the

public as an eccentric, bohemian witch-lady who wore flamboyant, billowing blouses and vivid bandannas, puffed on an exotic engraved cigarette holder and plucked her eye-brows so that they arched in a somewhat sinister curve. Slight in build and with long curly black hair, she always had something of a magnetic presence that made her stand out from the crowd.

Rosaleen Norton became known in the public mind as the artist whose provocative paintings of half-human, half-animal forms were even more controversial than Norman Lindsay's nude figures. She depicted naked women wrestling with reptilian elementals or flying on the back of winged griffins, and gods that were both male and female and whose arms were like wings with claws at the extremities. These days, at a time when fantasy art has brought a vivid array of supernatural and surreal styles to record album covers, posters and T-shirts, Rosaleen Norton's paintings appear mainstream enough but in the decade after the Second World War they seemed an affront to human decency and ran counter to orthodox religious practice. Rosaleen had worked as a model for Norman Lindsay in the 1930s and her work resembled his in its graphic technique, which was stylised yet strongly dependent on anatomical realism.

The artist was born in 1917 in

Dunedin during a violent thunder storm which she felt was a portent for her later love of the night side of life. Even when she was three and a half years of age she was fond of drawing 'nothing beasts' - animal-headed ghosts with tentacle arms - and at the age of five she observed an apparition of a shining dragon beside her bed. These events convinced her of the presence of the spirit world and she found herself developing religious beliefs contrary to those of her more orthodox parents. Rosaleen's father was a captain in the merchant Navy (and also a cousin of composer Vaughan Williams), her mother a 'conventional, highly emotional woman, far too absorbed in her family'.

The family migrated from New Zealand and settled in the Sydney suburb of Lindfield. Young Rosaleen lived there for the next ten years with her parents but found it increasingly difficult to relate to her mother, preferring the company of her elder sister and a favourite aunt. By the age of fourteen she had decided upon the direction her life should take and was prepared to experience everything she could, 'good, bad and indifferent' and to fully express in her own way 'life and art'. A numerologist had earlier worked out her name chart and arrived at the conclusion that Rosaleen's life and work would lie well off the beaten track, a

prediction which certainly came true.

Rosaleen was expelled from school under a cloud - her headmistress wrote to her mother indicating that she had 'a depraved nature which would corrupt the innocence of the other girls'. She then studied for two years at East Sydney Technical College under Rayner Hoff. During this time she became more interested in witchcraft and demonology and was well versed in the mystical writings of occultists like Dion Fortune, Aleister Crowley and Eliphas Levi long before they became fashionable in the 1960s. After leaving the college she became one of Australia's first woman pavement artists, displaying her work at the bottom of Rowe Street, near the Sydney G.P.O. Her subsequent jobs included working as a newspaper cadet, designing for a toy manufacturer, assisting in a bohemian night club, waitressing, and modelling. But her work pursuits were increasingly secondary to her occult interests and in 1940 she 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 Dali and Yves Tanguy who, like the others of their school, had explored techniques of getting the unconscious mind to manifest its contents. Sometimes the surrealists drew rapidly so that the 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 unconscious mind.

Rosaleen Norton found that she

could shut off her normal consciousness by means of self hypnosis and transfer her attention to an inner plane of awareness. She notes: 'These experiments 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'. She spent several years after this reading various systems of occult thought, including Buddhist and other examples of Oriental literature as well as standard works on western magic and witchcraft.

Her paintings became increasingly demonic although this

direction had already become manifest at school when she had produced an interpretation of Saint Saens' *Danse Macabre*, complete with vampires, ghouls and werewolves. Several years later a number of her supernatural paintings were seized by police from The 49 Steps night-club on the grounds of indecency, but the staff of *Smith's Weekly* interceded on her behalf and they were returned.

During this time, Rosaleen Norton began to activate more completely 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 the Lord of All Things - the very totality of all elements and forms of being. He was therefore, in a very real sense, the True God of this 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.

The artist 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 flat. She 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

the trance state.

Meanwhile, her art continued to be a vital part of her activities and she depicted the entities encountered in visions, including devilish creatures, half-animal half-human deities and various supernatural motifs. Psychiatrists were fascinated by her style and one of her paintings was bought in the early 1950s by an Adelaide bishop curious about the source of her inspiration.

When English traditional artist and critic John Sackville-West arrived in Australia in 1970 he claimed that there were far too many abstract painters claiming to be artists when in fact they were really designers; he acclaimed Norman Lindsay and Rosaleen Norton as two of Australia's finest artists who were gifted in

depicting detail and form.

The artist herself liked to be compared with Norman Lindsay, whom she admired and regarded, 'with Sir William Dobell, as Australia's only great artists'. She also admitted to liking and being influenced by Beardsley, Leonardo, Van Gogh and the etcher Gustav Dore but many of the world's mainstream artists, such as Picasso, Raphael and Matisse she dismissed as 'worthless'.


Rosaleen Norton's art has often been the source of considerable controversy and legal debate. She went on trial for exhibiting obscene paintings in Melbourne in August 1949 but was acquitted of all charges. Various critics had described her work as 'stark sensuality running riot', the result of 'a night-mare dipped brush' and 'as gross a shock to the average spectator as a witch's orgy' but the artist was quick to defend herself. 'Obscenity,' she countered, 'like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. This figleaf morality expresses a very unhealthy mental attitude'.

More trouble was to come however. In September 1955, nineteen year old Anna Karina Hoffmann, who was living temporarily in Victoria Street, Kings Cross, was charged by police with having unlawful means of support. She had given herself up to police because she 'couldn't stand' her life style as a part time waitress cum vagrant in Kings Cross. In court Miss Hoffmann claimed to have only £1 to her name but while evidence was being given, a number of extraordinary claims were made, some of which appeared to incriminate Rosaleen Norton.

Constable Ikin who had arrested Miss Hoffmann said she claimed to have inside information

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on Black Masses performed by Satanic cults and was wearing black clothes at the time because it was 'a mark of black magic'. She claimed further that Rosaleen Norton was 'the black witch of Kings Cross'.

Subsequently Anna Hoffmann denied actually taking part in a Black Mass and admitted that the connection with Rosaleen Norton was only hearsay. She was sentenced in Sydney Central Court to two months gaol and later described by Judge Holden in an appeals session as 'a menace'. However, as a result of press coverage, considerable damage had been done to Rosaleen Norton's reputation. Subsequently she had to go to great lengths to explain that the horned god Pan could not be identified with Lucifer, the god of the Satanists, and that she had never participated in a Black Mass.

Soon afterwards two Sydney newspaper reporters published a detailed eye-witness account of how they 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. Public interest and newspaper coverage of alleged witchcraft activities in Kings Cross continued to percolate and Rosaleen Norton in an interview with the press claimed boldly that she had to turn prospective cult followers away in droves.

Then, quite unexpectedly on October 3, 1955, Vice Squad police raided her flat in Brougham Street and laid charges against her.

It transpired later that two men, Francis Honer and Raymond Ager, had offered the Sun newspaper an allegedly obscene film which purported to show evidence of a Kings Cross witchcraft

cult. Two figures had been identified in the film: Rosaleen Norton and her lover, poet Gavin Greenlees with whom she had been living in a de facto relationship since 1949. Later, in ensuing court hearings, it was revealed that the films showed Norton and Greenlees garbed ceremonially in a ritual dedicated to Pan and performing 'an unnatural sexual act'. Honer had stolen the film from the artist's flat, and with Ager was attempting to sell it for £200.

The court case against Honer and Ager (who were subsequently gaoled for four months) and the extended hearings against Rosaleen Norton and Gavin Greenlees attracted extraordinary coverage in the press. Rosaleen Norton defended her religious practice of pantheism, which she described as the heathen worship of ancient Greek gods and caused raised eyebrows by appearing at the first court session flamboyantly dressed in a red skirt, black top and leopard skin shoes. Gavin Greenlees did not appear in court, though charged, because he was receiving psychiatric treatment in Sydney's Callan Park hospital. Later Rosaleen Norton similarly took leave from the court and was found by a psychiatrist to be suffering from the after-effects of a variety of drugs including dexedrine and methedrine, and was unable to sustain concentration. The couple were remanded on bail of £100.

Then the controversial charge of obscenity in Rosaleen Norton's art raised its ugly head again. Police officer Detective Sergeant Roy McDonald described in court how on September 9, 1955 he had visited the Kashmire Cafe in Macleay Street, Potts Point and found several of Rosaleen Norton's paintings on the wall. The

owner of the cafe, David Goodman, was subsequently charged under the Obscene Publications Act with having twenty-nine of her works displayed on his premises. In the Special Court, Mr. Dash S.M. described the paintings, which included such works as *Black Magic*, *Beelzebub* and *Belphegor* as being 'lewd, lustful and erotic' and fined Goodman £5 plus costs for displaying paintings which could attract the curious and avid.

The court hearings dragged on for almost two years and finally, in Central Court, Norton and Greenlees were convicted and fined £25 each for having assisted an unknown photographer in making obscene pictures in June 1955.

Understandably after these unfortunate and extended court hearings which in every way impinged upon her personal though unorthodox mystical beliefs, Rosaleen Norton began to withdraw from the public eye.

Although she still gave intermittent interviews to journalists and appeared occasionally on radio and television, her main interest was to be able to continue to paint, and to obtain enough commissions for a steady income.

The lurid media publicity surrounding her work has tended to override the essential importance of both her magical vision and the techniques of trance which she used to conjure the supernatural entities involved. For example, many occultists have applied the theories of Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung to relate magical experiences to the forces of the so-called 'Collective Unconscious'. Jung took the view that at a deep layer of the psyche lay a rich and varied source of archetypal images which were the very basis of

religion and mystical expression, irrespective of the culture or society involved. Other occultists reject this view, claiming instead that the gods live apart from the minds of men and are not merely projected 'thought-forms'. Rosaleen Norton agreed with the latter perspective. In an interview given the year before her death she explained that she believed it very egotistical and self-centred to place man on a pedestal in creation. For her the gods existed in their own right. She knew Hecate, Lucifer and Pan, not as extensions of her own consciousness, but as beings who would grace her with their presence if it pleased *them*, and not subject to her will. She believed that she had discovered certain of the qualities of these gods in her own temperament and that this was a natural catalyst which made their invocation much easier and more effective. She went to be with them on the astral planes, and on different occasions it could be said that they showed different aspects or facets of their own magical potency.

Rosaleen Norton regarded Lucifer not as 'evil' so much as man's adversary. He bound and limited man when it appeared that he was growing too big for his own boots. He tried to trick man, not with malicious intent, so much as by imposing the limitations of the ego and man's pride in his own existence. She regarded Pan as a very significant deity for the present day, a force in the universe which protects and conserves the natural beauty and resources of the environment. Pan is alive and well in the anti-pollution lobbies and among the Friends of the Earth!

Hecate on the other hand she felt to be more imposing, a fright-



ening shadowy goddess flanked by cohorts of ghouls and night-forms, a dealer in death and a purveyor of curses. But there was a magical bond to be found here too. Rosaleen Norton regarded magic and witchcraft as her protection and inspiration in a fairly hostile, ungenerous world. Her own witchcraft hardly brought her abundance. She lived simply, with few possessions and certainly without wealth. If she ever cursed people with witch current it was as a means of redressing the balance of events, a legitimate use of the magical art.

Rosaleen's paintings, as already mentioned, show a certain similarity of style to those of Norman Lindsay. But whereas for Lindsay, the world of supernature could only offer themes, for Rosaleen Norton it was an ongoing reality. This is very much reflected in her work. There are fire elementals, ablaze with light; devils with dual banks of eyes, indicative of their different planes of perception; cats with magical awareness; horned beings with sensual cheeks and a strange eerie light playing on their brow. Her art was the result of the magical encounter.

Energies filtered through her, she said, as if she were a funnel. She transmitted the current. If the gods were alive in her, her artistic medium allowed them to manifest, in degrees, upon her canvas.

Rosaleen Norton always denied that she portrayed the totality of the god. She could depict only those qualities the god chose to show. The gods existed in their own right, on a plane removed from man's everyday consciousness. The role of the magician was to enlarge his consciousness to take in all these possibilities, to walk in his world knowing it to be populated by all manner of beings and entities.

In certain of Rosaleen's paintings we find creatures which are half-human and half-animal. These in many ways are her most convincing magical works. For Rosaleen Norton these creatures were in no way degraded beings. If she depicted warlike forces as anthropomorphic hawk, it was because within the domain of animals and birds the hawk very admirably embodied the symbolism of destructiveness and aggression. When portraying Jupiter it was fitting that the king should have lion's legs and paws because the lion was a motif of royalty, of dominance and command. Several illustrations of this type were reproduced in a volume of the artist's drawings which was published in 1952 in a limited edition of one thousand copies. The drawings were in black and white and accompanied by a series of poems by Gavin Greenlees.

In the published edition, Rosaleen Norton's art-work appeared in the context of a series of magical statements, both in terms of Greenlees' poetry, but also as an adjunct to the names of the

major supernatural forces. It was documented with magical sources that did not become well known until the growth of interest in occultism during the 1960s.

In an introduction to the book, publisher Walter Glover noted the parallels in Rosaleen Norton's art and certain of the Surrealists, and also pointed out that her paintings embody what he called 'a vision of the night'. Rosaleen Norton had spontaneous magical experiences long before becoming acquainted with the means of structuring them through the terminology of demonology and witchcraft.

She herself always regarded art as a medium for expressing an alternate and much more impressive reality than the dimension of normality obfuscated by human beings. In an early journal she wrote:

There are senses, art forms, activities and states of consciousness that have no parallel in human experience... an overwhelming deluge of both Universal and Self Knowledge (often in an allegorical form) from every conceivable aspect... metaphysical, mathematical, scientific, symbolic... These comprise a bewildering array of experience each complete in itself yet bearing an interblending and significant relationship to every other facet.

One such experience could be compared with simultaneously watching and taking part in a play in which all art forms, such as music, dreams, ceremonial ritual, shape, sound and pattern, blended into one...

Rosaleen's art was considerably varied. Her paintings and drawings ranged from satirical, but essentially whimsical, parodies on church figures, to Boschean whirlpools of energy forms interacting

with each other, and representations of great supernatural deities.

Rosaleen's portrayal of Mars - the warlike entity - for example, shows a powerful human male torso with the winged head of a hawk. The god has a scorpion's tail and clawed feet and very much embodies a sense of power and aggression. He holds a sphere in his right hand which could almost be the puny globe of Earth, under his influence.

Her portrait of Jupiter shows a proud potentate with a resplendent light issuing from his forehead, and a dark, majestic beard lapping down on to his chest. His legs and tail are leonine, and he carries in his right hand the mace of authority.

In both of these pictures, Rosaleen Norton depicts her deities as an animal-human fusion. For her, animals characterise a dignity that man has lost. She is especially fond of cats because of their 'psychic qualities', and the lion therefore becomes an appropriate symbolic aspect of one of the major rulers of the magical universe.

Rosaleen felt that the animal kingdom had retained its integrity to a far greater extent than the human. She was one with animals, for whom she felt a natural empathy. Many human beings, however, she despised for their narrow world-view. Cats, by contrast, operated in waking consciousness and on the astral plane simultaneously.

She recalled what she felt may have been a previous incarnation. She lived in a past century in a rickety wooden house in a field of yellow grass near Beachy Head in Sussex. There were animals - cows, horses and so on and she was a poltergeist. She remem-

bered understanding the techniques by which poltergeists made objects move. And yet when 'real' people came near the house they were offended and frightened by her presence. They could not relate to her poltergeist condition, and she in turn found herself attacking them out of contempt. The animals however were no trouble at all. They regarded her as another cohabitant, as part of the 'natural order'.

Her love of animals and her antipathy towards much of what the human race has come to represent of course influenced her magical conceptions. And yet she acknowledged duelling factions within the animal kingdom as representing important themes of 'polarity'.

The hawk, for example, she saw as a natural predator, a fitting representation of the Martian archetype. Her preference for animals was thus clearly not an escape into the non-human. On the contrary the animal kingdom contained a range of activities and functions from which mankind had much to learn.

The necessity for a sense of balance shows itself well in another of her pictures, *Esoteric Study*. An angry demon leers across from the realm of chaos counter-balanced by a diamond shape of white radiance on the other side. The scales are issuing out of the cosmic egg and the

superimposition of the magician's face on the scales themselves suggests that the artist is the vehicle through which all the tides of energy flow, asserting their polarities of balance accordingly.

Gavin Greenlees accompanying poem begins:

Out of herself, the Earth created
by her own Guardian faces,

And using the rule they gave
her, out of herself,

She made creatures to serve
her, - animals, poems,

Forgotten beings, men, women
... Out of herself

She made the grandeur and its
faith, healthy or faded ...

One of Rosaleen Norton's most impressive portraits is titled *Individuation*. She has denied a direct influence from the Tarot, regarding it more as an intuitive source than as a series of meditative doorways to inner states. Nevertheless, in several respects we find here a parallel with the Tarot card *Temperance*. The figure depicted is a fusion of the animal, the human and the divine:

I speak the birth,

I speak the beginning of presence

*I am inauguration, I am a greeting
between friends*

One flower, one animal, one phrase,

*One illusion, one discovering in one
world!*

The figure stands astride the Zodiac drawn down into a mountain of forms, yet rising transcendent above them. The drawing

follows *Panic* which closely resembles *The Tower*, the card in the Tarot which provides a symbolic warning of the forceful energy levels of high states of being.

Rosaleen Norton's tower is exceptionally organic and phallic, again indicative of the fertility aspect of witchcraft. It is surmounted by the Horned God - horns symbolising for her the dual polarities of magical energy. A cascade of liquid energy courses around the column, and in the bottom of her picture we notice a hand causing a wave of astral forms.

As we have said, Rosaleen Norton's expression of her magical universe did not always attract a receptive audience. During the period when obscenity accusations were levelled at her work, a large part of the limited edition was destroyed by customs police and in the present day Rosaleen Norton's art has been neglected and forgotten. The public recalls her status as a witch, with its unbecoming connotations, but has forgotten her significance as a magical artist.

This is undoubtedly a misconception. Rosaleen Norton was clearly no mere 'witch'. She lived in a world of magical beings and astral entities which manifested in various degrees in her remarkable paintings. There is no question that Rosaleen Norton was one of the forerunners of the Australian occult explosion.

Further reading

Nevill Drury, *Pan's Daughter*, Collins Sydney 1988

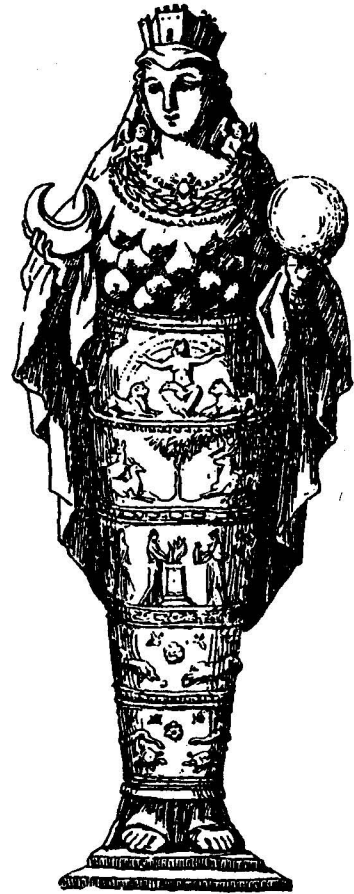
(copies of this biography of Rosaleen Norton are available at Atlantis Bookshop, Museum Street, London)



CHANGING

Penelope Shuttle

Certain places in the garden are female,
others are male. It is like
the male and female milks.
The night comes here as a boy
of great boldness and purity.
Hidden among tongue-shaped leaves
that lick up the rain,
he changes to a woman.
She has the beauty of her nighthood,
she is a changer, she has the look
of magical necessity.
For her the moon lets down a little hot piss.
For her the garden makes a once-only offer.
For her the sky takes to its bed.
For her the past comes running back.
For her the fig-tree laden with its yonis
slowly and unashamedly turns to a man.
Changing and changing,
he and she try all the colours, all the smells
of this certain garden.
They will not talk to you. You can only dream of them.



BOOK REVIEWS

Steve Wilson

I once read that there is nowhere in New York as quiet as a press preview for a new art exhibition. For hours every nationally respected expert will walk around in deep meditation. Finally someone will actually dare to voice an opinion and the trend will immediately be set. Every review the next day will agree as to whether the art is Art, and the public will be conned into believing that Art Criticism is a refined science.

Reviewing Occult books will never, I hope, be so snivelling. I came to *A Witches Book of Ghosts and Exorcism* (Robert Hale, £10.95, hbk) having already read a couple of scathing reviews, and these combined with the rather flat title to make me highly reluctant to read it. Instead I discovered what is probably the best book on the subject ever. Robin Skelton has been a pagan since before most of his reviewers were out of short pants, and perhaps this is why he neglects to impress with fancy theories and rationalisation.

The book contains a record of cases and techniques of laying ghosts and clearing houses of malevolent influences, built up over a twelve year period. Jean Kozocari is obviously a very sensible person, and without the inflated ego so often found among the sensitives and psychics. If these cases are fakes they are very inept ones, the ordinari-

ness of many cases would be excised from any sensationalist book.

Of course, for those who believe that using their knowledge to help the public is beneath them, who forget the social role of the real shamans, this book will be useless. While they continue to rule the universe from the security of their bedsits, these authors will continue to use the sensible and effective techniques that they outline to assist those confronted by forces they do not understand.

I would not use precisely the same methods, but it is made clear by the authors that it is only the principles that have to be used. Most important of all they outline vital rules for dealing with the people affected. These alone make the book essential reading for the practising occultist. Meanwhile, the book is a rattling good read and would, I feel, sell extremely well in the high streets as a well publicised paperback.

Sophia, Goddess of Wisdom by Caitlin Matthews, is published by Mandala at a reasonable £15.99. The hardback dustjacket is excellent, but in my opinion, when the book is opened things rapidly deteriorate. At first sight this seems to be a scholarly tome, but in my opinion, a few pages of Gnostic text do not excuse the tricks used to flesh out the subject. Goddess after Goddess is reeled out, described as being

Sophia without any reasoning or argument, and then forgotten. The standard technique is to tell a Goddess story and then follow it with a bland piece of dogma concerning Sophia that seems to be connected, but rarely is. Folk stories are told in which every wise woman is really Sophia, regardless of the cultural context, and each occurrence of the Hebrew word Binah in the Old Testament and Apocrypha is translated to make it about "Her", simply because the word is Feminine. The hidden agenda here is, in my opinion, to reduce any Pagan individuality from any tradition down to some half-baked Gnostic Christianity by a process of cultural imperialism. Luckily it is too blatantly done to be likely to convert anybody.

A far better attempt to find a spiritual Christianity is made by Anthony Duncan in *The Mind of Christ*, published by Element at £7.99. He is the author of *The Lord of the Dance*, which has been very influential in liberal Christian circles, and while remaining more dogmatic on certain issues than some modern theologians, he provides what I am sure is a useful book for those already converted to the faith. Such people could also make great use of *The Elements of Christian Symbolism* by John Baldock which, at the standard £4.99 of the "Elements Of" series is a good and comprehensive guide to the history and

meaning of its subject matter. Both books will particularly help the newer convert, and the Baldock book might well aid a beginner in choice of denomination. A similar reader attracted to Buddhism will find *The Elements of Buddhism* by John Snelling a decent guide to the religion in its many forms, and Snelling grinds no axes, gives the facts with some insight, and manages to include some of the lesser known sects.

Going back to Esoteric Christianity, Gareth Knight presents us with *The Magical World of the Inklings*, Element at £9.99. I tried to like this book, but it feels like a rush job. The Inklings were, of course, a group of Oxford Scholars under the wing of C.S.Lewis who studied mythology, wrote their own and had an enormous posthumous influence. There is, however, very little in this book that can't be found in the works of Humphrey Carpenter, with the exception of material about Owen Barfield, who doesn't seem in the least bit worth it. There are errors throughout, *The Cair Paravel of Narnia* becomes *High Paravel* and a hilarious misquotation from *That Hideous Strength* turns the mystic question "Who Is Called Sulva" into "Who Is Sylvia", and while some good points are made about the originality of Tolkien they seem rather obvious. Some good would be done if this book reaches enough people to start a Lewis revival, and Charles Williams, with his weird Platonic-Tantric-Christian religion of Co-inherence needs more work and more readers, but there has yet to be a book about the influence of the Inklings on such writers as Roger Lancelyn Green and Alan Garner, yet alone about the impact Lewis had, and has since lost, in the Church of England.

(A.N.Wilson may have done this though, I have yet to read his biography of Lewis).

Meanwhile, Element keep on publishing. *The Elements of Natural Magic* by Marian Green is the summary of a life of work in this area, and far outshines her *Elements of Ritual Magic*. I wish that certain circle-bound Wiccans would read this and stop pretending that twelfth century peasants set watchtowers, used voodoo terms and chanted poetry written in the 1950s. Marian Green uses a gentle approach which will hopefully get pagans out of their living rooms and onto the land. Recommended.

Decree and Destiny, The Freedom of No Choice has been published by Element at £7.99. It is by Shaykh Fadhalla Haeri and will presumably be bought by somebody, though who I can't imagine. Well, yes I can actually, but Stormin' Norman and the rest of the crew saw a few of them off. This is pure mainstream Islamic dogma of the worst type disguised with honeyed phrases of the oiliest kind. Hopefully by the time this review is published the Kurds will have got their Freedom of Choice at last. What on earth Element are doing publishing this mystifies me. Far better is *The Elements of Mysticism* by R.A.Gilbert. An excellent beginners guide to all forms of this work, in includes non-religious mysticism such as that of Jung and the Nature Mystics. I would have liked more of the opinions of the author, who seems determined not to be pinned down. No such danger with Hugh McGregor Ross, whose *Thirty Essays On The Gospel Of Thomas*, Element £7.95, could bring about a revolution in mysticism of the Christian variety. He points out

the beauty of this heretical gospel, also noted by the infamous Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, and with the audience Element are reaching it could even lead to a new movement, far preferable to that which either Duncan or Lewis might inspire, though Charles Williams might have approved. McGregor Ross has not only been inspired by the Gospel, he has done his homework too, and any lingering doubts about the original Christianity being vastly different to its mainstream modern forms should be dispelled by *Icons And The Mystical Origins Of Christianity*, Element, £9.99, by Richard Temple. Lavishly illustrated, though unfortunately in black and white only, this account of the early church makes it clear that the more mundane forms arose later, not earlier, than the esoteric schools as the orthodox usually maintain. A useful guide to those for whom Baldocks book is too basic.

Finally, I was given four excellent works on my own interests. The first is the gorgeous *Celtic Gods, Celtic Goddesses* by R.J.Stewart. Much better than many of his recent offerings, this Blandford hardback, ludicrously cheap at £14.95 is a no-nonsense guide to its subject, with black and white illustrations throughout and ten excellent colour plates, some of which breathe fire. At the other end of the publishing scale three excellent little booklets have appeared to brighten the pagan scene. *Life In The Next World* by the Rev Durdin-Robertson is, like all of his works, a non-nonsense uncritical record of the otherworld beliefs of a variety of systems ancient and modern. These are copiously annotated, and the bibliography is a fundamental guide to the subject. The

author is, of course, one of the founders of the worldwide Fellowship Of Isis, and one of their priestesses, Kati-Ma Koppana of Finland, has produced two outstanding works on Finnish, as opposed to Saami (Lapp) religion. *The Finnish Gods*, from her Mandragora Dimension project, gives a guide to this fascinating subject, and *Snakefat And The Knotted Thread* outlines the traditional folk magic of the Finns. Her research has been superb and given the deluge of repetition and lazy authorship in the English esoteric publishing world I really wonder if we deserve to have a Finnish project dedicated to publishing booklets and magazines in our language. I had the privilege of hearing the author at a recent Philoforum, and she was amazed at the ecstatic reception she got at the end. It seems that the Finnish scene is so tiny it can only afford her own group, a couple of Wiccans, a Golden-Dawner or two and a solitary Rosicrucian, so her quality is the rule rather than the exception. We should be so lucky, we really should.

TERENCE DuQUESNE
Anubis and the Spirits of the West
 Darengo 1990, £1.50, pbk
 Oxfordshire Communications in Egyptology I
Reviewed by Carfax

The author is probably best known for his scholarly yet poetic translations of ancient texts, most notably Egyptian, which have appeared in several occult magazines over the last few years. For those not familiar with his work, the author brings a refreshing breath of intelligently translated and analyzed source material to an area stale with the perpetual

rehashes of sloppy writers intent on the pursuit of money rather than growth or knowledge. The booklet deals with Anubis' role as psychopomp, and through it we see the recurring motif of the jackal deity through all the cycles of ancient Egyptian life, from birth through initiation to death and the afterlife. Although only twenty pages long, and ten of these notes, Mr DuQuesne is to be congratulated for producing this little work, which is of far wider interest than the title might suggest. Hopefully it will serve as an aperitif to whet the appetite of those who are looking for important source material accurately translated.

PHIL HINE
Touched by Fire
 Pagan News Publications 1990,
 £1.50, pbk
Reviewed by Starshine
Maiduphame

This, the third volume in Phil Hine's *Techniques of Modern Shamanism* series, is not so much a "How" but a "Why" manual. It examines and discusses the need for those who practice shamanistic techniques to become "true" shamans, i.e. become a functioning member of society, a "useful person to know".

I can't help but agree with Mr.Hine's point of view. Part of the reason why occultists of all types get a bad deal from the media and the general public, and blamed for such things as "Child Abuse" etc., is because too often we are seen as "outsiders". In any small community it has always been the outsider, the stranger, the weirdo who lives alone, who gets the blame when anything strange / nasty /unacceptable happens. (Any occultist could tell

the Police / Press / Social Workers / Doctors et al, that no *genuine* occultist is involved in child abuse. But are occultists asked? And would any notice be taken anyway?) When the "community" is extended to the size of a city, or country, a particular group becomes the scapegoat, and all members of the group get tarred with the same brush. People from an ethnic minority usually get it first, followed by Gays, but when something happens in an area where there are no obviously different scapegoats, then certain people assume the reasons are "religious". After all, no ordinary white, middle-class, "decent" Christian would do that sort of thing!! So, occultists (mislabelled as Satanists) get the blame. Hence the hysteria that has been flying around for the past few months, despite the lack of evidence.

My point is, that these situations will continue for as long as occultists refuse to "integrate". It all very well wanting to be "in the world, but not of it", but this attitude *can* be carried through into dealing with the community at large, rather than cutting ourselves off from it. All groups, ethnic or otherwise, who have suffered victimisation have had to fight for their right to coexist peacefully without losing their integrity and will to remain homogenous. Most have succeeded, or at least made sufficient inroads into people's consciousness that they are no longer immediately perceived as walking threats to children / women / property / values / morals etc. It's time occultists did the same.

I'm not talking from an "agit-prop" stance, here: Personally, I've got better things to do than march from Hyde Park to West-

minster carrying a placard saying "Pagans are Nice People". Rather, the way forward is pointed by Phil Hine in this book, that of becoming involved, useful to the community, slowly and gently. There is no point putting an ad in Yellow Pages saying "Curses cast & broken", either. All that will achieve is your local Fundamentalists beating a path to your door.

There is nothing wrong, morally or otherwise, with what we do: It's just perceived that way by the general public, thanks to the media. It's only our image that needs to change, not our methods. We will still always be regarded as different, outsiders, but hopefully "useful" ones, rather than "dangerous". Goddess knows, society NEEDS us (just look around you). We just have to convince them of it, and the only way to gain acceptance is by being useful to them, whether it is personally, emotionally, spiritually, ecologically, or whatever.

Perhaps I'm being twee, but I do think it would be nice if, on making it known what one does, the response was "Great! I've got this glowing green blob in my attic. Can you get rid of it?", rather than "Get out of this house, you crazy, evil fucker!"

I've waffled on a lot, I know, mainly because I couldn't find anything to complain about in this excellent book. I look forward to further volumes, and would like to see them collected into one paperback sometime, as they deserve to be. Anyone interested in Shamanism could do a lot worse than investing in this excellent-value-for-money series, whether they are beginners or advanced. They make far more interesting reading than those dry, stuffy anthropological tomes,

too. (Who cares what bugs the Dogon tribe eats?) Furthermore, they offer a healthier, more pragmatic approach to Shamanism than those wimpy New Age books with yucky covers of pretty girls and rainbows, that tell you to relax, breathe deeply and think of tropical islands. Need I say more?

JOHN POLLARD
Wolves and Werewolves
Robert Hale, £5.95, pbk
Reviewed by Carfax

In this day and age, more and more publishers offer enticing covers (or so they think) to attract the potential readers attention to the book's contents, with the author often having no say in the matter. Whether the author had any say or not, the presentation of the title of this book on the cover is misleading, to say the least. A fine picture of a wolf's head has the legend "Wolves and Werewolves" in bold red underneath, and the word "Werewolves" in print twice as large as the word "Wolves". One might be forgiven, therefore, for assuming this reprint of the 1964 work would deal with werewolves and lycanthropy in the bulk of its corpus. Unfortunately, only one of its fifteen chapters deals with the subject of lycanthropy, and this chapter merely details the attempts to rationalise phenomena into linear Newtonian-Cartesian perceptions which allow no room for magick or unexplained phenomena. The remaining fourteen chapters provide a catalogue of attacks, fatal and non-fatal, by wolves (rabid or not) on humans in various parts of Europe. It seems to me the

author was writing from a highly conditioned Christian point of view, a religion which has never liked wolves, representing as they do the wildness of nature, over which they were promised dominion by their god (an excellent article on this subject, and how Christianity has persecuted the wolf, entitled "Fear of the Beast" was written several years ago by a member of the Temple of Psychick Youth, unfortunately I cannot remember the magazine it was published in). This conditioning recurs in the author's dismissal of lycanthropy in shamanism as impossible, ignoring the symbiosis between the more "primitive" societies (and particularly the shaman) and their environment and its occupants. My distaste at the author's bias, which seems, as usual, to be based on ignorance and faith, grew through such phrases as "when the moon was full, a prerequisite always for witchcraft and the black arts" to climax at stunned disbelief with the following excerpt, following an Irish poem about wolf-hunting: - "Such a stirring account can hardly fail to rouse a faint sense of regret that a breeding nucleus of Irish wolves was not preserved purely for hunting purposes". A few pages after this unisolated demonstration of prejudice, the author makes what is probably the most pertinent statement in this book - "Wolves, however, and civilization do not go hand in hand". At the end of the book I was left wandering who are the biggest losers, the wolves who have been persecuted, or the so-called civilization that has lost so much in gaining blind faith and religion. The only person I can imagine enjoying this book would be the sort who likes nothing more than an evening in front of

the bonfire reading "Malleus Maleficarum".

**EVAN JOHN JONES with
DOREEN VALIENTE**
**Witchcraft: A Tradition
Renewed**
Robert Hale, London, hbk
Reviewed by Ann Finnin

The first thing that the reader will notice about this book is its utter simplicity. There are no formulas, no spells, no invocations given in bastardized Latin, Greek or Basque. All the reader will find is a straight-forward description of a Craft tradition that has remained underground long after its more colourful and dramatic cousins have emerged to fill the occult section of the bookstores. This is a mystical approach to the Craft, described in a surprisingly simple, sensible and matter-of-fact manner. Indeed, Jones finds no need to couch his mystical experiences in obscure terms. Mysticism is obscure only to those who have no experience of it.

There are many books currently in print that provide the "how" of Witchcraft - how to cast spells, invoke gods or spirits, celebrate the seasons, follows the phases of the moon, even how to initiate yourself if there is nobody around to do it for you.

In *Witchcraft: A Tradition Renewed*, we finally have the "why" of Witchcraft. Why are we of the craft in the first place? We are Craft out of love for the Goddess and devotion to the Old Ones, and the rituals, be they complex and ceremonial, or simple and homey, serve to bring us closer to Her and, thereby, bring us more in harmony with all of Her children on this planet that we live on.

NICHOLAS J. SAUNDERS
Cult of the Cat
Thames & Hudson, £6.95, pbk
Reviewed by Frater Venusius 49

Did you know that a cheetah can attain 65 m.p.h., doesn't attack humans, and makes a good coursing animal in the chase? This book is peppered with such fascinating cat facts and anecdotes.

The stunning illustrations include a psychedelically fluid tiger from a late eighteenth century Japanese silk painting, and a magnetic and beautifully lit head of Sekhmet, of when we learn that the Pharaoh Amenophis III commissioned 700 statues in an attempt to ward off a plague that was sweeping the Kingdom.

"In ancient Sumeria" we read "the lion was associated with the female essence" and the accompanying illustration depicts "the malevolent winged goddess Lilith standing on either two lions or one lion with two heads" (Her usual owls are in attendance, of course). We are told that this "most terrifying of all Sumerian demons was also known as the 'Bringer of Death' and is regarded as a prototype for the mediaeval witch". Well, perhaps your impression of Lilith will depend on your relationship with Her. In the accompanying illustration not only does she have in each hand what appear to be the top parts (loop and horizontal member) of the ankh associated with life-energy rather than death, but as with the Egyptian cat-goddess Bastet one could associate her with some aspect of fertility if her nubile appearance on the plaque is anything to go by. Her face has a commanding but not implacable expression, and could be read as determinedly sensual rather than

cruel. Pleasing to see one's patron animal clan associated with the enchanting Lilith whose image one treasures.

There again, the mediaeval witch is not so insalubrious a personage with whom to be associated once her connections with physicking the poor with herbs, providing assistance with her psychic abilities, understanding and utilising Nature's cycle of fertility, have been appreciated. Her attendance by the cat speaks volumes in favour of her character. The cat is very sensitive to human atmospheres and while attracted to the benevolent and the calm, is repelled by the freaked out and malevolent. So one feels a note of caution should be sounded when one reads "The choice of the cat as the witch's helper ... matched the animal's natural behaviour (and its ambivalent status - domestic but not fully domesticated) with the anti-social activities of the mainly old women who were accused of witchcraft - at least in the minds of their accusers".

However, it is largely true that "Unlike dogs, cats cannot be trained". It could be said that they don't *need* training. When all you have to do (consistently) with an adventurous cat whose safety you like to check, is to *think* of her, and within ten minutes, after a couple of days out, she will scratch at a third floor window - perhaps she was a special cat!

Although the text depicts the Amazonian Jaguar shaman in a rather fearsome light, the cat *can* appear to one for whom it is their "patron animal" in packs feral and loyal when he needs strength, or singly, singing in a strange language to inspire him, musically and poetically. Actually in the illustrative section, shamanis-

you like to check, is to *think* of her, and within ten minutes, after a couple of days out, she will scratch at a third floor window - perhaps she was a special cat!

Although the text depicts the Amazonian Jaguar shaman in a rather fearsome light, the cat *can* appear to one for whom it is their "patron animal" in packs feral and loyal when he needs strength, or singly, singing in a strange language to inspire him, musically and poetically. Actually in the illustrative section, shamanistic cure using jaguar skins is shown (the Paraguayan Héta Indian therapeutic practitioners are, sadly, said to be "now extinct"). So the therapeutic aspect of the "mirror-eyed" jaguar is represented, but standing apart from the textual section of the book.

This reflects what is something of a mosaic approach, one is often left to draw one's own inferences, - and a cat person would perhaps not in any case wish a book about the potent but allusive cat to be too categorical or dogmatic, but rather, like this one, be catalytic, sparkling off new concatenations of association. To one who praises the cat this enjoyable book celebrates its associations with royalty, sexuality, divinity, power, fertility, astral voyages and independent but affectionate companionship. No-one who appreciates the numinous charismatic playful and musical cat should deprive themselves of this treat.

OLIVIA ROBERTSON
Gaia - Initiations of the Earth
Cesara Publications, £3.50 or \$7
Reviewed by Elena Wood

Many people today understandably feel overwhelmed by the serious destruction the human

race is causing to the environment. This destruction stems mainly from our white Western, over-populated, patriarchal culture, which holds the Third World pagan peoples to ransom with its obscene consumerism. There is very little those in the West who care can do about saving a South American Rain Forest, unless they are a pop star, with easy access to their media. It is with local environmental issues that a real result may be achieved.

With this in mind, the Revd Laurence Durdin Robertson, Lord Strathlock, inaugurated The Order of Tara, an authentic chivalric order, for those undertaking specific, local environmental preservation work.

This little booklet introduces the order, and provides its investiture ceremony, and also a planetary rite in which the Earth itself is put on trial, with the other planets sat in judgement.

Gaia is unique, original and surprisingly potent.

Revd Laurence Durdin Robertson and Olivia Robertson are co-founders of the Fellowship of Isis.

Gaia: Initiations of the Earth is available from the author at Clonegal Castle, Enniscorthy, Eire.



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CAKRAS, NADIS AND THE AURA

by Carfax

I have seen much rubbish written about the subtle body and the cakras (which may also be spelt *chakra*) in various New Age magazines, and am often surprised by how few people actually know anything about the subtle bodies beyond buzz-words to drop. This article arose in response to this common and dangerous attitude of knowing good buzz-words to drop, but not knowing what their relevance to personal spiritual growth are. I use the Indian terminology because it already exists in such specific detail as the end result of hundreds of years spiritual science. For anyone inspired by this article to learn more on the subject, I would recommend the excellent book *Layayoga: An Advanced Method of Concentration* by Swyam Goswami (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980).

1) THE SUBTLE BODY

The Cakras are the energy centres in the subtle body which regulate the energy flows and interaction of the physical and subtle bodies (*cakra* means "wheel" or "disk"). As well as the seven traditional main cakras there are hundreds of smaller cakras around the body, other key cakras being those in the hands and feet, and the Nadi Cakra where the Sushumna, Ida & Pingala channels meet. Directly below the Muladhara (base of spine) is the Kanda, a small egg-shaped bulb from which twelve spokes of the major nadis emanate, as well as all the other

minor nadis. There are said to be seventy-two thousand nadis, tiny energy channels woven through the subtle body like "threads in a spider's web". The subtle body of energy centres (cakras) and energy channels (nadis) generates the aura which surrounds the individual. The aura is generally egg-shaped, slightly flattened around the middle, with a dent around the area of the solar plexus under the diaphragm (near the Manipura cakra). It is through this point one absorbs prana (energy) from the environment and interacts with others through emotional energies.

2) THE NADIS

The six cakras from Muladhara to Ajna are contained within the sun-gold Sushumna, the central channel from the Kanda which rises up the spine to the Sahasrara. Inside the Sushumna is the Brahma Nadi, which is used by the Kundalini during her ascent; inside the Brahma Nadi is the vermilion Wajra Nadi, which itself contains the white Chitrini Nadi. More evolved individuals will be "seen" to have a luminescent Chitrini Nadi. On the right and left of the Sushumna run the Pingala and the Ida channels.

The Sushumna, Pingala & Ida operate as conduits for *prana* (energy) round the energy-circuits of the subtle body. The prana carried via the sun-red Pingala vitalizes the material body, and the prana carried via the moon-

white Ida sustains the mind. The Pingala starts from the left ovary or testicle and runs to the right nostril, and the Ida from the right ovary or testicle to the left nostril. These two nadis cross over above alternate cakras as they spiral upwards, producing the criss-cross image of the twin serpents of the caduceus (this image is completed by the central "rod" of the staff which contains the lower six cakras, and is crowned with the double-winged/petalled Ajna cakra). The Pingala & Ida unite with the Sushumna forming a threefold "knot" at the Nadi Cakra just below the locus of the Ajna Cakra.

The twelve major nadis which emanate from the Kanda are the Alambusa (to left ear), Kuhu (to genitals), Waruni (all directions, involved in water generation), Pingala (to right nostril), Pusha (to right ear), Saraswati (to tongue), Shankhini (to throat), Gandhari (to left eye), Ida (to left nostril), Sushumna (to crown), Hastijihwa (to right eye) and Wishwodari (all directions, involved in metabolism of food).

3) THE CAKRAS

Sahasrara is located at the Crown. It has 1000 Brilliant Petals and is the Centre of Evolution, the residence of the Divine Spark or Bindu. In the physical body it corresponds to the Pineal Gland, and governs the Upper Brain and Sorcerer's (First) Eye. (The Sorcerer's Eye is the dominant of the

two physical eyes, the one used by sorcerers, not always positively, in their interaction with people to captivate the attention). Sahasrara responds to Violet light. Prana may be projected as White Light from this cakra via either the First Eye or the Nadi cakra. *Diamond* is the stone for this cakra. The bijamantra (root mantra) Aum(gn) goes with this cakra, though it is actually spread over the cakra system.

Ajna is located at the position of the Third Eye. It has 2 Lighting coloured Petals, and is the Centre of Spiritual Power, and of the Reductive (Passive) Magickal Senses. In the physical body it correlates to the Pituitary Gland, and governs the Lower Brain, the Second Eye, Ears, Nose, and Nervous System. It responds to Indigo light. *Rutile Quartz* may be used with this cakra. The sum of the Petals of the lower 6 cakras (i.e. those contained in the Sushumna) is 50 (4+6+10+12+16+2 = 50), which equate to the fifty letters of the Sanskrit alphabet.

Vishuddha is located at the Throat. It has 16 Smokey Petals, and the bijamantra Hang in the centre in a White Circle, the focus of Ether. It is the Centre of Active Magickal Power (through the voice) and of Dreaming. In the physical body it correlates to the Thyroid Gland, and governs the Lungs, Alimentary Canal, and the Bronchial and Vocal Apparatus. It responds to Blue Light. *Amethyst* should be used with this cakra, or *Tourmaline* for Dreamwork.

Anahata is located at the Heart. It has 12 Red Petals, and the bijamantra Yang in a Gold-edged Hexagram on a Smokey Circle, the focus of Air. It is the Centre of Being & Equilibrium, the source of Harmony. In the physical body it correlates to the Thymus Gland,

and governs the Heart, Blood, Vagus Nerve, and Circulatory System. It responds to Green Light. *Rose Quartz* is the most harmonic crystal for this cakra. Nadis from this cakra run to cakras in the hands which may be used to direct Prana as Gold Light projected from the Anahata.

Manipura is located at the Solar Plexus. It has 10 Dark or Black Petals, and the bijamantra Rang in an Inverse Red Triangle, corresponding to Fire. It is the Centre of Interaction with the Universe, and Centre of the Emotions. In the physical body it correlates to the Pancreas, and governs the Stomach, the Liver, the Gall Bladder and the Nervous System. It responds to Yellow Light. *Jade* may be used with this cakra, or *Opal* for Emotional works.

Svaddisthana is located at the Stomach. It has 6 Scarlet Petals, and the bijamantra Wang in a

White Crescent, corresponding to Water. It is the Centre of Health. In the physical body it correlates to the Adrenal Glands, and governs the Spinal Column, and the Kidneys. It responds to Orange Light. *Amber* is very effective with this cakra.

Muladhara is located at the Base of the Spine. It has 4 Red Petals, and the bijamantra Lang in a Golden Yellow Square, corresponding to Earth. There is also an Inverse Red Triangle corresponding to the Sun, Moon and Fire (the Gold, White & Red Light Rays), where the Kundalini resides coiled three and a half times. In the physical body it correlates to the Gonads, and governs the Reproductive System. It responds to Red Light, also to the scents of *Musk*, *Patchouli* & *Sandalwood*. *Quartz* and *Moonstone* may be used with this cakra for Active and Passive works. As

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well as being the centre for projecting Prana as Red Light, Muladhara also joins to the cakras in the Feet which connect to the Earth and allow interaction with earth energies.

4) MAINTAINING THE SUBTLE BODY

A) Daily performance of a ritual to maintain the subtle body, such as the Middle Pillar, is to be recommended. Below is a simple aura strengthening exercise for daily performance. I have found just prior to going to sleep at night the best and most convenient time in my day to perform this ritual. (It is also good to perform at any other time if you are feeling stressed or needing to relax and be calm).

Lie comfortably with your arms straight next to your side, palms lightly touching the sides of your legs, and feet just touching each other. When you feel relaxed, visualize your base cakra as a disk of spinning red light (the cakras are visualized as the colour of the light they respond to; with practice, one feels the petals, the actual colour, etc of the cakra as one works up the Sushumna). When you have the image clearly, inscribe a gold pentagram in the red disk. Then feel the flows of energy flowing from the base cakra to the feet cakras. Move to the stomach cakra and visualize this as a spinning orange disk, inscribing again the gold pentagram. Repeat this process moving through up through all the other cakras, i.e. solar plexus (yellow), heart (green), throat (blue), third eye (indigo) and crown (violet). After inscribing the gold pentagram on the green disk for the heart cakra, you should feel the flows of energy from the heart cakra to the healing cakras in the hands. When you have inscribed

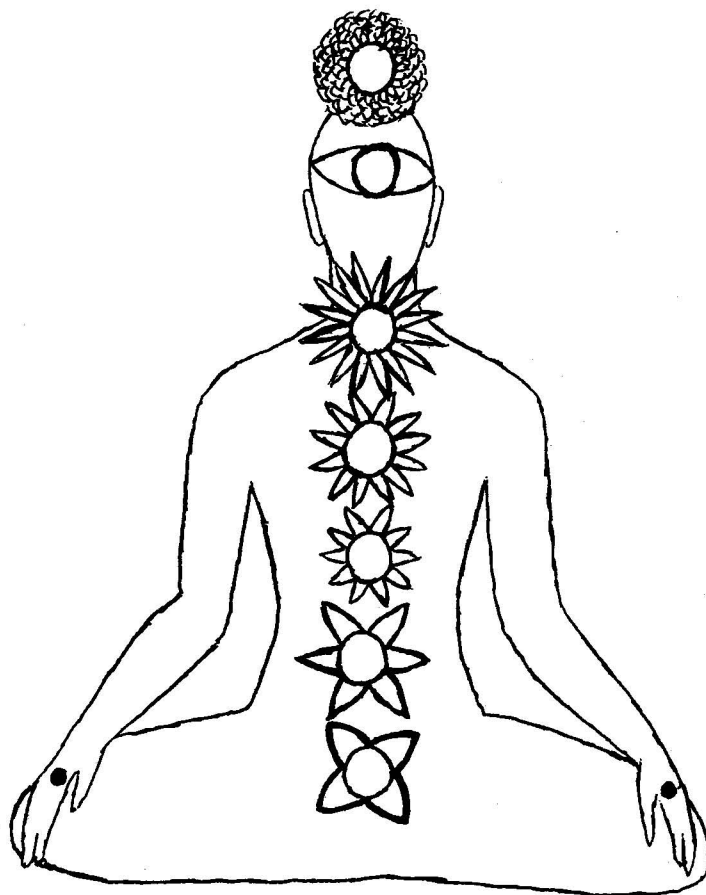
the pentagram in the violet disk for the crown cakra, visualize all the cakras pouring forth gold light into your aura, filling your aura and surrounding you with gold, cleansing and energizing as it does so. If you have problems with any particular part of your body, e.g. knees, focus the gold light around that part in a sphere and concentrate it until the pain is dispersed.

B) Prior to ritual, the operator should *smudge* thoroughly his/her aura with a suitable incense. Smudging is the blowing of incense smoke all around the physi-

cal body. A traditional shamanic mix which is hard to beat for smudging is *Copal, Sage & Pine* in equal parts.

C) A daily course, lasting 15 or more days, of *Damiana tea* (1 tablespoon mixed with equal part of *Saw Palmetto berries* in a cup of boiling water, left to cool and strained before drinking, for maximum effect) will cleanse the aura in a positively noticeable way (which is demonstrated in your interaction with other people).

D) Smoking *Passion Flower*, or *Damiana*, (leaves) also helps temporarily strengthen the aura.



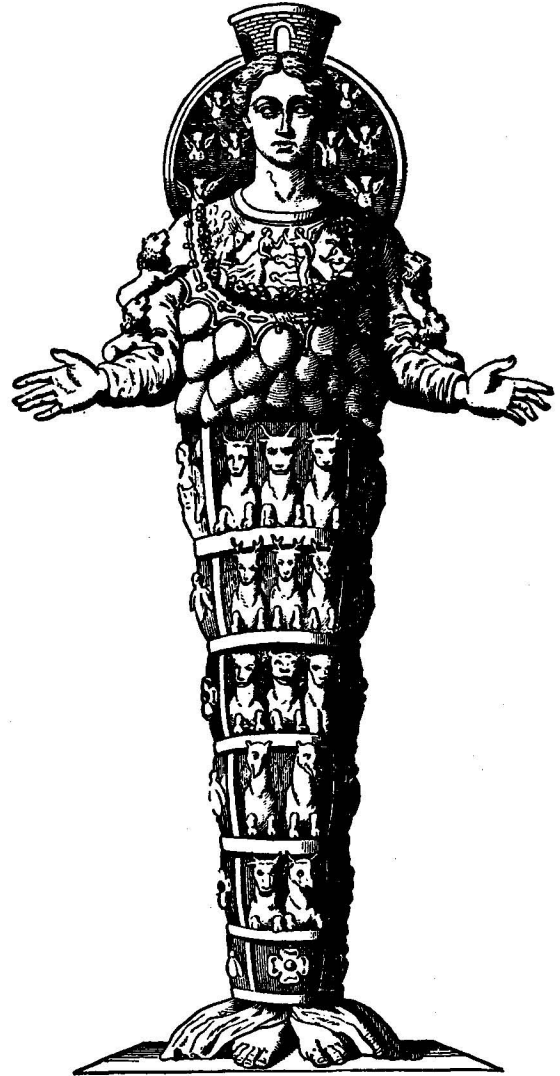
ODE TO LAUREL CAVERNS

Linda Falorio

Great Cave,
Womb of Earth,
Keeper of Earth's secret time
before the coming of the restless apes,
with reptile brains, we slow,
we crawl into your night.
Our eyes gone blank
we move uneasily into a velvet darkness.

Cascading water,
warmth of a piezoelectric force
pull us deep into a maze
of jagged, tumbled rock
where shy and strange-faced creatures
long of hand and limb
cling to shadowed walls,
flicker in far darkness.

Vast piercings of strange light
break through mammalian awareness;
bring back eternity
when men were not yet men,
when alien forms cherished
quite other modes of consciousness.
Star-words open
deep within the rock-strewn dark.



THE STELLAR LODGE

Kenneth Grant

One:

The Curio Shop

A lustrous sun hung in the sky, creating out of the void a bright afternoon in early May. Two young women entered Louis Bruhm's curio shop in Chelsea. Ruth Chalmers was up from the country, and Flavia Keene had joined her for the pleasure of Spring shopping. A few days previously, Flavia had seen an admirer off to Nigeria - where he'd gone for professional reasons - and life had seemed suddenly empty. But Ruth made up for almost everything, and they had spent the first part of the day in pursuit of unnecessary odds and ends.

Having exhausted the possibilities of draping themselves in rare stuffs and costly fabrics, they had turned to the problem of adorning these with bangles, semi-precious stones and curious coins engraved with ancient profiles. Louis Bruhm's was Flavia's resort when it came to matters like these; he had a "nose" for choice baubles, and he mingled the ordinary with the extraordinary in such a manner that the resulting ornament was not merely fantastic or grotesque, eccentric or startling, but strangely magical in a sense which combined with impeccable taste the barbarisms of feminine fantasy.

As with her scents and stuffs, Flavia sought the most exquisite products, which, although they

may not have possessed any character in themselves, were so grouped and arranged by her, and so cunningly blent, that the final result - the *impact* of the ensemble - struck a note of savagery and suavity vibrant with the hint of delicious mysteries. And these things were not manifested in the exotic and ostentatious fashion popular with many extravagant women but ambiguously suggested. Her perfumes were not entirely floral, nor entirely animal, they contained a metallic component which lent to the flowers a sombre saturnian quality, and to the animal essences a quality almost of moonlight.

Ruth Chalmers, slightly younger and rather less extreme than her dominant friend had nonetheless her own manner of choosing and wearing the things she finally purchased. Their jeweled fingers were now fluttering restlessly in the direction of the show-cases which formed a cunningly arranged labyrinth - geometrically precise - in Louis Bruhm's fabulous emporium. The absence of any human element but themselves enabled them to dispense with the veneer of polished calm which they usually assumed under the watchful eyes of the proprietor. They indulged in an almost brutal plundering of the objects strewn haphazardly on the glittering surfaces of the large glass cases.

In a wedge of sunlight splashed

across a corner of a cabinet heaped with ornaments, which seemed to flash angrily at the rifling of their sanctuary, Ruth discovered a gleaming coin. The chink of its contact with other baubles disturbed by her, caused Flavia to turn in her friend's direction. As she did so she saw, shining in the dark alcove, a small sphere, like a skryer's crystal. The sun, striking the side of the cabinet which contained so many treasures, shot dazzling beams into the shadowy recess as Flavia approached it. Ruth dropped the coin as soon as her friend drew attention to the shining object, and they were both bending over it, utterly entranced, when Louis Bruhm himself appeared in the narrow doorway at the back of the shop.

"Ah ha! so you have spotted the prize of my collection, Miss Keene, Miss Chalmers; only such taste as you possess could have guided you so unerringly to such a rare treasure".

Flavia turned, smiling blandly, oblivious of the unctuous flattery which Bruhm was lavishing upon them before naming the price, the astronomical price, which she knew he was bound to ask for so ravishing a treasure.

"Where did you find it?", she asked, casually.

"Ah ha!", he repeated; he always said "ah ha!", like that, when skirting the province of uncertain and excessive charges;

"I neither know nor care".

This evasion was purposeful, for, as Bruhm well knew, it always piqued and exasperated prospective buyers, but being such an old friend of Flavia's father he ran no risk of forfeiting this particular client. She waited in silence for his next remarks which would - she knew - apply themselves to his great delight in having the honour of a visit from Ruth and herself after so long a period of time. She had purchased several expensive items from him shortly before Christmas, with the sincere intention of making presents of them, but her perfect taste so unfailingly selected those very objects that pleased her the most, that, when the time came she could not bring herself to part with them. Her mother had had to scour the local shops in a last minute rush to get some costly but quite characterless bauble for Henrietta, Sylvia, Patricia and Betty.

But Louis Bruhm seemed strangely disinclined to release his usual flattering volleys. Ruth was looking at the sphere in a very absorbed manner, and it was the intent watchfulness with which Bruhm observed her friend's interest that caused Flavia to return her own gaze to the globe. There it nestled in its soft bed of violet satin, and it seemed to Flavia as if the rays of the sun set it smouldering in the deep cavern in which it appeared to be lying, like a nacreous shell caught suddenly by a powerful beam of sunlight as it clove the glaucous waters of a calm lake. Its almost conscious limpidity set against the dark impenetrable background seemed like the exudation of a dark flower just about to plash to the soft grass, shattering its fragile form and merging in glittering

substance with the black earth.

Ruth felt a vague wave of irritation. The sphere was Flavia's prize; she had notice it first; but Ruth suddenly wanted it above anything else she could imagine. The feeling was irrational and she suppressed it, and turned her attention to a selection of pendants, bracelets, antique rings and anklets which lay in heaped magnificence, encircled by the serpentine chain from which depended the gold medallion she had recently admired.

Louis Bruhm seemed glad of the opportunity to chatter to Ruth in an inconsequential manner, and Flavia was equally glad because her attention had been once more ensnared by the bright globe. Having become accustomed to the gloom of the shop, as compared with the brilliance of the street, she was able to examine the object more closely. She saw that it was large and not perfectly round, being more inclined to the ovoid than the spherical. Its interior was opalescent, unlike that of a crystal which remains uniform in its limpid transparency, whereas when she had first set eyes on it, it had shone with pellucid lustre more pure than any she had noticed in ordinary crystals. Yet even as she watched, she sensed a disturbing movement, a subtle shifting of refractibility which seemed to occur outside the boundary of its bright surface. The alternations of light and shade suggested the tremulations of an invisible veil. She sensed the presence of an atmosphere, nothing more tangible, pervaded by uncanny movements, as if the faintest of breezes charged with particles of coloured light painted the merest suggestion of tone, now azure, now green, now downy as blown

cloud, upon the globe's surface. It seemed to be enveloped from time to time in a luminous sheath, misty, vague, which had the effect of reducing and of magnifying by turns its molecular structure.

The sun now bathed it in its uncompromising brilliance, and the rays were shot back from the glazed cabinets ranged behind Flavia. Light penetrated the very essence of the sphere, so that one would have thought to see clear evidence of a vacuous and transparent heart; yet what lay revealed to her gaze was not a void, however scintillant, however serene, but the shadow of a dark object which itself was not visible, but which appeared to pulsate with steady rhythm. Something beat in time to her own pulse in that still and mysterious centre, and without realising what she was doing, she unfastened the catch of the cabinet and slipped both her hands inside it. Cupping them round its fragile form she gently eased the sphere out of its setting.

Louis Bruhm was beside her in an instant, wringing his hands, spasms of anxiety: "Please! please be careful! it is so light, almost like a bubble, do not be deceived by its appearance of solidity, do not let it fall".

Flavia flashed at him an angry glance as she held the precious object in her hands and scrutinized it closely. Ruth had come up beside her. Together they looked at it with unfeigned wonder; the Holy Graal itself could not have evoked such adoration.

Bruhm recovered his composure and stood rubbing his hands together in the manner peculiar to those who preside over curio shops.

"I see I was right", he beamed. "Only this morning I placed it in

the cabinet knowing that the Misses Keen and Chalmers would come in and find it, and - abracadabra! - am I not right? Say if I am not right!"

"But what is it?", murmured Ruth, "it doesn't really look like a crystal - and", she gasped in astonishment, "look! it's changing colour, it's changing shape ..."

"What is this object?", asked Flavia, levelling a strangely abstracted gaze at Bruhm. He was silent for a moment, an almost imperceptible moment:

"It's a shewstone", he replied, and did not enlighten her further.

Flavia was instinctively aware that he was struggling against a sense of revulsion; it manifested in an expression he was unable to conceal:

"Please replace the stone", he said.

"But I want it", said Flavia, immediately.

"Please replace it", he repeated.

The words came from his lips like a command, imperious in its intensity. He turned his back and walked away. Flavia replaced the stone almost mechanically, lowered the lid and fastened it. Then she walked over to Bruhm, and there was fire in her eyes. He was smiling now, enigmatically.

"If this is play-acting", she said, "then I've had enough. I wish to buy that stone; will you be so kind as to tell me its price".

"Certainly, Miss Keene", he replied. He was still smiling, but she thought she detected a whitening of the lips, a suspicion which was confirmed when she saw his tongue appear, and moisten them. An uneasy, furtive expression rippled over his features like a silent wave. He glanced quickly at the door from which he had emerged on hearing the chink of the chain which Ruth

had disturbed. He bent his head close to Flavia's and whispered something in her ear. Not a tremor passed over her face; she drew out her cheque book and, resting it on a showcase made out the required amount.

"Will you have it sent, or ..?"

"I'll take it with me; now."

He seemed extraordinarily relieved, and yet, as he took the proffered cheque, Flavia noticed again a shadow of disquietude hover for an instant over his features before it was wafted away by the breeze of his smile.

"As you wish".

He bowed deferentially, removed the stone from the cabinet - without, however, looking at it - and disappeared with it through a small door concealed by a green curtain to the left of the main entrance door.

Neither of the women spoke as they waited for Bruhm's return. Ruth, in the statue-silence of her outward calm, entered an inner inferno of envy and fury, while Flavia, enveloped in the coolth of her perfumes, dreamed of a bodiless heart beating in a luminous void.

Louis Bruhm returned, extending in Flavia's direction a neat parcel: "See! I have wrapped it for you myself so that no other should even so much as look upon so precious a ... relic".

"Relic?", queried Flavia. Bruhm smiled deprecatingly: "It is very old, of course", he said.

"It must be", she virtually spat at him, "for that price!"

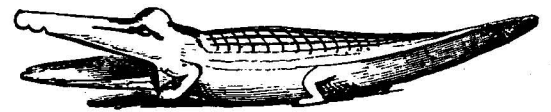
Her eyes were still blazing when she turned to Ruth, who was carefully gathering up her selection of ornaments.

"Forgive me, forgive me, Miss

Chalmers", Bruhm exclaimed: "Please let me help you; I must apologize, but the matter of the .. the stone ... ", he looked in Flavia's direction and smiled, "quite distracted my attention. Shall I have them sent, or ..?"

"I shall take this now; please send the rest", said Ruth as she detached the medallion from the remaining articles.

"Permit me; pray permit me", began Bruhm, and he placed the chain about Ruth's neck so that the gold pendant hung with the heavy costliness of all rare things above the valley of her breasts. Flavia drew close to her, and Ruth felt the heat of her breath on her throat as her friend remarked: "How lovely that is; surely it's the image of a cat".



"But you are mistaken, Miss Keene, is it not the head of a lady of .." Bruhm bent closer towards the object, " .. of Egypt?"

"Of ancient Egypt", said Ruth in a toneless voice.

Bruhm glanced swiftly at the inner door and complimented her on her choice of so appropriate an ornament.

"Will you have me enter the purchases in your account or will you follow the fashion set by Miss Keene?", he asked, smiling dubiously at Flavia.

"As I cannot imagine that the sum total of my purchases can amount to a tithe of the price of my friend's single piece, I think I'll risk your crediting them to my account; thank you".

As she said this, Ruth smiled coldly at Flavia, and together they

left the shop.

Two:

The Inner Room

As Louis Bruhm entered the room, Ralph Carter smiled sourly. He was dark, saturnine, and he suffered periodically from fainting fits. One of these had left half his face paralysed. He was an erudite person and possessed a store of unusual knowledge. He was also - and this was why Bruhm cultivated him - a member of the Beaumont Club, which ranked not only as the most exclusive but also as the most occult of its kind. Most of its members were creative in their respective spheres. The Club also contained some extremely wealthy individuals, not many, for the rich are seldom creative in the sense in which the Club understood the term. It was Bruhm's partiality for the rich and the famous, merely because they were rich or famous that barred him from the charmed circle, he might otherwise have gained admittance, because he was genuinely interested in curious personalities, and if he had little creative ability, he prided himself that one day he would prove useful to the Beaumont crowd. But his shop, his establishment, as he liked to call it, acted against his interests in this direction. In actual fact it was not the sort of club that Bruhm imagined it to be, for creativity often goes hand in hand with a passion for solitude, of "not belonging" to any given category or class of human affairs. It was rather in the nature of an "astral drawing-room", an affinity of souls, than a tangible salon.

Ralph Carter, because he cared for little but the past, not merely the historic past but that pre-human past which exists at subjective levels, enigmatic and pro-

found, and because he had discovered ways of tapping these levels, had been admitted to the fold and was honoured by the elect. He now sat in the inner room which was connected with the shop by the door with the green curtain.

"What did I hear about a shewstone?", he asked. A queer half-smile illumined the unaffected side of his face, leaving the other frozen in its perpetual calm.

"Nothing, nothing at all; a mere bauble my dear boy; some skryer's crystal, no doubt, but nothing that would interest you, I assure you".

Bruhm splayed his hands upon the table, exhibiting the immaculate perfection of a pair of snow white shirt-cuffs linked by glittering gems.

"Do you remember Hilary Morgan?", asked Carter, suddenly.

"Of course, my dear boy. Who doesn't remember Hilary? I sold some of his first pictures, long before your time".

Bruhm's face lighted up at the recollection of one who had unwittingly lined his pockets. But then the luminosity departed, for he then remembered that Hilary Morgan had sponsored Carter for the Beaumont Club. Morgan had thought very highly of Carter, and of young Basil Seton who was turning out canvasses in the Morgan manner. Bruhm drew his hands together; the fingers touched as if in prayer; yes, he well remembered Morgan. He had hinted as much to Seton in the hope that he also would let him handle his pictures - Bruhm could get a high price for them - and in return act, perhaps, as his own sponsor to the Club. But the gain to Seton, and the double gain to Bruhm had remained in the empyraean.

"Morgan had a very peculiar crystal", went on Carter.

Bruhm started, and withdrew his thoughts from the Beaumont Club.

"Did he indeed? I am surprised to hear that he took an interest in such things."

He wished Carter would keep off the subject of crystals; he was not at all sure that he had acted wisely over the Keene transaction, although the sum he had acquired thereby was astronomical! He squirmed uneasily under Carter's gaze, especially that which emanated from the unmoving side of his face. Carter sat back in his chair and resumed the conversation:

"One day Morgan confessed to me that the crystal had changed his style and endowed him with genius. As you know, his early work was unexceptional, technically good, perhaps, but not creative. But on becoming possessed of his talisman, as he called it, his work changed; it was not a matter of development, but of total change."

Bruhm was stirred by the allusion to the talisman, and he realised that the afternoon's encounter with Flavia had added another dimension to his memory of Hilary Morgan.

"I think that Morgan in his last period surpassed anything he had hitherto achieved".

Carter paused. Bruhm nodded and forced a smile of agreement which lacked sincerity: he was uneasy and beginning to be afraid. Carter went on, relentlessly:

"If I had to describe Morgan's work to someone totally ignorant of it - though well acquainted with the works of contemporary painters - then I should summarize it as a mingling of certain

elements which go into the make of a Spare, a Sime, or a Wunderlic. Morgan's subject-matter is, of course, anything but modern, and some people deplore the obsession with ancient Egypt which his later work reveals. But why deplore it? He treats the subject in a non-traditional manner, but why should he depict only those aspects so far confirmed by the discovery of historical fragments? I fail to understand how anyone can criticize a work of art because the painter depicts Isis holding an instrument that is unidentifiable."

Bruhm was familiar with the painting to which Carter referred. "My point is", went on Carter, "that it was only after Morgan became possessed of his talisman that he began painting those really extraordinary pictures. Previously, he had treated usual subjects in an unusual and - let us admit it - in a rather uninteresting manner; after he acquired the talisman we see a complete reversal - a straightforward treatment of extraordinary subjects. In this sense he may be compared with Dali, although the atmosphere of antiquity is not present in Dali's work. And the quality of light which pervades Morgan's work, this surely is his most remarkable achievement. Have you ever - before or since - beheld a picture in which the light seems to change as you look at it?"

Bruhm smiled assent, genuine this time:

"How did Morgan acquire this talisman?", he asked.

Carter raised his hands expressively, and let them fall to his sides: "Nobody knows; at least, nobody I know. And he permitted no one to see it, as I expect you know".

He paused, observing Bruhm with one mobile eye; he had been

on the point of adding that nobody at the Beaumont Club had seen it, but, remembering Bruhm's ever-open wound, he modified his remark. If no one at the Club had been allowed to look at it, then Bruhm could rest assured that no one outside it would have been accorded the privilege.

"I heard rumours - only rumours, mind you - that Basil Seton was to have inherited the talisman, but I doubt whether he ever actually saw it. He used to talk about it a lot several years before Morgan's death, but during the eighteen months or so before the end, he did not so much as allude to it. Its disappearance at the time of Morgan's death was suspicious, and Seton was accused, but he would hardly have bothered to spirit



away an object which he knew he was to inherit anyway".

Carter paused and directed at Bruhm another peculiarly disturbing glance.

"Seton was Morgan's chosen, was he not?", asked Bruhm.

The question was put more to keep his mind from the subject of the stone than for information.

"Yes, he was beginning to paint well under Morgan's influence. The stone's effect on Morgan was

so pronounced that I see no reason why it should not have had the same effect on Seton. Morgan claimed that it had the power of inducing inspirational frenzy, and I see no reason why it should not have done the same for Seton. This is merely a theory of mine; Lawrence Hector would merely laugh at the idea".

"Hector?", queried Bruhm, searching his mind for the names of Club members.

"Lawrence Hector, scientist, inventor, whatever you like to call him. Personally, I don't know why anyone tolerates him" (Carter meant "tolerates him at the Beaumont Club"), "but there you are! He's made one or two significant discoveries, I believe, in the realm of nuclear physics, and so ..."

Bruhm nodded. He remembered Hector when Carter mentioned the man's pursuits. It was characteristic of Bruhm that he could recall a person only when he had classified him as this or that, rarely by reference to name, face or character. The Misses Keene and Chalmers, for instance, were not elegant women whom he enhanced even more by adorning them with his curious treasures, they were daughters of the joint shipping-line owners Marshall Keene and Raymond Chalmers. Bruhm did not take into consideration their personal tastes and interests, any more than he would put any store by Hector's famous contributions to science. Likewise, even though Ruth Chalmers was herself one of the Beaumont crowd, Bruhm believed this to be due solely to the influence of her father. It was, in actual fact, due to quite different reasons, one of them being Ruth's poetry which was attracting attention in literary circles, another being her

interest in the ballet which had led to her friendship with Flavia, a woman of peculiar tastes and great creative potential. It was Flavia who had been determined to see Ruth accepted in the Club *despite* the almost insurmountable obstacle of her father's wealth!

After Carter had left, Louis Bruhm returned to his chair and sat thinking for a considerable time.

Three:

Louis Bruhm Remembers

Exactly three years previously, Bruhm had been sitting thus before the table by the chair that Carter had vacated. It had been a sultry afternoon and Bruhm had received few calls. But on this occasion the door of his shop had opened, and he had left the inner room to attend to his client. At first he distinguished nothing in the bright pathway of the sun except the black bar of the metal grille which covered the door. Then he noticed, with a start, a kyphotic figure in curiously black cloth that had a faint greenish bloom upon its shiny surface. Bruhm's intense preoccupation with this peculiar habit was - he later realized - due to his total disinclination to look at the face set on the crooked neck which rose from the green shadow. It was not so much that it was distorted, as the faces of dwarfs sometimes are distorted, but that there was in its expression so hideous an intent, that Bruhm - accustomed to contemplate rare and lovely objects - found it impossible to accept such an antithesis of his aesthetic ideal of normal beauty in this incarnate form of abnormal ugliness.

For the space of a few seconds, though to Bruhm it seemed an eternity, the two stood beside each other, and then fluttering

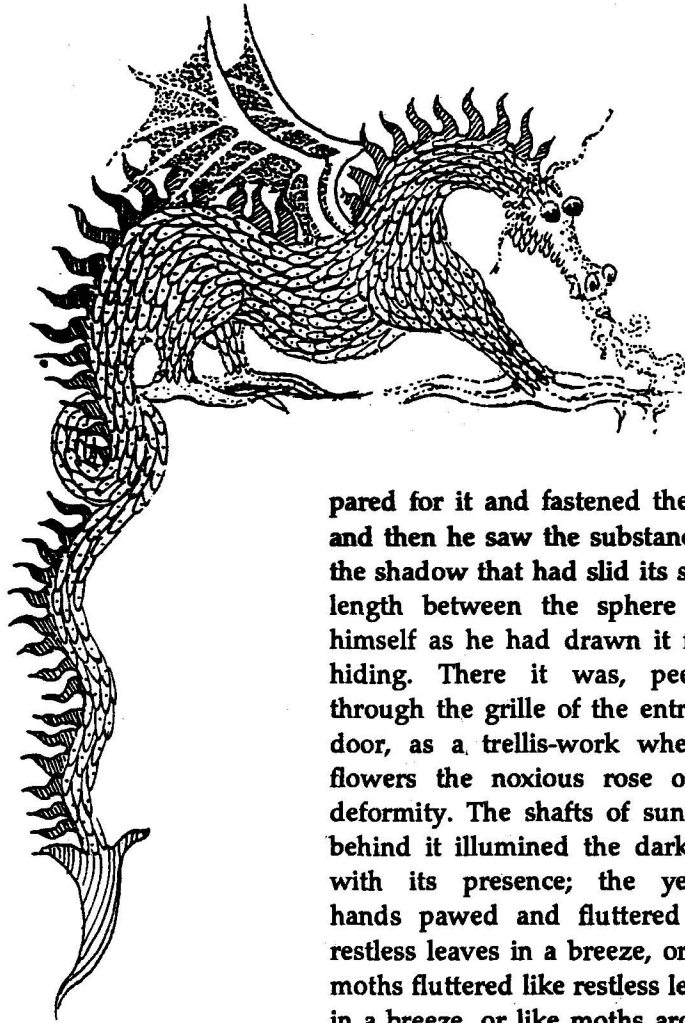
yellow hands plucked at his sleeve. Bruhm stood motionless, paralysed by the oblique entry into his domain of an element the very reverse of the solar gold which flooded the silent afternoon. A nausea that was wholly physical laved his being, as the heavings of stagnant water would have laved his body and coated it with a veil of greenish slime, had it lain immersed in some polluted backwater. If a spectre swathed in rank seaweed had risen from a pool scummed with scarves of green putrescence, and protruded *in lieu* of a hand a tongue-like flipper, Bruhm could not have been more completely introduced to fear, stark animal fear. His petrification was absolute; but within the immobility of the flesh which embalmed him, as in marble, his consciousness attained a lucidity, a mirror-like perfection, that enabled it to detect the finest shades of movement, and to register the subtlest gradations of the surrounding atmosphere. Carter would have said that Bruhm's body, having relinquished its task of receiving impressions, had identified itself with its own aura, which, registering all sensation, interpreted the slightest inclination towards itself in terms of pure physical impact.

Simultaneously, Bruhm was conscious of the advance towards him - as on a calm rivulet which the sun's rays fleck with gold - of an aqueous bubble about the size of a pomegranate. It was of a shining substance that reflected the sun's rays in spearheads which stabbed him from all sides. Borne upon the same current, a voice seemed to accompany it. Although no human mouth was capable of uttering the sounds he heard, and because he was able to interpret them in terms of words,

and therefore of human speech, he was compelled to acknowledge the activity of some human agency.

And so it was that Bruhm heard what he was to do, and how he was to do it, for he was the recipient of commands which he had to obey. He received them, not with his reasoning mind, but with a layer of consciousness normally inaccessible to direct influence. His waking mind informed him that he was receiving instructions from a hunchback with an evil face, and with hands that fluttered like wings, idly beating the summer air. He also knew that he was being hypnotized by an exterior intelligence that was implanting ideas that were to take effect, immediately, with regard to a specific matter, and were to remain dormant for a period of three years with regard to another specific manner. In three years, to the day, he knew that he had to bring out the "thing" from the place where he had, for safety's sake, been commanded to secrete it, and display it in his shop; and that a certain person would ask for it, would acquire it in her own name at a specified price, which he, Bruhm would be permitted to retain for his share in the transaction. That was all. That so simple a thing as secreting the sphere in his safe, and displaying it at the appointed time, seemed little to require of anyone in return for so large a sum of money.

And yet, during those three years Bruhm had known no peace. The sphere had been duly concealed, and he had not once felt any further curiosity concerning it; but there had hung before his inner vision the monstrous impression of a dwarfish shape, like a twisted cloud around which



seeped brilliant sunlight. Even so, he had risen from his bed on the morning of the day appointed as if it were a morning like any other, and not the morning of the day he had dreaded. It had been a matter of moments unlocking the safe and withdrawing what he had placed there. A shadow had fallen across the small square aperture as the heavy door swung outward; he had not turned his head, and had dared scarcely to breathe.

As he ascended the steps from the cellar with his weightless burden, he thought it seemed heavier than anything he had ever lifted. He placed it in the cabinet pre-

pared for it and fastened the lid, and then he saw the substance of the shadow that had slid its silent length between the sphere and himself as he had drawn it from hiding. There it was, peering through the grille of the entrance door, as a trellis-work whereon flowers the noxious rose of its deformity. The shafts of sunlight behind it illumined the darkness with its presence; the yellow hands pawed and fluttered like restless leaves in a breeze, or like moths fluttered like restless leaves in a breeze, or like moths around a flickering flame. Then it was gone. Bruhm's three-year prayer that it should not enter, should not invade with its substance what it had invaded with its shadow, was granted. He broke out in a sweat of terror as he thought of the possible consequences of having forgotten, or of having bungled his task. Madness, surely; perhaps death, in a manner totally beyond his power of imagining.

He had been standing thus as Ralph Carter entered the shop. Bruhm turned swiftly, his back shielding the show-case from Carter's gaze, which was fixed questioningly upon him. He took Carter's hand, greeted him effusively, drawing him with him into the inner room.

A few minutes later, Flavia Keene and her friend had entered the shop. Bruhm, paralysed by a dread he was unable to combat, submitted to the inner power that now controlled his physical movements, excused himself to Carter and entered the shop to carry out the final stage of his instructions. Even the process of wrapping up of the globe, of receiving Flavia's cheque, and of dealing with Ruth Chalmers' purchases were effected automatically by an intrusive intelligence which directed all his actions. Now, after Carter's departure, Bruhm recalled these events as if a series of indelibly vivid pictures had been branded upon his conscience.

As he had entered the cellar containing the stone, he had noticed several canvasses which he had stored there some years previously. They were mostly paintings of a pretty or charming nature which he exhibited from time to time; but among them were two or three by Hilary Morgan. Bruhm had forgotten the paintings and something now induced him to go down and look at them. He passed once more into the shop, and paused on his way to the curtained doorway through which he had disappeared with the shew-stone after Flavia had asked him to wrap it up. He looked at his watch, it was nearly ten minutes past four; he usually closed shop at a quarter to five, but something prompted him now to lock the main door. This he did not usually lock until the outer grille had been closed over it, but he feared that by opening the door he would invite the evil presence which he sensed in the near vicinity. He therefore locked the heavy door and drew into posi-

tion the double-barred aitch-lock. Then he pulled down the dark green blind. The shop was now illumined by a glaucous light which bathed the show-cases in an even sheen. Their contents appeared as motionless fish in a vast aquarium, and, owing to the passing of traffic without, sudden flashes of light streaked into its depths. In front of Bruhm, heaped on a central cabinet, were the shining baubles which Ruth Chalmers had let trickle through her long white fingers. He saw them now, caressing the hard cold brilliancies with a sterile and feverish excitement. A ring had gleamed on one of her fingers, it displayed a dark green stone that flashed its sullen cool spears against the coins and medals which she let fall upon the velvet cushions. He gathered up the little heap and dropped it carelessly into the cabinet, as one showers, idly, the calm surface of a pool with a handful of pebbles. Passing through the curtained doorway he traversed the small room in which he had wrapped the sphere, and approached the staircase descending to the strong-room.

Four:

The Encounter on the Pavement

Paul Chisholm was strolling in the afternoon heat, returning to the hotel where he was staying with Dr. Irving Starke, an old friend who directed in Chelsea a clinic for nervous disorders. It was a little after three o'clock. Catching sight of a coffee bar he decided to take refuge from the gruelling heat and, sitting over a cup of coffee, he mused upon recent impressions received at the clinic.

Chisholm had been invited by Dr. Starke because he was puzzled by certain symptoms exhibi-

ted by some of his patients. He had thought instantly of Chisholm, whose wide knowledge of occult matters might enable him to explain them. Although the doctor was a specialist in the psycho-therapeutic treatment of nervous disorders, and dealt with a wide range of disturbances of psychoneurotic origin, he did not undertake extreme psychotic cases. It was his practise to pass them on to other institutions, but in the particular circumstances alluded to here, Dr. Starke had not pursued his usual procedure.

Among these special cases were three women who for the past two or three years had proved intractable to his methods of treatment. Their nervous systems showed signs of extreme disorganization, but they were not, strictly speaking, psychotic cases.

Within the past six weeks, two more, similarly afflicted patients - also women - had been committed to his charge, and he had decided that they exhibited symptoms of an "occult" nature.

Chisholm had come down, therefore, to study the cases directly. He had given considerable attention to the doctor's written reports, and these had been supplemented by private discussions as certain observations that touched upon the occult borderland had not been entered in the reports. The latter testifies to a morbid condition of nervous functioning, combined with partial amnesia where certain specific matters were concerned. A marked anxiety-state was present which, in all the cases, was characterised by a dread of children or exceptionally small adults. This fear was so acute that one of the nurses at the clinic, owing to her diminutive size, had caused in the patients outbursts

terminating in a total collapse of the psycho-physical organism. The nurse in question now no longer did her duty in the wing tenanted by these patients.

Concerning treatment: hypnosis induced a comparatively lucid state in which each of these patients described a more or less similar experience, though at a certain point a barrier supervened and every method failed to elicit further material.

In conversation, Dr. Starke had told Chisholm that hypnotic permeability ceased always at the appearance of a curious geometric symbol or design, which each patient drew automatically on a sheet of paper. The symbol thereafter acted as a veil covering an entire layer of the subconsciousness, which resisted all further attempts at exploration. The accounts up to this point resolved themselves into a single story representing an experience common to all three patients. This experience terminated in obsession by the symbol, which seemed to epitomize and at the same time "seal off", the trauma. Chisholm recognized in the symbol a close similarity to an occult sigil known as *seeing through the oblivion of Time*, which was based upon an ancient Egyptian hieroglyph. Beyond this close resemblance, more marked in one patient's version of the symbol than in



those of the other two, he could detect nothing remotely familiar. In one of the other cases he noted certain additional sigils, one of which closely approximated to the Egyptian hieroglyphic for "water", while another resembled a crudely drawn star. The patients exhibited no particular reaction to the ideas or actualities connected either with time, stars, water, or with vision, although - of course - the idea of oblivion could be associated with the amnesia which afflicted each patient. On confronting them individually, however, with the notions of water: of the sea, of running water, of water-clocks; or with ideas of time, stars, eyes, vision, and so on, no noticeable reaction could be detected either in the hypnagogic state or during waking consciousness. Violent reactions were produced only by the sight of children, by the sight of the nurse already mentioned, by bright lights or shining objects, and by personal adornments or trinkets which induced in all three patients paroxysms of fury. The women were, in all cases, similar physiological types, possessed of forceful personalities combined with unusually strong aesthetic sensibilities. One woman was - as was Dr. Starke himself - a member of the Beaumont Club, a fact which seemed to rule out congenital weak-mindedness and similar defects.

To Chisholm's mind, the similarity in type appeared the most startling feature. He had not that day seen the patients in question, having been occupied solely with Dr. Starke's account of them. He had with him a portfolio containing everything pertaining to the case which the doctor had collected during the previous three years.

Chisholm left the coffee-bar and strolled leisurely along the blazing strip of pavement until the heat forced him to take refuge on the other side of the street. He had been walking for some time when his reverie was interrupted by an alarming spectacle. A little way ahead of him a young woman appeared to be wrestling with a grotesquely shrunken old gentleman who was trying to pinion her against a shop window. In the glare of the afternoon sun, Chisholm watched this drama being enacted as if it were an isolated cameo suspended in a shimmering gauze before his heat-engendered fancy. The street was strangely silent and still, although a small group of people were advancing in the direction of the disturbance. As Chisholm drew abreast of the scene, the elderly assailant emitted a gasp and sank to his knees. The woman glanced fearfully at Chisholm:

"Oh, he's fainted; the heat has been too much for him ... I tried to hold him up, but he struggled against me."

Chisholm did not believe a word the woman was saying; she seemed not to be addressing him, but the advancing crowd. There was an urgency in the words she had just uttered, and the look of terror in her eyes seemed too genuine to be simulated.

"She attacked him; I saw it!", said one of the group, a hard-faced woman with a malevolent expression. As the accusation was levelled against her, the young woman moved closer to Chisholm and stood slightly behind him.

"I happened to observe the whole scene", said Chisholm, in a tone which made it clear to his listeners that they should go their various ways. "The young lady is

perfectly correct in what she has said".

By this time the man had revived sufficiently for Chisholm to help him to his feet.

A shopkeeper emerged from a doorway and offered a glass of water, but the man declined it, and, glancing queerly at Chisholm, shambled down the street. As is usual in such cases, nobody had observed closely what had occurred, and the accusation which had been flung at the young woman arose from the desire for trouble which some people delight in initiating. And so the group slowly dispersed, melted almost literally in the relentless heat.

The young woman at Chisholm's side was plucking at his sleeve in an agitated manner, the momentary expression of relief on her face having now given way again to one of panic. She was pulling him forward in the direction in which he wished to go, but not by any means at the speed he wished to go on such an afternoon. She urged him on, and there was some quality in her insistence, coupled with her obvious anxiety, which impelled him forward at the rate she would have him go. She muttered under her breath a disconnected account of the violent encounter, which she explained away as a distressing accident caused by mistaken identity. She referred, repeatedly, to a curio shop which - so Chisholm gathered - was situated not far away. She said that some indescribable abnormality had entered the shop and emerged a few minutes later. Her brief glimpse of the figure had inspired in her such terror that she had been compelled, despite her abhorrence, to follow in its wake, to confront it, and so to assure

herself that her senses had deceived her. On catching up with it, however, she had found herself face to face with the elderly gentleman whom Chisholm had saved from the efforts of her temporary derangement.

Chisholm tried vainly to reason with the woman. They had reached the shop in question and she had grasped the door knob. The door did not yield to her pressure; she pushed frantically, hysterically, until Chisholm laid upon her shoulder a detaining hand. As she turned towards him - her eyes glazed with the veil of impenetrability that often indicates a state of interior upheaval, sometimes of ecstasy - she noticed a florists shop on the opposite side of the road, and, before he realized her purpose she was urging him over the road. The traffic surged about them as they wove a zigzag path to the opposite pavement. Once inside the florist's, Chisholm was barely able to restrain his companion, until a white-smocked figure detached itself from a cluster of blossoms foaming in an enormous tub, and advanced in their direction. Chisholm cast an anxious glance at the young woman, who then addressed the florist quite casually:

"I wish to see Mr. Bruhm, but unfortunately his shop appears to be closed."

The man she was addressing looked at his watch: "A quarter past four", he said thoughtfully. "He usually remains open until a quarter to five; would you care to give him a ring?"

"If you would be so kind, I think this gentleman will oblige me". She motioned in Chisholm's direction as she finished speaking. The florist looked at him queerly and led him into a small side

room. Chisholm turned, held open the door, and the woman followed him to the telephone.

"What's your name?", he whispered, as the florist withdrew.

"I'll ring him", she said, heedless of his question. "I know his number; I've bought things there."

She seemed calm and collected now as she took the receiver in her long tapering fingers, the nails of which - he noticed - were lacquered in mauve. At last he was able to take stock of the enigmatic and erratic creature beside him. Her face was full, round, and unusually soft, he thought, for a woman whose other features suggested an age between thirty-five and forty years. Her small arched mouth was also full, and the eyes, liquid and large, lent to the face a curiously voluptuous, almost oriental appearance, except that the finely chiselled nose and the receding forehead suggested a vaguely African provenance.

Her call was in vain. She looked anxious, but not distraught, as she replaced the receiver and looked blankly at Chisholm. He recalled his attention from wandering over other of her attributes and proceeded to chose a lavish bouquet of flowers which he then presented to her. He left his card with the surprised and delighted florist, and, together, they left the shop.

She seemed speechless with gratitude, but he deliberately refrained from paying any attention to her exclamations, when they came. Instead, he hailed a passing cab and suggested she should go home and rest. He heard her give an address in St. John's Wood, mentally noted it, and, giving a note to the driver, waved her goodbye.

He then hailed a cab on his own behalf and arrived back at his hotel between half past four and a quarter to five. He was tired, hot, and hungry. After a light meal, he retired to his apartment and remained there until morning, his mind reverting to earlier episodes in what seemed to him to have been a long and confusing day.

But although the encounter on the pavement was pushed into the background by his study of,



and reflections on, Dr. Starke's case-histories, Chisholm was nonetheless conscious of the presence, perpetual, vague, of a lovely face distorted in turns by apprehension and frustration.

The day that followed was fresh and bright, the buildings shone against a flawless sky as if the entire town, and he in it, were floating in a chalice filled with azure foam. He decided to walk and revolve in his mind the thoughts which yesterday had deposited. In Hyde Park the profusion of fresh blossoms which quivered slightly in the ghost of a breeze, cleared his mind of the baffling case-histories.

He had been strolling for some time before he realised that he was again in the vicinity of the curio shop. As he approached it he heard a clock strike twelve; and what he saw made him

quicken his pace. Two policemen, a small group of bystanders - among which he recognized the florist - and a large vehicle, were disposed around the shop's entrance, and it was evident that a legal entry of the premises was being effected. As he drew abreast of the group he recognized the florist, who motioned to one of the policemen and said: "This is the person I was telling you about". He then produced the card Chisholm had given him the previous day. Both florist and policeman looked at him a little queerly, but when Chisholm mentioned his friend Dr. Starke, matters were made easier, by the florist who occasionally supplied flowers to the clinic, and by the policeman's acquaintance with the doctor who directed it. The policeman was relieved to find someone who might contribute a more substantial justification for the florist's entering the curio shop than that with which the florist had furnished him.

It appears that Bruhm had lived in constant fear of some sort, and he had asked the florist to inform the police the moment anything unusual occurred. Apart from Bruhm's having closed his shop earlier than usual the preceding evening, the florist had noticed the omission in the matter of the closing of the metal grille. Having become uneasy when Bruhm did not open his shop at the usual hour next morning, and urged by his wife, the florist informed the police. Now, at a little after midday, Chisholm was observing the result.

As the policeman turned once more to the door, two things occurred simultaneously; one of them observable and explicable: the sudden yielding of the heavy door against the iron bars that

were crossed behind it from within; the other, invisible and inexplicable: the sudden realisation by Chisholm that this rather irritating matter in which he had become involved had a definite connection, and a vital one, with the cases of nervous disorder which his friend Dr. Starke had under observation. And so it was with that impulsive spontaneity that sometimes overcomes all barriers, that he entered the curio shop in the presence of two policemen and came upon the dead body of Louis Bruhm lying at the foot of the stairs in the strong-room. A broken neck, caused by his fall, seemed the obvious cause of death. An empty safe stood open in the wall to the left of the stairs. Chisholm recognized it as a Hummel-Sauvage recess-safe of foreign manufacture, little used in England. While the police were busy taking notes, Chisholm quickly took out a pocket handkerchief, and, placing it over the catch recess-slide, released it. Inside lay a slight brown-covered notebook which he slipped into his pocket. Why he had engaged in so risky a procedure he was unable to explain, but a face haunted with fear, a face that had come to have some meaning for him, appeared to his inner vision, its eyes prompting by the intensity of their expression, the action he had just performed, quite unnoticed by the policemen, who now waited for him to precede them up the stairs and out of the shop. They smiled courteously, as if obliged to him for some courteous service.

Chisholm's imagination had enabled him to see more than the apparent. And so it was in the case of Louis Bruhm's death, to which the police gave no further attention, its circumstances being

devoid of any of the features normally associated with foul play. Even the vacuity of the safe did not stimulate a query in minds conditioned to observe only positive facts, and these were lacking precisely because Louis Bruhm had indeed fallen down the stairs and broken his neck.

But Paul Chisholm sensed a very different state of affairs, one which the law could in no way discover owing to a total ignorance of its existence.

To be continued.

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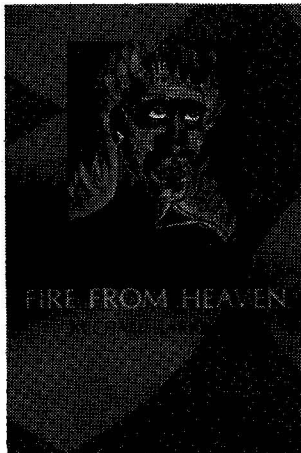
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