



kult ov kaos

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Contents

Nietzschean Nonlinear Economics? By Ben Goertzel

The Walls of Heaven By Richard Stanley

Mog Protocol By Frater Drench

Inside The LC: The Strange but Mostly True Story of Laurel Canyon and the Birth of the Hippie Generation

Part III By Dave McGowan

Interview with KatieJane Garside of Ruby Throat By Saint Natas

i am at lukla airport By KatieJane Garside

Calling Demons into a Glass of Water! By David Rankine

ANARCHISM By Emma Goldman

Go With the Flow - But Be Ready for Surprises on the Way by Jeff Atkins

The Holy Guardian Angel: Exploring the Sacred Magick of Abramelin the Mage

By Aaron Leitch

Interview with Shou Wang and Shenggy of White By Saint Natas

Was Cagliostro A 'Charlatan'? By H. P. Blavatsky

Wasted My Life (A letter from prison) By Joseph R. Gerken I

Stellar Magic By Payam Nabarz

Nietzschean Nonlinear Economics?

By Ben Goertzel

I was thinking a little more about the current economic situation and why it seems so confusing to people, including experts.

Part of the problem is just that the systems involved are so complex, of course -- the economy has complexified and the human brain has not kept up.

Another part of the problem, though, is that none of the traditional economic theories (neither the mathematical ones or the qualitative ones) embrace this complexity *in principle*.

I.e., the very *fact* of the increased complexity of the economy has direct implications, which seem to require introduction of new approaches for economic analysis.

One way to look at this is in terms of what I semi-seriously call "Nietzschean economics," where a more abstract notion of economic power replaces the traditional notion of money.

Put simply: it seems that the modern economy has somewhat obsoleted the concept of *money*, which has economists (and many others) confused...

For instance, China has a lot of US dollars right now, in principle ... but they can't really spend most of it, because if they traded their dollars for goods on the open international market, then the dollar would collapse in the international currency markets, the US economy would tank, demand for Chinese goods would collapse, and China would risk massive internal unrest etc.

It's not exactly that the Chinese government has money they can't use; but they have money that comes with severe restrictions on the ways it can be used. Having this money confers great economic power on them; but, this economic power can't necessarily be used in the traditional manner of buying stuff.

In general: with the world so interconnected, the notion of a unit of currency as being something that can be exchanged for a certain amount of stuff, anywhere, doesn't really apply...

More complexly, the same sorta phenomenon applies among and within investment banks and other financial institutions. E.g. a large bank holds some portfolio of financial instruments ... but if they sell a lot of one kind of instrument, this impacts the markets in a way that affects the value of the others, etc. So one can hardly assign each instrument they hold a value independently of the others.... The values of their various portfolio items are interdependent in

the manner of a system of simultaneous nonlinear equations.

What this growing, rampant interdependence means is that the traditional concepts and tools of economics don't closely apply to the international biz/finance world anymore...

A lot of this was foreseen, on a qualitative level, in Galbraith's book "Economics and the Public Purpose" from the 1970s ... he talked about the "market economy" versus the "technostructure" and pointed out that the latter (being a complex of large corporations, governments and other institutions) follows quite different rules.

Well, now the nonlinear dynamics of the technostructure is running rampant -- but economists are still mainly studying it with tools designed for studying markets.

One step I think that needs to be taken, on the theory level, is to view actual buying power as Level 1 of a hierarchy of types of economic power. I'm thinking of:

- *Level 1 = power to buy goods or services [right now, or at some future point(s) in time]*
- *Level 2 = power to influence others' Level 1 power*
- *Level 3 = power to influence others' Level 2 power*
- *.. etc. ...*

In principle, one could boil down Level k power into Level 1 power. But in practice, with the economy so complex, this involves calculations that are infeasible to do. So, economic agents are in effect seeking Level k power without a clear picture of how it will in the future boil down into Level 1 power. This might be thought of as Nietzschean economics (as Nietzsche viewed the "will to power" as the essential dynamic of the universe).

The ultimate extreme of all this of course would be

- *Level infinity = power to influence others' Level infinity power*

which was basically Nietzsche's view of the driving force of the universe ... and I do think that international economics and politics boils down to this sometimes: power for its own sake, rather than being tied to ultimately influencing the acquisition of goods and services.

Traditional economics is based on the notion that everything boils down to buying power ... but in a world where *no one is smart enough to calculate what their decisions will imply in terms of buying power*, this sort of economics seems to have limited applicability...

What we need is a nice, elegant, pragmatically applicable theory of the nonlinear dynamics of Level k economic power under conditions where

- the computational complexity of recognizing important high-level patterns in an economy

vastly exceeds

- the computational capability of even the smartest individual participants in the economy

This might be a fun thing to work on, but I've got a thinking machine to build, so hopefully somebody else will do it ... or we'll have to wait for the AI to solve the problem. (Of course, an appropriately constructed AI could also palliate the problem, due to having increased capability to recognize economic patterns, either due to possessing greater-than-human general intelligence, or due to combining human-level general intelligence with specialized capabilities for economic analysis.)

The Walls of Heaven

By Richard Stanley

Mora (1963, 436-438) writes that tarantism and dance manias used rituals as psychotherapeutic attempts to cope with either individual or societal maladjustments which fostered mental disturbances. *Henry Swinburne*, who traveled to the 'country of the tarantula' in the 1770's, was one of the first and only foreign observers to hint at the true character of the phenomenon. He concluded that the tarantella was probably a form of pagan bacchanalia, a flight from the toils of agrarian life, that now operated 'under cover' of the Spider and devotion to St. Paul (Melechi, A. University of York, 2005). Sigerist held a similar view. An abnormal psychology text written by *Robert Carson* of Duke University and his colleagues (1998, 37) cites Sigerist to support the view that St. Vitus's dance and tarantism were similar to ancient Greek orgiastic rites which had been outlawed by Christian authorities, but were secretly practiced anyway. While still only a wild hypothesis, that anonymous text in the Benedictine library hinted at the existence of a pagan shrine on the mountain of Montserrat in southern Catalonia consecrated to Venus.

The name of the route we took from the upper station, St. Michael's path (Rifa, M. Montserrat Official Guidetext, 1998) would tend to confirm this, suggesting aggressive Christianization. I was starting to seriously doubt the icon had simply been abandoned on the mountain by that 'fleeing gothic bishop' - conveniently fingered in the church's official account. She had been here all along, since before the Christian faith existed and despite the Roman Church's every attempt to bring her under the yoke of their patriarchal dogma, she was still here in the heart of a web spun over countless generations, at the heart of her holy mountain reigning in undisputed dominion over an invisible empire.

Quite possibly the original icon rested in the locked chapel before us and the one on display in the basilica was the replica rather than it being the other way round as some would have it. Equally plausibly the sepulchral chamber, in which we now stood, might have the original site of her worship, rather than the somewhat shallower (barely an overhang!) grotto indicated by the guidebooks, indicating Her kinship with Kybele / Kubaba / Magna Mater / Meter Orië (mountain mother), the goddess of caves and caverns, who was worshipped on mountaintops and deep within the lightless hollows of the living earth long before there were words or language to tell of it.

As with Baptists touched by the Holy Ghost, the devout Mexican Catholics in the presence of the Virgin of Guadalupe, or the Haitian Voodooists at Saut d'Eau during the feast of the Virgin of Mount Carmel, it is not hard to imagine the primal state of ecstasy that might have gripped Her followers in the proximity of the original icon, in the 'Pla de les Tarantules' - 'the place of the dancers'...

Modern historians assume that these "secret gatherings... probably led to considerable guilt and conflict", which triggered collective hysterical disorders. Dance frenzies appeared most often during periods of crop failures, drought and social upheaval, leading *Rosen* (1968) to conclude that this stress triggered the hysteria, prompting desperate attempts at divine intervention through

ritualized dancing, and often producing trance and possession states. Many symptoms associated with tarantism are consistent with sleep deprivation, excessive alcohol consumption, emotional excitement and prolonged physical activity. A German chronicle reports that during a dance frenzy at Strasbourg in 1418, "many of them went without food for days and nights" (Rust 1969, 20).

Viewed with the eyes of faith, however, it is a different matter. I put it to you, my brothers, that these episodes were not 'spontaneous', but highly structured and involved unfamiliar quasi-Lovecraftian sects engaging in strange customs and religious practises, that were defined as behavioral abnormality only by those who were incapable or unwilling to see any sense or value in their actions. 'Gibberish' as opposed to 'algebra', you could say.

The ringleaders of this merry mayhem did not reside in the principalities in which the epidemics occurred, but hailed from other territories, traveling through various Christian and Muslim communities as they sought out shrines and graveyards to perform in.

The largest and best documented dance plague, that of 1374 involving throngs of "dancers" in Germany and Holland, was precipitated by "pilgrims", who traveled, according to *Beka's* chronicle, "from Bohemia, but also from Hungary, Poland, Carinthia, Austria, and Germany. Great hosts from the Netherlands and France joined them" (Backman 1952, 331).

Radulphus de Rivo's chronicle **Decani Tongrensis** states that "in their songs they uttered the names of devils never before heard of... this strange sect." *Petrus de Herenthal* writes in **Vita Gregorii XI**: "There came to Aachen... a curious sect." **The Chronicon Belgicum Magnum** describes the participants as "a sect of dancers". The chronicle of *C. Browerus* (**Abtiquitatum et Annalium Trevirensium**) states: "They indulged in disgraceful immodesty, for many women, during this shameless dance and mock-bridal singing, bared their bosoms, while others of their own accord offered their virtue" (290).

The chronicles would seem to indicate on closer reading that these 'hysterical disorders' or 'outbreaks' were in fact highly structured displays of worship, that occasionally attracted locals. *Radulpho* states, "persons of both sexes, possessed by devils and half naked, set wreathes on their heads, and began their dances"; *Johannes de Beka's* **Canonicus Ultrajectinus et Heda, Wilhelmus, Praepositus Arnhemensis: De Episcopis Ultraiectinis, Recogniti**, states that in 1385, "there spread along the Rhine... a strange plague... whereby persons of both sexes, in great crowds... danced and sang, both inside and outside of churches, till they were so weary that they fell to the ground".

Far from being a random unprovoked eruption of repressed sexual energy, the epidemic seems to have been deliberately spread by the cult's strolling players, the original Pandaemonium Carnival in all its motley glory. This is evident in a first-hand account recorded on September 11, 1374, by *Jean d'Outremeuse* in his chronicle **La Geste de Liege**, who states that "there came from the north to Liege... a company of persons who all danced continually. They were linked with brightly coloured clothes, and they jumped and leaped and fiercely clapped their hands."

Whether this 'white Voodoo' hailed from Africa, the East, or if its roots sprang from the shamanic ur-religion of our cro-magnon ancestors is impossible to tell with any clarity from the available texts and perhaps impossible to ever truly know. That its characteristics are seemingly identical in many respects with the secret traditions of the Haitian Bizango and Makanda societies is beyond question. The Voodoo societies trace their roots back to Guinea, Benin and places south, but also incorporate aspects of western esoteric mysticism such as the pentagram and the Masonic notion of the 'Great Architect'. The standard textbook definition of Voodoo (which simply means 'faith' in local parlance, a broad church by any standards) as essentially an Afro-Caribbean tradition brought over by the slave trade and over written with the images of Christian saints as a result of their forced Christianization doesn't even begin to cover all the bases.

Medical historian *Jean Russell* states that taranti would typically commence dancing at sunrise, stop during midday to sleep and sweat, then bathe before the resumption of dancing until evening, when they would again sleep and sweat, consume a light meal, then sleep until sunrise. A pattern immediately familiar to anyone who has witnessed the great annual Voodoo festivals of Souvenance, Saut d'Eau, Plain du Nord or Soukri, in which this ritual is usually repeated over four or five days, and sometimes for weeks on end, requiring a degree of organization and crowd control that would put Glastonbury to shame. German magistrates contracted musicians to play for participants and even serve as dancing companions. The latter were intended to reduce injuries and mischief during the procession to the St. Vitus chapel (Hecker 1970 [1837], 4). Hecker states that the dancing mania was a "half-heathen, half-Christian festival", which incorporated into the festival of St. John's day as early as the fourth century, "the kindling of the 'Nodfyr,' which was forbidden by St. Boniface".

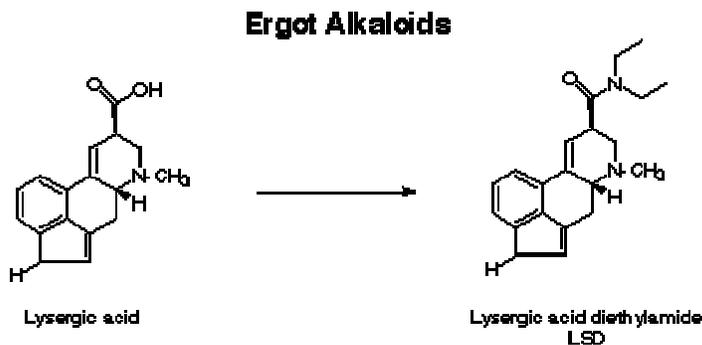
This ritual involved the leaping through smoke or flames, which was believed to protect participants from various diseases over the ensuing year. A central feature of the dance frenzy was leaping or jumping continuously for up to several hours through what they claimed were invisible fires, until collapsing in exhaustion.

This has echoes not only of Zoroasterism but of the original pagan folk traditions of Central Asia, suppressed by Islam but still practiced in parts of Afghanistan and Northern Iran to celebrate 'Noruz', the Muslim New Year. Coins and sweets are given out so that one might start the year with a sweet taste in one's mouth and participants make wishes by secretly tying knots in blades of grass before jumping over a bonfire while chanting what roughly translates as: "I give you my yellow and take your red" (ie: I get rid of all the crap in my life and take on the energy of the fire). Sometimes a fish, herbs or an egg are placed on the fire as an offering, the painted egg possibly the pagan origin of our modern Easter egg.

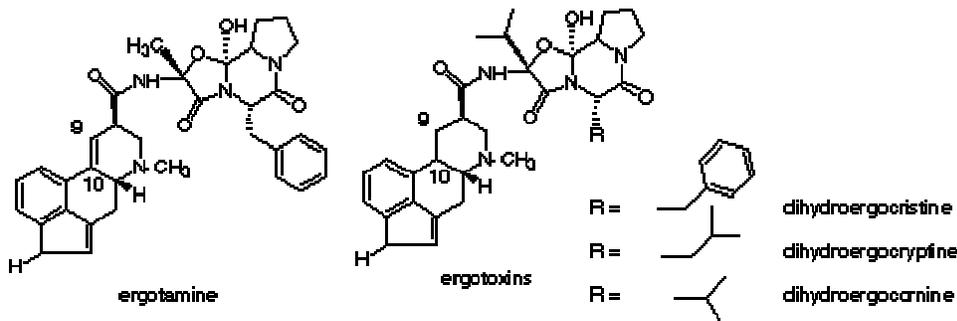
Not only were episodes scripted and directed by the ring leaders, but as the dance processions were swollen by spectators so the festivals began to take on the typical characteristics of any great rock event, a chaotic, swirling life of its own, the crowd including children searching for parents who were among the dancers, and vice versa (Haggard 1934, 187). Some onlookers were threatened with harm for refusing to dance (Backman 1952, 147). While many took part out of loneliness and carnal pleasure, others were curious or sought exhilaration (Rust 1969, 22). Hecker remarks that "numerous beggars, stimulated by vice and misery, availed themselves of

this new complaint to gain a temporary livelihood", while gangs of vagabonds imitated the dance, roving "from place to place seeking maintenance and adventures". Essentially stealing your cameras and credit cards from the tents while you were out thrashing to Gogol Bordello or was it Iggy and the Stooges (*see 'Twilight of the Brits')?

Ergot poisoning (pronounced "er-get") has been blamed by the more mechanically minded (brother *Nikolai* among 'em) for the hallucinations and convulsions that accompanied the dance mania. Nicknamed St. Anthony's Fire, ergotism coincided with floods and wet growing seasons, which fostered the growth of the fungus *claviceps purpurea*, which thrives in damp conditions and forms on cultivated grains, especially rye.



Essentially homegrown LSD, but please don't try this at home - laboratories exist for a purpose! Like supercooling really helps if you don't want your arms and legs to drop off from self-induced gangrene.



Convulsive ergotism can cause funky behavior and perhaps even premature enlightenment, but chronic ergotism more commonly results in the loss of fingers and toes from gangrene, a feature not associated with dance manias (Donaldson et al. 1997, 203). Neither did outbreaks coincide with floods or wet growing or harvest periods. Quite the opposite. Tarantism was thought to occur only during July and August and was triggered by real or imaginary spider bites, hearing music, or seeing others dance and involved structured annual rituals.

Also, while rye was a key crop in central and northern Europe, it was uncommon in Spain and Italy. Quite possibly a few participants were hysterics, epileptics, mentally disturbed, or even delusional from ergot, as some holdouts stubbornly insist, but the large percentage of the

populations affected, and the circumstances and timing of outbreaks, suggests otherwise. Episodes were pandemic, meaning that they occurred across a wide area and affected a very high proportion of the population (Lidz 1963, 822; Millon and Millon 1974, 22). Besides if the 'Tarantula Cult' drew the emotionally disturbed, the unstable and those suffering from poisoning or other physiological disorders, it was because they sought the strange piping music as the cure rather than the cause of their symptoms. "As there is scarce a disease to which the body is subject but what they think proceeds from the bite of the tarantula, this method of cure is practiced and with so much success that it seems miraculous and is esteemed the effect of the music" (Turnbull, H. Report to the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh, 1771).

'Miraculous' events of this order were as much of an affront to Enlightenment philosophy as is evidence that would tend to support the defacto existence of magic and alchemy to clinical psychiatry and medicine today. In fact, modern psychiatrists and orthodox social historians routinely classify 'tarantism' as a form of hysteria due to its 'psychological' character and often erroneously claim those affected were mostly female (Sigerist 1943, 218; Rosen 1968, 204). This typically sublimated Freudian patriarchal cognicentricity in the guise of so-called 'rational thought' informs our view of the 'medieval' period and its attendant phenomena, best illustrated by the seemingly endless series of 'nunsploitation' movies kicked off by the breakthrough success of *Ken Russell's [The Devils](#)* (1971).

Based on *Huxley's **The Devils of Loudon***, Russell's modish misreading of the possession phenomenon wraps its misogyny in the crushed velvet cloak of pop psychology. Male supremacy is reasserted through the notion that all the witchy 'freaking out' (if not all 'religion' in toto) is a symptom of female sexual hysteria, that could probably be put right by healthy recourse to a bit of the ol' in-out in-out with a 'real man' like *Ollie Reed*.

The slew of imitations that followed in its wake include such 'gems' as *Walerian Boroczky's [Behind Convent Walls](#)* (1977), *Joe D'Amato's [The Nuns of Saint Archangel](#)* (1973) and *Bruno Mattei's [The Other Hell](#)* (1980), originally titled **L'Altro Inferno** or **The Other Inferno**, in a gloriously misguided attempt to pass itself off as a semi-sequel to *Argento's* own **Suspiria** sequel (sadly Bruno passed over while this blog was still in the pipeline. Lest we forget...).

Listing the titles of these potboilers alone would require more patience than I have, let alone sitting down to review them, but of **The Devils'** spawn one title stands out as a workable compendium of the sub-genre's pathological underpinnings: *[Flavia the Heretic](#)* (*Gianfranco Mingozzi*, 1974), aka **Flavia - High Priestess of Violence!**, aka **Flavia The Muslim Nun**, aka **The Rebel Nun**.

Set in 15th century Italy, the pic concerns a suitably 'frustrated' nun played by *Florinda Bolkan* (star of *[Don't Torture a Duckling!](#)* and *[Lizard in a Woman's Skin](#)*) incarcerated in a Byzantine monastery decorated with images of Saint Michael. She finds temptation not in the form of Ollie but in the unlikely Jewish scribe come handyman, Abraham, played by hunky *Claudio Cassinelli* (*[The Scorpion with Two Tails](#)*), leading to the usual series of visions and her defection to the Muslim cause. Along the way a naked nun emerges from the carcass of a dead cow, people get impaled and Flavia is eventually tied to a tree and skinned alive for her sins by the resurgent Christians thus restoring patriarchal order to the community. The demented pot pourri of elements

includes the arrival of a black Madonna by boat as a cover for a Muslim sneak attack on unsuspecting Europeans and the appearance of the only 'Tarantula Cult' ever to have been named as such on screen.

And what of the real life Tarantula Cult? What are we to make of it on the basis of the available evidence?

An examination of a representative sample of medieval chronicles would tend to indicate the so-called 'medieval dancing epidemics' were in fact the work of a heretical or openly pagan sect, that briefly gained a mass following as its adherents made pilgrimages through Europe during years of turmoil. The symptoms (visions, fainting, tremors) are predictable for any large population engaged in prolonged dancing, emotional worship, and fasting. Their actions have been "mistranslated" by contemporary scholars evaluating the participants' behavior at a remove from its original cultural and temporal context and either unwilling or unable to deal with the possibility of the 'supernatural' existing in the first place, let alone playing an active or causative role in human affairs...

Mog Protocol

By Frater Drench

Henceforth, a mog is a magickal blog. Here, then, are some non-standard standards for mogs.

Since our magickz are results-oriented, our mogs should be results-oriented. There is room enough for feelings and speculations and what we ate for lunch--indeed, sometimes these are the very results we seek--but we should be as clear as possible about what has been achieved.

We should be as detailed as possible in our descriptions. Most of us type fast. We also have searchability. There is no flipping through pages of a mog looking for something. We should take advantage of this by giving our readers, including ourselves, as much detail as possible, especially since seemingly irrelevant details sometimes reassert themselves. In my experience, the weather can be very important, as can diet, mood, and interruptions. Just remember not to leave results out.

To be useful, our mogs should be honest. The wisest advice I've found about honesty came from a Noam Chomsky lecture. He said that most people lie all the time, and the way they do it and still sleep at night is by first convincing themselves that the lie is true. Even so, in my experience, the scientific method as outlined in textbooks often has little to do with how results manifest, even for scientists striving to stick to it.

Consider big projects. Most of us expect to be around for several decades, so why not give ourselves longer than an afternoon to explore something? Dive into a paradigm for a longer time and mog away. See whether your mog changes you the way Julie Powell's blog, of Julie & Julia fame, changed her.

Invite feedback on your mog. But what about secrecy? Why make our magick public? Because we tend to be terrible at evaluating our own Work. Most folks think they're above-average drivers, and most of us think we're above-average magicians. Feedback stimulates us and helps us evolve. If the Work is sensitive, the technology exists to invite only those you trust to view your mog and comment on it, but you would be wise to include those most likely to disagree with you. Yes-men and yes-women won't help you nearly as much.

Inside The LC: The Strange but Mostly True Story of Laurel Canyon and the Birth of the Hippie Generation
Part III
May 13, 2008

By Dave McGowan

“I mean, fuck, he auditioned for Neil [Young] for fuck’s sake.”

Graham Nash, explaining to author Michael Walker how close Charlie Manson was to the Laurel Canyon scene.

During the ten-year period during which Bruce, Novarro, Mineo, Linkletter, Stevens, Tate, Sebring, Frykowski and Folger all turned up dead, a whole lot of other people connected to Laurel Canyon did as well, often under very questionable circumstances. The list includes, but is certainly not limited to, all of the following names:

- Marina Elizabeth Habe, whose body was carved up and tossed into the heavy brush along Mulholland Drive, just west of Bowmont Drive, on December 30, 1968. Habe, just seventeen at the time of her death, was the daughter of Hans Habe, who emigrated to the U.S. from fascist Austria *circa* 1940. Shortly thereafter, he married a General Foods heiress and began studying psychological warfare at the Military Intelligence Training Center. After completing his training, he put his psychological warfare skills to use by creating 18 newspapers in occupied Germany – under the direction, no doubt, of the OSS.
- Christine Hinton, who was killed in a head-on collision on September 30, 1969. At the time, Hinton was a girlfriend of David Crosby and the founder and head of The Byrd’s fan club. She was also the daughter of a career Army officer stationed at the notorious Presidio military base in San Francisco. Another of Crosby’s girlfriends from that same era was Shelley Roecker, who grew up on the Hamilton Air Force Base in Marin County.
- Jane Doe #59, found dumped into the heavy undergrowth of Laurel Canyon in November 1969, within sight of where Habe had been dumped less than a year earlier. The teenage girl, who was never identified, had been stabbed 157 times in the chest and throat.
- Alan “Blind Owl” Wilson, singer, songwriter and guitarist for the Laurel Canyon blues-rock band, Canned Heat, was found dead in his Topanga Canyon home on September 3, 1970. His death was written off as a suicide/OD. Wilson had moved to Topanga Canyon after the band’s Laurel Canyon home – on Lookout Mountain Avenue, next door to Joni Mitchell and Graham Nash’s home – burned to the ground. “Blind Owl” was just twenty-seven years old at the time of his death. A little more than a decade later, Wilson’s former bandmate, Bob “The Bear” Hite, who had once acknowledged in an interview that he had partied in the canyons with various members of the Manson Family, died of a heart attack at the ripe old age of 36.
- Jimi Hendrix, who reportedly briefly occupied the sprawling mansion just north of the Log Cabin after he moved to LA in 1968, died in London under seriously questionable circumstances on

September 18, 1970. Though he rarely spoke of it, Jimi had served a stint in the U.S. Army with the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell. His official records indicate that he was forced into the service by the courts and then released after just one year when he purportedly proved to be a poor soldier. One wonders though why he was assigned to such an elite division if he was indeed such a failure. One also wonders why he wasn't subjected to disciplinary measures rather than being handed a free pass out of his ostensibly court-ordered service. In any event, Jimi himself once told reporters that he was given a medical discharge after breaking an ankle during a parachute jump. And one biographer has claimed that Jimi faked being gay to earn an early release. The truth, alas, remains rather elusive. At the time of Jimi's death, the first person called by his girlfriend – Monika Danneman, who was the last to see Hendrix alive – was Eric Burden of the Animals. Two years earlier, Burden had relocated to LA and taken over ringmaster duties from Frank Zappa after Zappa had vacated the Log Cabin and moved into a less high-profile Laurel Canyon home. Within a year of Jimi's death, an underage prostitute named Devon Wilson who had been with Jimi the day before his death, plunged from an eighth-floor window of New York's Chelsea Hotel. On March 5, 1973, a shadowy character named Michael Jeffery, who had managed both Hendrix and Burden, was killed in a mid-air plane collision. Jeffery was known to openly boast of having organized crime connections and of working for the CIA. After Jimi's death, it was discovered that Jeffery had been funneling most of Hendrix's gross earnings into offshore accounts in the Bahamas linked to international drug trafficking. Years later, on April 5, 1996, Danneman, the daughter of a wealthy German industrialist, was found dead near her home in a fume-filled Mercedes.

- Jim Morrison, who for a time lived in a home on Rothdell Trail, behind the Laurel Canyon Country Store, may or may not have died in Paris on July 3, 1971. The events of that day remain shrouded in mystery and rumor, and the details of the story, such as they are, have changed over the years. What is known is that, on that very same day, Admiral George Stephen Morrison delivered the keynote speech at a decommissioning ceremony for the aircraft carrier *USS Bon Homme Richard*, from where, seven years earlier, he had helped choreograph the Tonkin Gulf Incident. A few years after Jim's death, his common-law wife, Pamela Courson, dropped dead as well, officially of a heroin overdose. Like Hendrix, Morrison had been an avid student of the occult, with a particular fondness for the work of Aleister Crowley. According to super-groupie Pamela DesBarres, he had also "read all he could about incest and sadism." Also like Hendrix, Morrison was just twenty-seven at the time of his (possible) death.
- Brandon DeWilde, a good friend of David Crosby and Gram Parsons, was killed in a freak accident in Colorado on July 6, 1972, when his van plowed under a flatbed truck. In the 1950s, DeWilde had been an in-demand child actor since the age of eight. He had appeared on screen with some of the biggest names in Hollywood, including Alan Ladd, Lee Marvin, Paul Newman, John Wayne, Kirk Douglas and Henry Fonda. Around 1965, DeWilde fell in with Hollywood's 'Young Turks,' through whom he met and befriended Crosby, Parsons, and various other members of the Laurel Canyon Club. DeWilde was just thirty at the time of his death.
- Christine Frka, a former governess for Moon Unit Zappa and the Zappa family's former housekeeper at the Log Cabin, died on November 5, 1972 of an alleged drug overdose, though friends suspected foul play. As "Miss Christine," Frka had been a member of the Zappa-created GTOs, a musical act, of sorts, composed entirely of very young groupies. She was also the inspiration for the song, "Christine's Tune: Devil in Disguise" by Gram Parson's Flying Burrito Brothers. Frka was probably in her early twenties when she died, possibly even younger.
- Danny Whitten, a guitarist/vocalist/songwriter with Neil Young's sometime band, Crazy Horse, died of an overdose on November 18, 1972. According to rock 'n' roll legend, Whitten had been fired by Young earlier that day during rehearsals in San Francisco. Young and Jack Nietzsche, Phil Spector's former top assistant, had given Whitten \$50 and put him on a plane back to LA. Within hours, he was dead. Whitten was just twenty-nine.

- Bruce Berry, a roadie for Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, died of a heroin overdose in June 1973. Berry had just flown out to Maui to deliver a shipment of cocaine to Stephen Stills, and was promptly sent back to LA by Crosby and Nash. Berry was a brother of Jan Berry, of Jan and Dean. (Dean Torrence, the “Dean” of Jan and Dean, had played a part in the fake kidnapping of Frank Sinatra, Jr., just after the JFK assassination. The staged event was a particularly lame effort to divert attention away from the questions that were cropping up, after the initial shock had passed, about the events in Dealey Plaza.)
- Clarence White, a guitarist who had played with The Byrds, was run over by a drunk driver and killed on July 14, 1973. White had grown up near Lancaster, not far from where Frank Zappa spent his teen years. At least one member of White’s immediate family was employed at Edwards Air Force Base. The driver who killed young Clarence, just twenty-nine years old at the time of his death, was given a one-year suspended sentence and served no time.
- Gram Parsons, formerly with the International Submarine Band, The Byrds and the Flying Burrito Brothers, allegedly overdosed on a speedball at the Joshua Tree Inn on September 19, 1973. Just two months before his death, Parson’s Topanga Canyon home had burnt to the ground. After his death, his body was stolen from LAX by the Burrito’s road manager, Phil Kaufman, and then taken back out to Joshua Tree and ritually burned on the autumnal equinox (Kaufman had been a prison buddy of Charlie Manson’s at Terminal Island; when Phil was released from Terminal Island in March of 1968, he quickly reunited with his old pal, who had been released a year earlier.) By the time of Gram’s death, his family had already experienced its share of questionable deaths. Just before Christmas, 1958, Parson’s father had sent Gram, along with his mother and sister, off to stay with family in Florida. The next day, just after the winter solstice, “Coon Dog” caught a bullet to the head. His death was recorded as a suicide and it was claimed that he had sent his family away to spare them as much pain as possible. It seems just as likely, however, that “Coon Dog” knew his days were numbered and wanted to get his family out of the line of fire. The next year, 1959, Gram’s mother married again, to Robert Ellis Parsons, who adopted Gram and his sister Avis. Six years later, in June of 1965, Gram’s mother died the day after a sudden illness landed her in the hospital. According to witnesses, she died “almost immediately” after a visit from her husband, Robert Parsons. Many of those close to the situation believed that Parsons had a hand in her death (very shortly thereafter, Robert Parsons married his stepdaughter’s teenage babysitter). Following his mother’s death, Parsons briefly attended Harvard University, and then launched his music career with the formation of the International Submarine Band, which quickly found its way to – where else? – Laurel Canyon. Gram’s death in 1973 at the age of 26 left his younger sister Avis as the sole surviving member of the family. She was killed in 1993, reportedly in a boating accident, at the age of 43.
- “Mama” Cass Elliot, the “Earth Mother” of Laurel Canyon whose circle of friends included musicians, Mansonites, young Hollywood stars, the wealthy son of a State Department official, singer/songwriters, assorted drug dealers, and some particularly unsavory characters the LAPD once described as “some kind of hit squad,” died in the London home of Harry Nilsson on July 29, 1974 (Nilsson had been a frequent drinking buddy of John Lennon in Laurel Canyon and on the Sunset Strip). At thirty-two, Cass had lived a long and productive life, by Laurel Canyon standards. Four years later, in the very same room of the very same London flat, still owned by Harry Nilsson, Keith Moon of The Who also died at thirty-two (on September 7, 1978). Though initial press reports held that Cass had choked to death on a ham sandwich, the official cause of death was listed as heart failure. Her actual cause of death could likely be filed under “knowing where too many of the bodies were buried.” Moon reportedly died from a massive overdose of a drug used to treat alcohol withdrawal. Like Cass, Moon had at one time been a resident of Laurel Canyon.
- Amy Gossage, Graham Nash’s girlfriend at the time, was murdered in her San Francisco home on February 13, 1975. Just twenty years old at the time, she had been stabbed nearly fifty times and was bludgeoned beyond recognition. Amy’s father, a famed advertising/PR executive, had died of

leukemia in 1969. Not long after, her half-sister had been killed in a car crash. In May of 1974, her mother, the daughter of a wealthy banking family, died as well, reportedly of cirrhosis of the liver. That left just Amy, age 19, and her brother Eben, age 20, both of whom reportedly had serious drug dependencies. Amy's brutal murder, cleverly enough, was pinned on Eben. Police had conveniently found bloodstained clothes, along with a hammer and scissors, sitting on the porch of Eben's apartment, looking very much as though it had been planted. A friend of Eben's would later remark, perhaps quite tellingly, "If Eben did kill her, I'm convinced he doesn't know he did it."

- Tim Buckley, a singer/songwriter signed to Frank Zappa's record label and managed by Herb Cohen, died of a reported overdose on June 29, 1975. Buckley had once appeared on an episode of The Monkees, and, like Monkee Peter Tork (and so many others in this story), he hailed from Washington, DC. Buckley was just twenty-eight at the time of his death. His son, Jeff Buckley, also an accomplished musician, managed to remain on this planet two years longer than his dad did; he was thirty when he died in a bizarre drowning incident on May 29, 1997.
- Phyllis Major Browne, wife of singer/songwriter Jackson Browne, reportedly overdosed on barbiturates on March 25, 1976. Her death was – you all should know the words to this song by now – ruled a suicide. She was just thirty years old.

There are a few other curious deaths we could add here as well, though they were only indirectly related to the Laurel Canyon scene. Nevertheless, they deserve an honorable mention, especially the Bobby Fuller and Phil Ochs entries; the former because it is a rather extraordinary example of the exemplary work done by the LAPD, and the latter because it just may contain a key to understanding the Laurel Canyon phenomenon:

- Bobby Fuller, singer/songwriter/guitarist for the Bobby Fuller Four, was found dead in his car near Grauman's Chinese Theater on July 18, 1966, after being lured away from his home by a mysterious 2:00-3:00 AM phone call of unknown origin. Fuller is best known for penning the hit song "I Fought the Law," which had just hit the charts when he supposedly committed suicide at the age of twenty-three. There were multiple cuts and bruises on his face, chest and shoulders, dried blood around his mouth, and a hairline fracture to his right hand. He had been thoroughly doused with gasoline, including in his mouth and throat. The inside of the car was doused as well, and an open book of matches lay on the seat. It was perfectly obvious that Fuller's killer (or killers) had planned to torch the car, destroying all evidence, but likely got scared away. The LAPD, nevertheless, ruled Fuller's death a suicide – despite the coroner's conclusion that the gas had been poured after Bobby's death. Police later decided that it wasn't a suicide after all, but rather an accident. They didn't bother to explain how Fuller had accidentally doused himself with gasoline after accidentally killing himself. At the time of his death, one of Fuller's closest confidants was a prostitute named Melody who worked at PJ's nightclub, where Bobby frequently played. The club was co-owned by Eddie Nash, who would, many years later, orchestrate the Wonderland massacre. A few years after Bobby's death, his brother and bass player, Randy Fuller, teamed up with drummer Dewey Martin, formerly of Buffalo Springfield.
- Gary Hinman, a musician, music teacher, and part-time chemist, was brutally murdered in his Topanga Canyon home on July 27, 1969. Convicted of his murder was Mansonite Bobby Beausoleil, who had played rhythm guitar in a local band known as the Grass Roots. To avoid confusion with the more famous band already using that name, the Laurel Canyon band changed its name to Love. Beausoleil would claim that the band's new name was inspired by his own nickname, Cupid.
- Janis Joplin, vocalist extraordinaire, was found dead of a heroin overdose on October 4, 1970 at the Landmark Hotel, about a mile east of the mouth of Laurel Canyon, where she occasionally visited. Indications were that she had taken or been given a "hot shot," many times stronger than standard street heroin. Joplin's father, by the way, was a petroleum engineer for Texaco. And

though it might normally seem an odd coupling, it somehow seems perfectly natural, in the context of this story, that Janis once dated that great crusader in the war on all things immoral, William Bennett. Like Morrison and Hendrix, Joplin died at the age of twenty-seven.

- Duane Allman and Berry Oakley, lead guitarist and bass player for the Allman Brothers, were killed in freakishly similar motorcycle crashes on October 29, 1971 and November 11, 1972. Allman was the son of Willis Allman, a US Army Sergeant who had been murdered by another soldier near Norfolk, Virginia (home of the world's largest naval installation) on December 26, 1949. In 1967, Duane and his younger brother, Gregg, then billing themselves as The Allman Joys, ventured out to Los Angeles. While there, Gregg auditioned for and was almost signed by the Laurel Canyon band Poco, which featured Buffalo Springfield alumni Richie Furay and Jim Messina, as well as future Eagle Randy Meisner. Duane was killed when a truck turned in front of his motorcycle at an intersection and inexplicably stopped. Just over a year later, Oakley had a similar run-in with a bus, just three blocks from where Allman had been killed. Following the crash, Berry had dusted himself off and declined medical attention, insisting that he was okay. Three hours later, he was rushed to the hospital, where he died. Both Oakley and Allman were just twenty-four years old.
- Phil Ochs, folk singer/songwriter and political activist, was found hanged in his sister's home in Far Rockaway, New York on April 9, 1976. Throughout his life, Ochs was one of the most overtly political of the 1960s rock and folk music stars. A regular attendee at anti-war, civil rights, and labor rallies, Ochs appeared to be, at all times, an unwavering political leftist (he named his first band The Singing Socialists). That all changed, however, and rather dramatically, in the months before his death. Born in El Paso, Texas on December 19, 1940, Phil and his family moved frequently during the first few years of his life. His father, Dr. Jacob Ochs, had been drafted by the US Army and assigned to various military hospitals in New York, New Mexico and Texas. In 1943, Dr. Ochs was shipped overseas, returning two years later with a medical discharge. Upon his return, he was immediately institutionalized and didn't return to his family for another two years. During that time, he was subjected to every 'treatment' imaginable, including electroshock 'therapy.' When he finally returned to his family, in 1947, he was but a shell of his former self, described by Phil's sister as "almost like a phantom." Beginning in the fall of 1956, Phil Ochs began attending Staunton Military Academy, the very same institution that future 'serial killer'/cult leader Gary Heidnik would attend just one year after Ochs graduated. During Phil's two years there, a friend and fellow band member was found swinging from the end of a rope (I probably don't need to add here that the death was ruled a suicide). Following graduation, Phil enrolled at Ohio State University, but not before, oddly enough, having a little plastic surgery done to alter his appearance (doing such things, needless to say, was rather uncommon in 1958). In early 1962, just months before his scheduled graduation, Ochs dropped out of college to pursue a career in music. By 1966, he had released three albums. In 1967, under the management of his brother, Michael Ochs, Phil moved out to Los Angeles. Michael had begun working the previous year as an assistant to Barry James, who maintained a party house at 8504 Ridpath in Laurel Canyon. In the early 1970s, with his career beginning to fade, Phil Ochs began to travel internationally, usually accompanied by vast quantities of booze and pills. Those travels included a visit to Chile, not long before the US-sponsored coup that toppled Salvador Allende. In early summer of 1975, Phil Ochs' public persona abruptly changed. Using the name John Butler Train, Ochs proclaimed himself to be a CIA operative and presented himself as a belligerent, right-wing thug. He told an interviewer that, "on the first day of summer 1975, Phil Ochs was murdered in the Chelsea Hotel by John Train ... For the good of societies, public and secret, he needed to be gotten rid of." That symbolic assassination, on the summer solstice, took place at the same hotel that Devon Wilson had flown out of a few years earlier. One of Ochs' biographers would later write that Phil/John "actually believed he was a member of the CIA." Also in those final months of his life, Ochs began compiling curious lists, with entries that clearly were references to US biological warfare research: "shellfish toxin, Fort Dietrich, cobra venom,

Chantilly Race Track, hollow silver dollars, New York Cornell Hospital ...” Many years before Ochs’ metamorphosis, in an interesting bit of foreshadowing, psychological warfare operative George Estabrooks explained how US intelligence agencies could create the perfect spy: “We start with an excellent subject ... we need a man or woman who is highly intelligent and physically tough. Then we start to develop a case of multiple personality through hypnotism. In his normal waking state, which we will call Personality A, or PA, this individual will become a rabid communist. He will join the party, follow the party line and make himself as objectionable as possible to the authorities. Note that he will be acting in good faith. He is a communist, or rather his PA is a communist and will behave as such. Then we develop Personality B (PB), the secondary personality, the unconscious personality, if you wish, although this is somewhat of a contradiction in terms. This personality is rabidly American and anti-communist. It has all the information possessed by PA, the normal personality, whereas PA does not have this advantage ... My super spy plays his role as a communist in his waking state, aggressively, consistently, fearlessly. But his PB is a loyal American, and PB has all the memories of PA. As a loyal American, he will not hesitate to divulge those memories.” Estabrooks never explained what would happen if the programming were to go haywire and Personality B were to become the conscious personality, but my guess is that such a person would be considered a severe liability and would be treated accordingly. They might even be find themselves swinging from the end of a rope. Phil Ochs was thirty-five at the time of his death.

And with that, I think we can move on now from the Laurel Canyon Death List. The list is not yet complete, mind you, since we have only covered the years 1966-1976. Rest assured then that we will continue to add names as we follow the various threads of this story. Some of those names will be quite familiar, while others will be significantly less so. One of the names from that era that has been all but forgotten is Judee Lynn Sill, who was once favorably compared to such other Laurel Canyon singer/songwriters as Joni Mitchell, Judi Collins and Carole King. By the time of her death on November 23, 1979, however, she had been all but forgotten, and not a single obituary was published to note her passing.

Judee was born in Studio City, California, not far from the northern entrance to Laurel Canyon, on October 7, 1944. Her father, Milford “Bud” Sill, was reportedly a cameraman for Paramount Studios with numerous Hollywood connections. When Judee was quite young, however, Bud moved the family to Oakland and opened a bar known as “Bud’s Bar.” He also operated a side business as an importer of rare animals, which required him to spend a considerable amount of time traveling in Central and South America. Such a business, it should be noted, would provide an ideal cover for covert intelligence work. In any event, Bud Sill was dead by 1952, when Judee was just seven or eight years old. Depending on who is telling the story, Bud died either from pneumonia or a heart attack.

Following Bud’s death, the family relocated back to Southern California and Judee’s older brother Dennis, still in his teens, took over the family importing business. That didn’t last long though as Dennis soon turned up dead down in Central America, either from a liver infection or a car accident. The animal importing business, I guess, is a rather dangerous one.

Judee's mother, Oneta, met and married Ken Muse, an Academy Award winning animator for Hanna-Barbera who was described by Judee as an abusive, violent alcoholic. At fifteen, Judee fled her violent home life and lived with an older man with whom she pulled off a series of armed robberies in the San Fernando Valley. Those activities landed her in reform school, which did little to curb her appetite for drugs, crime and alcohol. She spent the next few years with a serious heroin addiction, which she financed by dealing drugs and turning tricks in some of LA's seedier neighborhoods.

By 1963, Judee had cleaned herself up enough to enroll in junior college. In the early winter of 1965, however, Judee's mom, her last surviving family member, died either of cancer or of complications arising from her chronic alcoholism (take your pick; the details of this story will likely remain forever elusive). Barely an adult, Judee was left all alone in the world, and thus began another downward spiral into drugs and crime, which culminated in her being arrested and possibly serving time on forgery and drug charges.

In the late 1960s, with her addictions apparently temporarily curbed, Sill joined the Laurel Canyon scene, where she attempted to forge a career as a singer/songwriter. Her first big break came when she sold the song "Lady O" to The Turtles (yet another Laurel Canyon band to hit it big in the mid-1960s; best known for the hit single "Happy Together," The Turtles were led by lead vocalist/songwriter Howard Kaylan, who happened to be, small world that it is, a cousin of Frank Zappa's manager and business partner, Herb Cohen). The band released the song, which featured Judee's guitar work, in 1969. The next year, Sill became the first artist signed to David Geffen's fledgling Asylum record label. The year after that, her self-titled debut album became Asylum's first official release. The first single from the album, "Jesus Was a Crossmaker," was produced by Graham Nash, whom she opened for on tour following the album's release.

Though critically well-received, the album's sales were disappointing, in part because the record was overshadowed by the debut albums of Jackson Browne and The Eagles, both released by Asylum shortly after the release of Judee's album. Sill's second album, 1973's "Heart Food," was even more of a commercial disappointment. Nevertheless, in 1974 she began work on a third album in Monkee Mike Nesmith's recording studio. Prior to completion, however, she abandoned the project and promptly disappeared without a trace. What became of her between that time and her death some five years later remains largely a mystery. It is assumed that she once again descended into a life of drugs and prostitution, but no one seems to know for sure.

It is alleged that she was seriously injured when her car was rear-ended by actor Danny Kaye, causing her to suffer from chronic back pain thereafter, thus contributing to her drug addictions. According to a friend of hers, she lived in a home that featured an enormous photo of Bela Lugosi above the fireplace, a large ebony cross above her bed, and racks of candles. She is said to have read extensively from Rosicrucian manuscripts and from the writings of Aleister Crowley, to have possessed a complete collection of the work of Helena Blavatsky, and to have been a gifted tarot card reader.

What is known for sure is that, on the day after Thanksgiving, 1979, Judee Sill, the last surviving member of her family, was found dead in a North Hollywood apartment. The cause of death was listed as “acute cocaine and codeine intoxication.” It was claimed that a suicide note was found, but friends insisted that the supposed note was either a portion of a diary entry or an unfinished song. One of her friends would later note that, at some point in her life, Judee began to realize that “there was a part of her that wasn’t under her conscious control.” I’m guessing that Phil Ochs, and quite a few other characters in this story, could relate to that.

To Be Continued ...

Interview with KatieJane Garside of Ruby Throat

By Saint Natas

Saint Natas: Hi. Thanks for taking the time to do this interview with me. You have a new album out as Ruby Throat. The album is titled the Ventriloquist. It's a departure from your previous style. It seems to be such a hauntingly sweet album. What can you tell me about this new direction your music has taken?

KatieJane: for five very dark years i had been watching a family of swans, they were pivotal for me, a point of light in all weathers, i came by one day to find they had all been brutally murdered, body parts scattered down the river bank, a chapter had ended, five prostitutes were murdered in essex at the same time, their bodies dumped in rivers to corrupt the evidence

SN: How did Ruby Throat come to be?

KJ: not entirely sure, ruby came and found me, she insisted, i resisted and doubted her, i still do but she seduces me, draws me in and 'makes' me

SN: Chris Whittingham is a beautiful guitar player. The two of you seem to work well together. How does your relationship work musically?

KJ: two currents converge, the convergence has a velocity, power and life all its own, what's left of so called me is pulled along in the slipstream, he might agree with me something to that affect, i might have swallowed him

SN: Let's talk about a few of the tracks on the Ventriloquist album. The first one that comes to mind is John 3.16. It's a very long, powerful song, running 16 minutes. The title is a reference to the most quoted verse of the bible, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life". What are your meaning and intentions with this song?

KJ: it was writ on the base of a polystyrene cup, a man kept on whispering it to me in the night

SN: My personal favorites on the album are Swan and The Minotaur and Happy Now. What can you tell me about the creation of these songs?

KJ: song and dance routines pulled from my personal diaries, however swan and minotaur had been gathering her wits unbeknownst to me (about six inches above my left temple in the blindspot), that recording is her first appearance (an improvisation?)

SN: I'm interested in hearing about your creative process in general. How does it work for you?

KJ: my 'life' is played out on the inside, polarized, 'songs' are 'evidence' posted out to the outside, filthy scraps of paper trodden into the mud

SN: Can you tell me a little bit about the history of your previous band, Daisy Chainsaw, and why you left the band?

KJ: a lifetime ago, perhaps i don't remember now, i just about learned to walk like most other children, i

always seem to walk away rather than toward

SN: You are also in the band QueenAdreena. Tell me about the history of this group and the musical style?

KJ: folk out there seem to know more about me than i do, i would ask them, they will be more constructive, i don't seem to remember the last 25 years

it all comes from diaries looking out through different windows, a two way membrane but mainly one way

SN: Tell me about some of your other projects like Corps Electriques and Lesions In The Brain? Indigo Vertigo?

KJ: love letters and invitations to marry (a lifetime in two weeks or a day), some of these marriages more successful than others, some forgotten, i have a very selective and entirely subjective memory

SN: You seem to be a very artistic individual. Tell me a bit about mediums you work in aside music, such as writing, drawing, and photography?

KJ: i play with toys, if i am hungry i sell something and tell them its 'art'

SN: Who have been influences in your life, musically and otherwise?

KJ: hunger

SN: In closing, is there anything you'd like to leave our readers with?

KJ: my bills? and love intended

thank you



i am at lukla airport

by KatieJane Garside

i am at lukla airport, a plane has crashed on landing as i am waiting to get a flight to kathmandu, pasang dawa called me outside from departures to tell me about a new hotel and transfers from the airport, i was talking to a german man when hundreds of people started running out and down the runway, a buddist nun to my left starts wailing, a friend put his arms around her, there seems to be one survivor who is now in departures, my english friend, a heart consultant is with him and an english medical student called michaela, i think the survivor is nepali or sherpa, maybe in pilots clothes, there is blood, i heard from a german translation that there was a fatal confusion between the plane taking off and one coming into land, it is a cloud covered misty morning, it seems the plane came in too low onto the very short steep runway, there was a fireball on impact, i hear some germans getting their sherpa guide to rebook their rooms in lukla, now rumours abound, there is the smell of burning fuel in the air, people are milling, some are crying, there is shock, the german man i was speaking to is staring out the window, i am very cold in my down jacket, another woman is crying, i need to speak to 'light in dark places', i must speak to my sister and my mother and father, i must get a message to them before the rumours do, i see three men walking across the runway, one military, two civilian carrying rifles, i left my little plastic pearl necklace i bought with 'light in dark places' with the prayer flags over the pass at zetra la, the heart consultant just ripped down a dividing wall to use as a makeshift stretcher for the survivor, there is a hospital here at lukla, but there is nothing in the hospital, its empty, this airport has no emergency procedure whatsoever, there is a bad smell, people are watching voyeuristically, i am writing voyeuristically...i am fixed to the page, i have stayed out of the way, there are so many people trying to help and seemingly some qualified medical people that were actually at the airport waiting to board the plane with me, i don't believe i can be of use, i wonder if my notebooks would survive a plane crash, an american couple next to me at the himalaya lodge this morning were talking about the possibility of a plane crashing, their sherpa guide hushed them saying these things are not spoken of in this country, that to speak this way brings bad luck, children are running about excitedly, men are gathering at the windows, there is a glint of facination and excitement, a crime scene, i hope this doesn't make the news at home or there will be panic, i must get word to them....i am selfishly thinking about my bag which is ready outside to board a plane, 'silverback' i havn't told him i love him, would the letter back at the summit hotel in kathmandu get to him eventually if i had been in that plane?, a woman is shouting outside, a medic i think, i am very cold, i gave dawa sherpa my knife as i was running for the plane very early this morning, i was given a 5 min 'get out' as pasang dawa had managed to get me a plane ticket, a helicopter has just taken off perhaps with the survivor, somebody filmed it, i think about ringing 'silverback' and then i cry, i cry for me not them...i always cry for me, a few feet away people are burning in their seats, families, lovers, children devastated and changed forever, irretrievable...the reality: the plane i was supposed to be on crashed on landing...i need to tell him, i must tell him...one survivor...a german man asks if i am ok?, where do i come from? am i alone?...the place has cleared somewhat..i wonder about my baggage...ma and pa are up on the mountain making their way to high camp on mera peak...the pilot survives, the co pilot is dead in a blue bag on a trolley over there, his burnt feet are

sticking out...i am sitting outside now with the heart consultant, an american is phoning home on his sherpa's phone, we hear that it was a german party on the plane, yeti airlines, not my plane after all, they say local people were stealing luggage and rucksacs from the crash site as bodies burned in their seats (the value of a pair of walking boots would probably support a family here for a year), someone was spooning water from a stream with a washing up bowl to put out the fire, the passengers were killed by burning fuel...i have called 'light in dark places' and asked him to get a message to my sister, the phone cut off but i got the message through, i called 'silverback' and left a message on the answer machine, i called from himalaya lodge, someone was on the internet looking at pictures of the crash, my bags are back here now, i have been given room 104, dawa sherpa is erecting tents on the lodge lawn for a morgue...they seem to have been taken down now, the heart consultant and michaela did the best they could, the co pilot died on the runway, the heart consultant saw him alive but then he died, locals were telling him to massage the co pilots chest, bring him back to life but the heart consultant said he was very dead, pasang dawa is supposed to get sonam to sms pasang sherpa on the mountain and let ma and pa know whats happened and that i was not on the plane..don't know if that's happened but at least my sister knows, she will probably have the initiative to sms them on the satellite phone, a big military helicopter has just landed, a crowd of people are out on the lawn, the buddist nun is there too with her robe over her head, she is in mourning i would hazard, the german man who was about to catch the plane with me and share the transfer at kathmandu wonders what the german government will make of this, pasang dawa took me to a table and introduced me to his friends, suggested we eat together and then go for a walk to his mothers house down in a village below lukla, i did not feel like joining them, the buddist nun is in the party, i keep writing, the blue, green and red roofs of lukla, body bags, i am traumatized by hearing 'silverback's' voice on the answer machine, stretchers are coming up the runway now to the military helicopter, an old crippled dog lies on the lawn, reminds me of venus's dog, the daughter of pasang dawa's brother works here, she came and asked me for 400 rupees for the two phone calls, she reminds me of janey madlani, i wonder if janey has sherpa blood, i am still freezing, i have put my thermals on now i have my bag back, the dead co pilot in the blue bag was lying next to my jagged globe bag with my ice axe and crampons unused, i am craving salt, perhaps whiskey, dawa sherpa is walking the lawn, a trauma medic who was also at the airport assisted as far as the first helicopter that took the pilot to hospital, he is sitting on the the lawn with his girlfriend witness to continuing events, a black crow pecks at the earth, two moths in my room, one half dead or half alive depending...i let them out the window, there are too many people crowded round the military helicopter as usual, there are always too many people, the black crows are circling above the prayer flags, more people are at the helicopter...what is wrong with these people?...years ago i gave my father a book called 'himalaya dreaming', i found it in a junk shop on archway road with 'silverback', same place i found my brown leather hat, there is a picture of pasang dawa on the back, very young maybe twelve or fourteen years old, smiling broadly in a yellow jumper, there is a thick fog now, i think the helicopter with the bodies is preparing to go, i am not in there, i wish 'light in dark places' was here, the crippled dog sniffs the air as the blades begin to turn, the crippled dog stands and hobbles a little closer, he breaks into an awkward trot, his tail is up, he is seeing them off, 'silverback's' friend was supposed to be on the plane that crashed over locherbie, he missed his flight, the helicopter is off the ground, RAN 38, it moves away down the runway and into the clouds, the crowd begins to disperse, a crow lands in a tree, it is raining, the american couple at breakfast walk into the lodge looking very white, the old dog

hobbles past the rooms i stayed in with ma and pa on our incoming journey, i remember that the heart consultant told someone with a camera at the scene to fuck off, i think he is in shock though stoic and english, i don't want to see the crash scene again, i wonder how and when i will get out of here, there are no roads into lukla, it's completely cut off cept for the airport, it's a three day walk to a bus for an eight hour journey to kathmandu, i consider this, we are nothing, isn't that right? just a scratch, we were supposed to come down from zetra la today, me and dawa sherpa, we made it back a day early, i think all communications here are done by satellite so it doesn't make a difference if you call a landline or mobile, very erractic connection, i think the cloud cover is clearing, the weather here is in constant turmoil, lukla is nearly two miles above sea level, i am looking out the window, now i hear 'the tyre didn't work' when the plane attempted to land, i see an australian man, an older man, earlier i saw him howling into a mobile phone, he was saying that he wished it was him that was dead instead of them, he's not crying now, the buddist nun is back at the table with pasang dawa, i hope and pray that my mother and father are ok, perhaps i will walk to the internet shop, i lost the details of how to contact the satellite phone, i should email my sister and she can tell them to call her and she can explain, its unclear if pasang dawa has asked sonam to send an sms to pasang sherpa up the mountain, the heart consultant talked about getting a helicopter out of here, i would buy into that...me and my writing...i'm still fixed to the page...i wonder if it seems cold and remote to others, people are taking comfort in humour and one another..i have been looking for 'heart stones' up in the mountains, i have my whiskey, i am warmer, my feet are in a cold sweat, i had a dream many years ago, maybe twelve, that a plane crashed into the sea, i was trying to get people out of the fusilage but a firm disembodied hand stopped me saying i must not interfere with karmic law, the following day there was news of such a plane crash, at dawn this morning i woke with bonnie prince billy lyrics in my head 'at the break of dawn, i'm ending all of it...' i don't like this song very much 'so don't say we had a ball...', a flying phobic looks for threads and connections, the german man i was supposed to transfer with keeps looking in my direction, pasang dawa's brother comes over and asks me for my plane ticket and boarding pass, he wants the cover it was supposedly issued in but i was never given one, he himself issued the ticket to me this morning, i was sitting in bed, curled up in my sleeping bag very early this morning doing the i ching when dawa sherpa banged on my door and tried to come in (as he has done in the lodges on other occasions when we were alone in the mountains together), he said to come very quickly, that i have a ticket for the plane, i have a bucket full of pee next to the bed and thank god (depending how you like to think) i didn't have to put away my 'impossible to put away' thermorest, i had seriously overheated in the night at this lower altitude and thrown off most of my clothes, my face is nearly back to normal after becoming a very swollen and flattened with altitude (i looked like i had been in a boxing ring, eyes fat and closing) but i look knackered and didn't sleep well, i have minutes to pack and load out, dawa sherpa is still at the door trying to get in the room, i am getting angry but keep it at bay by the means i always use, cold, remote, shielded, unreadable and unapproachable, i lock down inside, retract my feelers and harden my shell, the job is done and i soften as dawa sherpa the lama is actually kind to me despite his wayward hands, which though annoying are a lack of education and like all of us he is just operating with the tools he has been given...i am rushed downstairs and dawa sherpa disappears with my back breaking bag, i am given black tea and the urgency seems to abate, can't remember much now but pasang dawa's brother hands me a ticket maybe at the airport which is about a 100ft from the lodge, pasang dawa himself says something about a different hotel...i didn't catch its name, transfers

etc, the summit hotel is fully booked, pain in the arse as i have to go there to get my left luggage, my computer etc, i have been told i'm on the first flight out, when i meet the heart consultant at the airport our tickets are different colours, mine is yellow, maybe 'silverback' could walk across that lawn towards me...what would he do though?..don't know..perhaps he wouldn't be angry, he apologized to me when 'pig' died, as if the 'real thing' broke his cloud cover....is all this why i always see that lone red prayer flag on the mountainside in my blindspot?..the sound now of something about to fly, i wish it wouldn't...can i overland home? 'light in dark places' would come with me..i don't have to go to japan if i don't want to, i have a map of India, 'light in dark places' gave it to me, another helicopter leaves, the one that brought the crash investigators, i need some foot warmers now, two girls have just arrived from the mountains, they look healthy and bemused but they have heard the news as they walked into lukla, they seem unburdened unlike the rest of us who will have it for the rest of our lives, it has happened and that cannot be changed...now i feel my shock and grief are no longer using 'silverback' as a filter, those 20 people burned alive as i was watching, i didn't hear a thing, just the nun wailing as the horror made itself known..hundreds of people tipped and spilled, down the runway into the vortex of a terrible coming

my diary was not supposed to end like this

the american couple are beginning to argue, they are down the hall, they are shouting

there is a picture of me and dawa sherpa at the zetra la pass in the clouds with the prayer flags, it was taken by a beautiful blonde german man, it's the only picture worth keeping other than the magical bull yak, the yaks were incredible that night at chutenga tea house, i had to go for a piss in the night and they had completely surrounded our tents, they were silent cept for a low moan and the near soundless knocking of a bell, a cloudless, moonless night sky, bewildering stars

for some reason the slip given to me by the woman who looks like janey madlani for the phone calls has fuel intake, plane weight etc on the back of it, i keep the slip (the plane exploded in such a devastating way because it was carrying so much fuel)

does this country act as a catalyst for ones deepest darkest fears?..or is this thought just my self obsessed solipsistic nature realised

i fly out of lukla the following morning on the 2nd flight out, we fly over the wreckage, i fly out with the wailing nun, it turns out the wailing nun is infact the singing nun, very famous in nepal and currently no.1 in the nepali charts, people want their picture taken with her at kathmandu airport

i was just talking to an australian called rob by the pool, he and his friends were all supposed to be on the flight that crashed, he said in hushed tones that the german party had pushed in front of them (they still actually have tickets for the plane that crashed), it was reported back home in australia that they had been on the flight...he says that they are all being quite philosophical about it, they are mostly paramedics and therefore somewhat trained or prepared to look these things in the eye...they would have been on that flight cept for the fatal eagerness of the other party

Calling Demons into a Glass of Water!

David Rankine

Some years ago I came across an intriguing reference in a manuscript I was transcribing. I had noticed previously that a number of the pentacles in grimoires such as the Key of Solomon contained an eight rayed figure at their heart, reminding me of the Chaos Star. Now here was the design again, on the cover to be placed on a glass of water in which you conjured a demon! The manuscript, Sloane MS 3824, dates to around 1649, and contains an interesting mixture of original conjurations, translations of parts of earlier classics like the fifteenth century *Heptameron* and Agrippa's *De Occulta Philosophia*, and other material largely relating to treasure spirits. By this I mean the conjuration of spiritual creatures like demons and fairies to assist in the process of acquiring treasure, either by locating it, or by driving away the existing guardian spirit.

Locating treasure was big business in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and if you could make a spirit unearth a cache of treasure for you, you were set up for life. As a result the phrase "hill-digger" was commonly used to describe a person who was on the make, i.e. they would do whatever it took, including using treasure spirits. It is amusing to note that as well as magicians and cunning-folk, priests were also in demand to perform the conjurations of such treasure spirits. However the records of such events also show that some spirits, particularly the fairy king Oberion, refused to talk to priests when he was conjured! Coercion can only get you so far, it seems!

Early this year I returned to the transcription I had carried out all those years ago, thinking I would finally go through it and prepare it for publication. The result was *The Book of Treasure Spirits* (Avalonia, 2009), and my memory was jogged with the conjuration into the glass of water. This is an ancient idea, as bowls of water were frequently used by magicians in Biblical times for constraining demons, as is illustrated in the classic second century CE proto-grimoire, *The Testament of Solomon*. So I was delighted to see a short and simple conjuration with instructions staring me in the face, ready for use. That conjuration, including the seal which first drew my attention, now follow, for your perusal, delight and attention. Enjoy, and consider whether it is something you might like to try?

Experiment of Bleth

Of the Spirit Bleth,¹ Who is mostly called upon and appeareth in a glass of water

Have a glass made of pure white metal pretty thick, made in the form of a Urinal,² and make a cover thereto of Virgin Wax or parchment with the Character made thereon as hereafter followeth, then fill

¹ This is probably the Goetic spirit Bileth.

the glass a little above half full of water, and Set it upon the table of practice, or other Convenient place, where It may stand very Sure and Steady, from Shaking or jogging & let it stand on your left hand and set the Cover thereof by it on the right hand &c: Let the table or place which the Glass and Its Cover standeth, be Covered with a Linen Cloth very white: and so when all things are decently Set in Order, Invoke as followeth:³

*I adjure & call upon command and constrain thee O thou spirit which art called **Bleth**: in & through the name of the father & of the Son & of the holy Ghost, Three persons in trinity, & one God in Unity, & by this incomprehensible name, of the most High and Omnipotent Creator of Heaven & Earth, **Tetragrammaton, Jehovah**, I powerfully and Earnestly urge and Constrain thee O thou spirit **Bleth** and I call upon & command thee to appear Visibly & affably Unto me in this Glass of water, set here before me, as a fit and appointed Receptacle to Entertain you, And I do again adjure Call upon, bind, command and Constrain thee O thou spirit **Bleth**, by the Virtue and might of those Great & powerful names By which Wise Solomon bound spirits, and shut them up **Elbrach, Ebanher, Gosh, Ioth, Agla, Oshie, Venoch, Nabrat**, to appear & show thy Self, fairly & fully and plainly Visible unto me, In that Glass of water here before me, which I have Set to Receive you in and to resolve & openly & manifestly to show me, the Truth Verity & Certainty of all Such matters & things, as I shall Demand & Request of you, without any fraud guile Dissimulation, or other Crafty or Deceitful Illusion whatsoever, wherefore I now call upon & Constrain thee hereby, O thou Spirit **Bleth** in and through these high & potent names of our Lord & Saviour **Jesus Christ, Messias, Sother, Emanuel, Alpha & Omega**, to move appear & show thy self plainly unto me, & fulfil my Demands, desires & Requests in all things, according to your Office, wherein you may or Can without any further tarrying or Delay, but immediately prepare you & come away, and Do for me as for the Servant of the Highest.*

Speak this Conjunction often, and when the water Stirreth a Little, & a Smoke Seemeth to be seen In the Glass, then Doth the spirit Enter, for this is the foreshowing Sign of his appearance, & when this is perspicuously Discerned, then Lightly Cover the Glass with the Cover, & bind it all about So Severely, that nothing may Go out &c: Then Ask what you will, & he will either Resolve it viva voce, or it will be seen written on his Breast.

The Spirit **Sonoryan** may be Invoked & called upon, As Either of the foregoing Spirits **Vassago Agares**⁴ or **Bleth**, being Exemplary alike, only Changing the name In the Invocation, Some use oil in the Glass instead of water, for so did Cardinal Richlieu, who this spirit **Sonoryan** was very familiar, frequent & Conversant withal &c.⁵

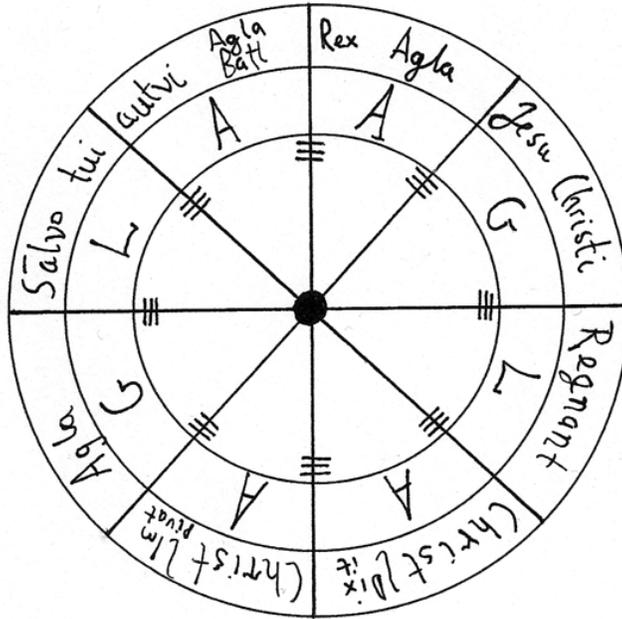
² Yes, it does say that!

³ This practice resembles the use of bowls of water for containing demons found in early Jewish texts, such as the writings of Flavius Josephus (1st century CE).

⁴ Agares and Vassago are two of the Goetic spirits frequently called as treasure spirits.

⁵ This is an interesting claim, for which there is however no supporting evidence!

This Character is to be made on the Cover of the Glass



SEAL FOR GLASS

Emma Goldman

ANARCHISM what it really stands for

(1910)

ANARCHY

Ever reviled, accursed, ne'er understood,
Thou art the grisly terror of our age.
"Wreck of all order," cry the multitude,
"Art thou, and war and murder's endless rage."
O, let them cry. To them that ne'er have striven
The truth that lies behind a word to find,
To them the word's right meaning was not given.
They shall continue blind among the blind.
But thou, O word, so clear, so strong, so pure,
Thou sayest all which I for goal have taken.
I give thee to the future! Thine secure
When each at least unto himself shall waken.
Comes it in sunshine? In the tempest's thrill?
I cannot tell - but it the earth shall see!
I am an Anarchist! Wherefore I will
Not rule, and also ruled I will not be!

JOHN HENRY MACKAY

THE history of human growth and development is at the same time the history of the terrible struggle of every new idea heralding the approach of a brighter dawn. In its tenacious hold on tradition, the Old has never hesitated to make use of the foulest and cruelest means to stay the advent of the New, in whatever form or period the latter may have asserted itself. Nor need we retrace our steps into the distant past to realize the enormity of opposition, difficulties, and hardships placed in the path of every progressive idea. The rack, the thumbscrew, and the knout are still with us; so are the convict's garb and the social wrath, all conspiring against the spirit that is serenely marching on.

Anarchism could not hope to escape the fate of all other ideas of innovation. Indeed, as the most revolutionary and uncompromising innovator, Anarchism must needs meet with the combined ignorance and venom of the world it aims to reconstruct.

To deal even remotely with all that is being said and done against Anarchism would necessitate the writing of a whole volume. I shall therefore meet only two of the principal objections. In so doing, I shall attempt to elucidate what Anarchism really stands for.

The strange phenomenon of the opposition to Anarchism is that it brings to light the relation between so-called intelligence and ignorance. And yet this is not so very strange when we consider the relativity of all things. The ignorant mass has in its favor that it makes no pretense of knowledge or tolerance. Acting, as it always does, by mere impulse, its reasons are like those of a child. "Why?" "Because." Yet the opposition of the uneducated to Anarchism deserves the same consideration as that of the intelligent man.

What, then, are the objections? First, Anarchism is impractical, though a beautiful ideal. Second, Anarchism stands for violence and destruction, hence it must be repudiated as vile and dangerous. Both the intelligent man and the ignorant mass judge not from a thorough knowledge of the subject, but either from hearsay or false interpretation.

A practical scheme, says Oscar Wilde, is either one already in existence, or a scheme that could be carried out under the existing conditions; but it is exactly the existing conditions that one objects to, and any scheme that could accept these conditions is wrong and foolish. The true criterion of the practical, therefore, is not whether the latter can keep intact the wrong or foolish; rather is it whether the scheme has vitality enough to leave the stagnant waters of the old, and build, as well as sustain, new life. In the light of this conception, Anarchism is indeed practical. More than any other idea, it is helping to do away with the wrong and foolish; more than any other idea, it is building and sustaining new life.

The emotions of the ignorant man are continuously kept at a pitch by the most blood-curdling stories about Anarchism. Not a thing too outrageous to be employed against this philosophy and its exponents. Therefore Anarchism represents to the unthinking what the proverbial bad man does to the child, - a black monster bent on swallowing everything; in short, destruction and violence.

Destruction and violence! How is the ordinary man to know that the most violent element in society is ignorance; that its power of destruction is the very thing Anarchism is combating? Nor is he aware that Anarchism, whose roots, as it were, are part of nature's forces, destroys, not healthful tissue, but parasitic growths that feed on the life's essence of society. It is merely clearing the soil from weeds and sagebrush, that it may eventually bear healthy fruit.

Someone has said that it requires less mental effort to condemn than to think. The widespread mental indolence, so prevalent in society, proves this to be only too true. Rather than to go to the bottom of any given idea, to examine into its origin and meaning, most people will either condemn it altogether, or rely on some superficial or prejudicial definition of non-essentials.

Anarchism urges man to think, to investigate, to analyze every proposition; but that the brain capacity of the average reader be not taxed too much, I also shall begin with a definition, and then elaborate on the latter.

ANARCHISM: - The philosophy of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by man-made law; the theory that all forms of government rest on violence, and are therefore wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary.

The new social order rests, of course, on the materialistic basis of life; but while all Anarchists agree that the main evil today is an economic one, they maintain that the solution of that evil can be brought about only through the consideration of *every phase* of life, - individual, as well as the collective; the internal, as well as the external phases.

A thorough perusal of the history of human development will disclose two elements in bitter conflict with each other; elements that are only now beginning to be understood, not as foreign to each other, but as closely related and truly harmonious, if only placed in proper environment: the individual and social

instincts. The individual and society have waged a relentless and bloody battle for ages, each striving for supremacy, because each was blind to the value and importance of the other. The individual and social instincts; the one a most potent factor for individual endeavor, for growth, aspiration, self-realization; the other an equally potent factor for mutual helpfulness and social well-being.

The explanation of the storm raging within the individual, and between him and his surroundings, is not far to seek. The primitive man, unable to understand his being, much less the unity of all life, felt himself absolutely dependent on blind, hidden forces ever ready to mock and taunt him. Out of that attitude grew the religious concepts of man as a mere speck of dust dependent on superior powers on high, who can only be appeased by complete surrender. All the early sagas rest on that idea, which continues to be the *Leitmotiv* of the biblical tales dealing with the relation of man to God, to the State, to society. Again and again the same motif, *man is nothing, the powers are everything*. Thus Jehovah would only endure man on condition of complete surrender. Man can have all the glories of the earth, but he must not become conscious of himself. The State, society, and moral laws all sing the same refrain: Man can have all the glories of the earth, but he must not become conscious of himself.

Anarchism is the only philosophy which brings to man the consciousness of himself; which maintains that God, the State, and society are non-existent, that their promises are null and void, since they can be fulfilled only through man's subordination. Anarchism is therefore the teacher of the unity of life; not merely in nature, but in man. There is no conflict between the individual and the social instincts, any more than there is between the heart and the lungs: the one the receptacle of a precious life essence, the other the repository of the element that keeps the essence pure and strong. The individual is the heart of society, conserving the essence of social life; society is the lungs which are distributing the element to keep the life essence - that is, the individual - pure and strong.

"The one thing of value in the world," says Emerson, "is the active soul; this every man contains within him. The soul active sees absolute truth and utters truth and creates." In other words, the individual instinct is the thing of value in the world. It is the true soul that sees and creates the truth alive, out of which is to come a still greater truth, the re-born social soul.

Anarchism is the great liberator of man from the phantoms that have held him captive; it is the arbiter and pacifier of the two forces for individual and social harmony. To accomplish that unity, Anarchism has declared war on the pernicious influences which have so far prevented the harmonious blending of individual and social instincts, the individual and society.

Religion, the dominion of the human mind; Property, the dominion of human needs; and Government, the dominion of human conduct, represent the stronghold of man's enslavement and all the horrors it entails. Religion! How it dominates man's mind, how it humiliates and degrades his soul. God is everything, man is nothing, says religion. But out of that nothing God has created a kingdom so despotic, so tyrannical, so cruel, so terribly exacting that naught but gloom and tears and blood have ruled the world since gods began. Anarchism rouses man to rebellion against this black monster. Break your mental fetters, says Anarchism to man, for not until you think and judge for yourself will you get rid of the dominion of darkness, the greatest obstacle to all progress.

Property, the dominion of man's needs, the denial of the right to satisfy his needs. Time was when property claimed a divine right, when it came to man with the same refrain, even as religion, "Sacrifice! Abnegate! Submit!" The spirit of Anarchism has lifted man from his prostrate position. He now stands erect, with his face toward the light. He has learned to see the insatiable, devouring, devastating nature of property, and he is preparing to strike the monster dead.

"Property is robbery," said the great French Anarchist Proudhon. Yes, but without risk and danger to the robber. Monopolizing the accumulated efforts of man, property has robbed him of his birthright, and

has turned him loose a pauper and an outcast. Property has not even the time-worn excuse that man does not create enough to satisfy all needs. The A B C student of economics knows that the productivity of labor within the last few decades far exceeds normal demand. But what are normal demands to an abnormal institution? The only demand that property recognizes is its own gluttonous appetite for greater wealth, because wealth means power; the power to subdue, to crush, to exploit, the power to enslave, to outrage, to degrade. America is particularly boastful of her great power, her enormous national wealth. Poor America, of what avail is all her wealth, if the individuals comprising the nation are wretchedly poor? If they live in squalor, in filth, in crime, with hope and joy gone, a homeless, soulless army of human prey.

It is generally conceded that unless the returns of any business venture exceed the cost, bankruptcy is inevitable. But those engaged in the business of producing wealth have not yet learned even this simple lesson. Every year the cost of production in human life is growing larger (50,000 killed, 100,000 wounded in America last year); the returns to the masses, who help to create wealth, are ever getting smaller. Yet America continues to be blind to the inevitable bankruptcy of our business of production. Nor is this the only crime of the latter. Still more fatal is the crime of turning the producer into a mere particle of a machine, with less will and decision than his master of steel and iron. Man is being robbed not merely of the products of his labor, but of the power of free initiative, of originality, and the interest in, or desire for, the things he is making.

Real wealth consists in things of utility and beauty, in things that help to create strong, beautiful bodies and surroundings inspiring to live in. But if man is doomed to wind cotton around a spool, or dig coal, or build roads for thirty years of his life, there can be no talk of wealth. What he gives to the world is only gray and hideous things, reflecting a dull and hideous existence, - too weak to live, too cowardly to die. Strange to say, there are people who extol this deadening method of centralized production as the proudest achievement of our age. They fail utterly to realize that if we are to continue in machine subserviency, our slavery is more complete than was our bondage to the King. They do not want to know that centralization is not only the death-knell of liberty, but also of health and beauty, of art and science, all these being impossible in a clock-like, mechanical atmosphere.

Anarchism cannot but repudiate such a method of production: its goal is the freest possible expression of all the latent powers of the individual. Oscar Wilde defines a perfect personality as "one who develops under perfect conditions, who is not wounded, maimed, or in danger." A perfect personality, then, is only possible in a state of society where man is free to choose the mode of work, the conditions of work, and the freedom to work. One to whom the making of a table, the building of a house, or the tilling of the soil, is what the painting is to the artist and the discovery to the scientist, - the result of inspiration, of intense longing, and deep interest in work as a creative force. That being the ideal of Anarchism, its economic arrangements must consist of voluntary productive and distributive associations, gradually developing into free communism, as the best means of producing with the least waste of human energy. Anarchism, however, also recognizes the right of the individual, or numbers of individuals, to arrange at all times for other forms of work, in harmony with their tastes and desires.

Such free display of human energy being possible only under complete individual and social freedom, Anarchism directs its forces against the third and greatest foe of all social equality; namely, the State, organized authority, or statutory law, - the dominion of human conduct.

Just as religion has fettered the human mind, and as property, or the monopoly of things, has subdued and stifled man's needs, so has the State enslaved his spirit, dictating every phase of conduct. "All government in essence," says Emerson, "is tyranny." It matters not whether it is government by divine right or majority rule. In every instance its aim is the absolute subordination of the individual.

Referring to the American government, the greatest American Anarchist, David Thoreau, said:

"Government, what is it but a tradition, though a recent one, endeavoring to transmit itself unimpaired to posterity, but each instance losing its integrity; it has not the vitality and force of a single living man. Law never made man a whit more just; and by means of their respect for it, even the well disposed are daily made agents of injustice."

Indeed, the keynote of government is injustice. With the arrogance and self-sufficiency of the King who could do no wrong, governments ordain, judge, condemn, and punish the most insignificant offenses, while maintaining themselves by the greatest of all offenses, the annihilation of individual liberty. Thus Ouida is right when she maintains that "the State only aims at instilling those qualities in its public by which its demands are obeyed, and its exchequer is filled. Its highest attainment is the reduction of mankind to clockwork. In its atmosphere all those finer and more delicate liberties, which require treatment and spacious expansion, inevitably dry up and perish. The State requires a taxpaying machine in which there is no hitch, an exchequer in which there is never a deficit, and a public, monotonous, obedient, colorless, spiritless, moving humbly like a flock of sheep along a straight high road between two walls."

Yet even a flock of sheep would resist the chicanery of the State, if it were not for the corruptive, tyrannical, and oppressive methods it employs to serve its purposes. Therefore Bakunin repudiates the State as synonymous with the surrender of the liberty of the individual or small minorities, - the destruction of social relationship, the curtailment, or complete denial even, of life itself, for its own aggrandizement. The State is the altar of political freedom and, like the religious altar, it is maintained for the purpose of human sacrifice.

In fact, there is hardly a modern thinker who does not agree that government, organized authority, or the State, is necessary only to maintain or protect property and monopoly. It has proven efficient in that function only.

Even George Bernard Shaw, who hopes for the miraculous from the State under Fabianism, nevertheless admits that "it is at present a huge machine for robbing and slave-driving of the poor by brute force." This being the case, it is hard to see why the clever prefacer wishes to uphold the State after poverty shall have ceased to exist.

Unfortunately, there are still a number of people who continue in the fatal belief that government rests on natural laws, that it maintains social order and harmony, that it diminishes crime, and that it prevents the lazy man from fleecing his fellows. I shall therefore examine these contentions.

A natural law is that factor in man which asserts itself freely and spontaneously without any external force, in harmony with the requirements of nature. For instance, the demand for nutrition, for sex gratification, for light, air, and exercise, is a natural law. But its expression needs not the machinery of government, needs not the club, the gun, the handcuff, or the prison. To obey such laws, if we may call it obedience, requires only spontaneity and free opportunity. That governments do not maintain themselves through such harmonious factors is proven by the terrible array of violence, force, and coercion all governments use in order to live. Thus Blackstone is right when he says, "Human laws are invalid, because they are contrary to the laws of nature."

Unless it be the order of Warsaw after the slaughter of thousands of people, it is difficult to ascribe to governments any capacity for order or social harmony. Order derived through submission and maintained by terror is not much of a safe guaranty; yet that is the only "order" that governments have ever maintained. True social harmony grows naturally out of solidarity of interests. In a society where those who always work never have anything, while those who never work enjoy everything, solidarity of interests is non-existent; hence social harmony is but a myth. The only way organized authority meets this grave situation is by extending still greater privileges to those who have already monopolized the earth, and by still further enslaving the disinherited masses. Thus the entire arsenal of government - laws,

police, soldiers, the courts, legislatures, prisons, - is strenuously engaged in "harmonizing" the most antagonistic elements in society.

The most absurd apology for authority and law is that they serve to diminish crime. Aside from the fact that the State is itself the greatest criminal, breaking every written and natural law, stealing in the form of taxes, killing in the form of war and capital punishment, it has come to an absolute standstill in coping with crime. It has failed utterly to destroy or even minimize the horrible scourge of its own creation.

Crime is naught but misdirected energy. So long as every institution of today, economic, political, social, and moral, conspires to misdirect human energy into wrong channels; so long as most people are out of place doing the things they hate to do, living a life they loathe to live, crime will be inevitable, and all the laws on the statutes can only increase, but never do away with, crime. What does society, as it exists today, know of the process of despair, the poverty, the horrors, the fearful struggle the human soul must pass on its way to crime and degradation. Who that knows this terrible process can fail to see the truth in these words of Peter Kropotkin:

"Those who will hold the balance between the benefits thus attributed to law and punishment and the degrading effect of the latter on humanity; those who will estimate the torrent of depravity poured abroad in human society by the informer, favored by the Judge even, and paid for in clinking cash by governments, under the pretext of aiding to unmask crime; those who will go within prison walls and there see what human beings become when deprived of liberty, when subjected to the care of brutal keepers, to coarse, cruel words, to a thousand stinging, piercing humiliations, will agree with us that the entire apparatus of prison and punishment is an abomination which ought to be brought to an end."

The deterrent influence of law on the lazy man is too absurd to merit consideration. If society were only relieved of the waste and expense of keeping a lazy class, and the equally great expense of the paraphernalia of protection this lazy class requires, the social tables would contain an abundance for all, including even the occasional lazy individual. Besides, it is well to consider that laziness results either from special privileges, or physical and mental abnormalities. Our present insane system of production fosters both, and the most astounding phenomenon is that people should want to work at all now. Anarchism aims to strip labor of its deadening, dulling aspect, of its gloom and compulsion. It aims to make work an instrument of joy, of strength, of color, of real harmony, so that the poorest sort of a man should find in work both recreation and hope.

To achieve such an arrangement of life, government, with its unjust, arbitrary, repressive measures, must be done away with. At best it has but imposed one single mode of life upon all, without regard to individual and social variations and needs. In destroying government and statutory laws, Anarchism proposes to rescue the self-respect and independence of the individual from all restraint and invasion by authority. Only in freedom can man grow to his full stature. Only in freedom will he learn to think and move, and give the very best in him. Only in freedom will he realize the true force of the social bonds which knit men together, and which are the true foundation of a normal social life.

But what about human nature? Can it be changed? And if not, will it endure under Anarchism?

Poor human nature, what horrible crimes have been committed in thy name! Every fool, from king to policeman, from the flatheaded parson to the visionless dabbler in science, presumes to speak authoritatively of human nature. The greater the mental charlatan, the more definite his insistence on the wickedness and weaknesses of human nature. Yet, how can any one speak of it today, with every soul in a prison, with every heart fettered, wounded, and maimed?

John Burroughs has stated that experimental study of animals in captivity is absolutely useless. Their character, their habits, their appetites undergo a complete transformation when torn from their soil in field and forest. With human nature caged in a narrow space, whipped daily into submission, how can we speak of its potentialities?

Freedom, expansion, opportunity, and, above all, peace and repose, alone can teach us the real dominant factors of human nature and all its wonderful possibilities.

Anarchism, then, really stands for the liberation of the human mind from the dominion of religion; the liberation of the human body from the dominion of property; liberation from the shackles and restraint of government. Anarchism stands for a social order based on the free grouping of individuals for the purpose of producing real social wealth; an order that will guarantee to every human being free access to the earth and full enjoyment of the necessities of life, according to individual desires, tastes, and inclinations.

This is not a wild fancy or an aberration of the mind. It is the conclusion arrived at by hosts of intellectual men and women the world over; a conclusion resulting from the close and studious observation of the tendencies of modern society: individual liberty and economic equality, the twin forces for the birth of what is fine and true in man.

As to methods. Anarchism is not, as some may suppose, a theory of the future to be realized through divine inspiration. It is a living force in the affairs of our life, constantly creating new conditions. The methods of Anarchism therefore do not comprise an iron-clad program to be carried out under all circumstances. Methods must grow out of the economic needs of each place and clime, and of the intellectual and temperamental requirements of the individual. The serene, calm character of a Tolstoy will wish different methods for social reconstruction than the intense, overflowing personality of a Michael Bakunin or a Peter Kropotkin. Equally so it must be apparent that the economic and political needs of Russia will dictate more drastic measures than would England or America. Anarchism does not stand for military drill and uniformity; it does, however, stand for the spirit of revolt, in whatever form, against everything that hinders human growth. All Anarchists agree in that, as they also agree in their opposition to the political machinery as a means of bringing about the great social change.

"All voting," says Thoreau, "is a sort of gaming, like checkers, or backgammon, a playing with right and wrong; its obligation never exceeds that of expediency. Even voting for the right thing is doing nothing for it. A wise man will not leave the right to the mercy of chance, nor wish it to prevail through the power of the majority." A close examination of the machinery of politics and its achievements will bear out the logic of Thoreau.

What does the history of parliamentarism show? Nothing but failure and defeat, not even a single reform to ameliorate the economic and social stress of the people. Laws have been passed and enactments made for the improvement and protection of labor. Thus it was proven only last year that Illinois, with the most rigid laws for mine protection, had the greatest mine disasters. In States where child labor laws prevail, child exploitation is at its highest, and though with us the workers enjoy full political opportunities, capitalism has reached the most brazen zenith.

Even were the workers able to have their own representatives, for which our good Socialist politicians are clamoring, what chances are there for their honesty and good faith? One has but to bear in mind the process of politics to realize that its path of good intentions is full of pitfalls: wire-pulling, intriguing, flattering, lying, cheating; in fact, chicanery of every description, whereby the political aspirant can achieve success. Added to that is a complete demoralization of character and conviction, until nothing is left that would make one hope for anything from such a human derelict. Time and time again the people were foolish enough to trust, believe, and support with their last farthing aspiring politicians, only to find themselves betrayed and cheated.

It may be claimed that men of integrity would not become corrupt in the political grinding mill. Perhaps not; but such men would be absolutely helpless to exert the slightest influence in behalf of labor, as indeed has been shown in numerous instances. The State is the economic master of its servants. Good men, if such there be, would either remain true to their political faith and lose their economic support, or they would cling to their economic master and be utterly unable to do the slightest good. The political

arena leaves one no alternative, one must either be a dunce or a rogue.

The political superstition is still holding sway over the hearts and minds of the masses, but the true lovers of liberty will have no more to do with it. Instead, they believe with Stirner that man has as much liberty as he is willing to take. Anarchism therefore stands for direct action, the open defiance of, and resistance to, all laws and restrictions, economic, social, and moral. But defiance and resistance are illegal. Therein lies the salvation of man. Everything illegal necessitates integrity, self-reliance, and courage. In short, it calls for free, independent spirits, for "men who are men, and who have a bone in their backs which you cannot pass your hand through."

Universal suffrage itself owes its existence to direct action. If not for the spirit of rebellion, of the defiance on the part of the American revolutionary fathers, their posterity would still wear the King's coat. If not for the direct action of a John Brown and his comrades, America would still trade in the flesh of the black man. True, the trade in white flesh is still going on; but that, too, will have to be abolished by direct action. Trade-unionism, the economic arena of the modern gladiator, owes its existence to direct action. It is but recently that law and government have attempted to crush the trade-union movement, and condemned the exponents of man's right to organize to prison as conspirators. Had they sought to assert their cause through begging, pleading, and compromise, trade-unionism would today be a negligible quantity. In France, in Spain, in Italy, in Russia, nay even in England (witness the growing rebellion of English labor unions), direct, revolutionary, economic action has become so strong a force in the battle for industrial liberty as to make the world realize the tremendous importance of labor's power. The General Strike, the supreme expression of the economic consciousness of the workers, was ridiculed in America but a short time ago. Today every great strike, in order to win, must realize the importance of the solidaric general protest.

Direct action, having proven effective along economic lines, is equally potent in the environment of the individual. There a hundred forces encroach upon his being, and only persistent resistance to them will finally set him free. Direct action against the authority in the shop, direct action against the authority of the law, direct action against the invasive, meddling authority of our moral code, is the logical, consistent method of Anarchism.

Will it not lead to a revolution? Indeed, it will. No real social change has ever come about without a revolution. People are either not familiar with their history, or they have not yet learned that revolution is but thought carried into action.

Anarchism, the great leaven of thought, is today permeating every phase of human endeavor. Science, art, literature, the drama, the effort for economic betterment, in fact every individual and social opposition to the existing disorder of things, is illumined by the spiritual light of Anarchism. It is the philosophy of the sovereignty of the individual. It is the theory of social harmony. It is the great, surging, living truth that is reconstructing the world, and that will usher in the Dawn.

Go With the Flow – But Be Ready for Surprises on the Way

(The Theory of Reflexivity – An Information (Thermodynamic) Philosophy of Nature)

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Chelsea, Quebec

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Introduction

The universe, people and everything else are the cumulative result of a 13.7 billion year old universal computation (the Langton Computation) that continues to this day. In much the same way that the computers we are familiar with calculate the problems we give to them, so too nature calculates its problem. What is that problem? Nature must find a way to optimize itself. But what is nature you may ask? And whatever it is, how can this be optimized? Increasingly nature is being thought of as information and the best way to optimize information is to process it.

If nature is to process its problem, it needs a computer. What is that? It is nature itself. Nature processes itself by treating itself as its own computer and using its own information to run this computer. **This is reflexivity.** And nature has its own special central processing unit (CPU), known as a phase transition. This is a natural physical process that is nature's way of creating new things. A phase transition takes something that already exists and transforms it into something new through a natural computation (the Langton Computation). We see it every day when water freezes to form ice or when a caterpillar turns into a butterfly. We feel a phase transition when we wake up or fall asleep. We can see the power of some phase transitions in the explosion of an atomic bomb.

Information Flow and Phase Transitions

Phase transitions are the creators of the natural world. Everything that we see around us has been created by an infinite number of phase transitions. Phase transitions do four important things. In no particular order, they liberate a deluge of vibrating information particles that flow like water down a hill. This free flow in turn establishes three metaphorical channels which do three essential things simultaneously. The first channel is the creative channel and provides the information to power and compute the process for the new phase (the Langton Computation). This uses up information (entropy) and can be of short duration. The second channel maintains the process that supports the continued existence of the new phase that has just been computed by the Langton Computation. It does this in two ways. First it provides a continuous a flow of new information to continuously fuel or maintain the phase process. And second it continuously flushes away the used information that comes from this maintenance process (entropy). Without this continued flushing or cleansing, entropy would accumulate like poison and quickly bring the phase

process to an end. The new phase would die. The third channel continues to flow free, within a buffer, ready to power new phase transitions.

This is all well and good, but why do the vibration information particles flow in the first place? It is the result of an event 13.7 billion years ago that continues to this day. The vibrating particles made up an original medium of pure information. They had (and have today) high potential, pressure, energy...choose the analogy you prefer. This blank slate of information particles was differentiated by the first phase transition and the information particles were released and began to flow toward the realm of low potential, pressure and energy, like water flowing down a hill. As the information flowed it powered other phase transitions which created the entire world that we see.

More About Phase Transitions – The Resonance induced absorption of information and Resistance induced radiation of information by a medium

Because this article is about information it would be a good idea to describe what I mean by the term. For present purposes I consider information to be a potential, three types of potential to be specific: the potential to be transformed, the potential to be the transforming agent or the potential to have been transformed. Information can be any or all of these things. I should also mention reflexivity and why reflexivity is the means by which nature optimizes itself. The idea is simple. Reflexivity keeps processing distances short, minimizing waste (entropy) due to transmission loss during processing. (Any action has a cost known as entropy).

Phase transitions begin with wavy information flow. Flowing wavy information imparts resonance to the surrounding medium and this induced resonance causes that medium to self-absorb some of the information from the flow (the way a TV picture is formed when a TV circuit resonates with the TV signal). The medium itself may be resistant to some of its information and may self-radiate information back into the flow. Any time something is done, there is a cost, called entropy. There is no free lunch. This resonance induced self-absorption of information and resistance induced self-radiation of information are basic features of information processing. The continuous flow of information creates a collision (a computation) between the self-absorption of information and the self-radiation of information forms the dynamic that is the basis for optimization of information processing that creates the universe.

Causes of Phase Transitions

Information/media have a kind of comfort zone and are able to absorb or radiate free information as long as its total information content remains in this zone. Phase transitions occur because the wavy free information absorbed or radiated by an information/medium rises above or falls below the upper or lower limits of this comfort zone. As mentioned above the information/medium has three parts, one fixed and two flow related. The fixed item is the buffer for free information. The two flow related items are, first the process/maintenance flow that characterizes the information/medium and second the flowing free information stored in the buffer.

What about the buffer? As mentioned it has a fixed storage capacity for the flowing free information, with maximum and minimum limits.

When the information/medium self-absorbs information through wave-induced resonance this free information is stored in the buffer. The characteristic process/maintenance is not affected. When an information/medium self-radiates information due to wave-induced resistance the free information that is radiated comes from the buffer. The characteristic process is not affected.

However when the information/medium absorbs more free information than the buffer can hold it spills over into the maintenance/process. This causes the process to undergo the Langton Computation which creates a new information/medium with a new maintenance/process that has a higher information content and a new empty buffer.

In the same way, when the information/medium radiates more information than is stored in the buffer, some is taken from the maintenance/process. This causes the process to undergo a Langton Computation which creates a new information/medium with a new maintenance/process that has a lower information content and a new full buffer.

The Langton Computation

So, what is a Langton Computation? A phase transition is nature's primary computer. The computation that it undertakes is known as the Langton computation (author's name). The Langton Computation calculates a number of things.

First it computes the properties or process for the new medium. It can do this by creating a whole new process that is characteristic of a whole new medium. Or it can filter out some features of the old process. Or it can do both and combining the result. When features are filtered out the process is called symmetry breaking. Where the resulting medium has some properties in common with the originating medium we say that the symmetry of those properties has been maintained.

The Langton Computation also frees the wavy flow of information to continuously support the continued existence of this new medium (remember, without waves the medium neither absorbs information nor radiates information). It also calculates the parameters for the new buffer. These include the lower and upper limits for the information storage capacity of the free information that the buffer will hold. They also include the nature of the type of the information that the buffer will hold, including orders of freedom for the free information.

Finally the Langton Computation calculates the amount of wavy free information that will be stored in the buffer and allows that information to flow into the buffer.

The Langton Computation is the most wonderful process in nature. It is the basis for the creation of everything that we see around us, including ourselves.

Uncertainty

Phase transitions are not deterministic. Stated another way, the Langton Computation is not deterministic. It is incredibly mysterious. For example, it is impossible to predict by examining the medium itself, if it will undergo a phase transition and the associated Langton Computation, in a changing environment. If it does undergo a phase transition it is impossible to predict by examining the medium itself or the environment, the conditions that will induce the phase transition. Furthermore, it is impossible to predict by examining the medium itself or by examining the environmental conditions that induced the phase transition, the nature of the medium that will be created by the phase transition. Worse than that, once the phase transition has occurred it is impossible to explain, **after the fact**, why the new medium is characterized by its unique new properties. The mystery of the phase transition is total. These things mentioned here can only be known through observation and noted.

This has important consequences for our understanding of the natural world. For example, it is impossible to predict that solid water will become liquid under certain circumstances (assuming of course that this phenomenon has never been observed). All we can do is observe the transition from solid to liquid and note the existence of the new phase. I argue here that such things as, space, time, energy, nucleons, atoms, stars, galaxies, bio-consciousness, self-awareness and civilization are created by phase transitions. If this is the case, then the creation of these new phases by the Langton Computation, can never be explained, even now, after the fact. The emergence of these new phenomena can only be observed and noted.

The Langton computation is the most mysterious phenomena in nature. In many ways it is nature's way of covering its tracks, of hiding how it creates new things. It imposes the limit to our knowledge of the natural world. But if there are limits to what we can know, at least we know why we cannot know.

The First Phase Transition – The Big Bang

Where and when did all these phase transitions start? They started with an original medium. This medium, a kind of blank slate, was differentiated by the first phase transition, which we call the Big Bang. The Big Bang initiated a huge flow of free information that formed the three metaphorical channels, mentioned above. The first channel provided the power for the Langton Computation that created what we see as space and time. The creation of space and time continues to this day, a fact that has implications that are discussed in the next paragraph. The second channel formed to continuously maintain the existence of space and time and the third channel of free information was formed to power new phase transitions.

This flow of free information released by the Big Bang, powered a second phase transition, computing quantum fields with associated particles of matter in the form of fermions and energy in the form of bosons. It is also possible that particles of what is referred to as dark matter were also formed. It appears, unlike the creation of time and space, that the creation of matter and energy was a one time event and that the total of both remains constant to this day. The second channel of information began to flow and perform its continuous two part task. First it provided the information to continuously maintain matter and energy. The flow also simultaneously and continuously flushed away the entropy produced by their creation. The third channel was also established, with free flowing information ready to create new things through phase transitions.

The Big Bang phase transition that created space and time is very special because it is continuous (the Langton Computation is continuous). In recent years the expansion of space has been observed to be accelerating and the cause has been ascribed to an unknown process powered an unknown force called "dark energy". It is interesting to speculate on the idea that this acceleration of the expansion of space may be due to the release of free information from the original medium, the blank slate, which gives a boost, so to speak to the creation process of space. Should this be the case, our universe would not be the closed system that many think it is. No, it would be open, with free information flowing "in" from some "outside" source. Such a state of affairs would have astonishing implications for such things as laws of conservation and communications.

Furthermore the continuous expansion of space may end up diluting the information density of space. As more and more space is created, the amount of free information that is liberated may find the increasing volume of space so empty there is nothing to create. Remember. The creation of space and time is continuous but the creation of matter and energy was a one time event. Once it was created, that was it. No more. As space continues to expand, this matter and energy is diluted. As it becomes increasingly diluted the new information released by the continuous creation of space time, cannot be absorbed by its surroundings and induce a new phase transition because the new surroundings are essentially empty of matter and energy. The flow of information becomes too diffuse to induce any Prigogine Phase Transitions (see below). This new information although it continues to flow, flows down a bottomless well. Nothing new happens, space continues to expand becoming progressively emptier...information death. How dull.

While we talk of the Big Bang as a singular event I present the idea that it is the local example of an infinite number of such events in a class of phase transitions that I call the Big Bang class. These have created and will continue to create multiple universes, which form the multiverse, by continuously differentiating the original undifferentiated medium. Our universe is the result of one such event.

Prigogine Phase Transitions: Self-dissipation – Optimizing the Small and Large Scales

As the density of free information decreases and entropy increases in the ever expanding universe it would seem that the prospects for the creation of structures of increasing order are not bright. However a quick look around us demonstrates that order and structure are commonplace. They are everywhere! How can this happen if the universe appears to be running out of gas. Well, the flow of free information is the key. Up to this point (the present day) in the history of the universe, neither the decreasing density of matter, energy or free information nor increasing entropy have been of any consequence as relates to the creation of order. They have been overcome by the continuous flow of free information. This flow flushes away the entropic poison which is a by-product of the phase transition. This fortunate turn of events has been explained by the Russian physicist Prigogine and is the hallmark of what he calls a dissipative system. This fortunate process is at the heart of a new class of phase transition, the Prigogine Phase Transition (author's name) that emerged shortly after free information released by the Big Bang, began to flow.

The First Prigogine Phase Transitions occurred shortly after the Big Bang Phase Transition. Remember, this transition created the information flow in the form of the fields associated with fermions and bosons, including gravity that we see as matter and energy. In the case of matter, these Prigogine transitions took these smaller components (fermions or more specifically quarks) and combined them, creating the sub-atomic particles...neutrons and protons. The process was calculated by a Langton Computation. The continuing flow of information released by the Big Bang provided the information for the maintenance of the structure of these protons and neutrons. It also continuously flushed away the entropy associated with the buzzing quantum field of quarks that make up both particles. Following

the creation of sub-atomic particles further Prigogine Transitions created neutral hydrogen atoms. This transition, which occurred about 400,000 years after the Big Bang, is known as “recombination” and it created a dark universe, opaque to the passage of photons. The period that followed is known in cosmology as the “Dark Ages”. A further Prigogine Phase Transition known as “reionization” occurred between about 150 million and one billion years after the Big Bang and once again allowed the passage of light.

As space expanded these hydrogen atoms came under the influence of gravity, itself created by a phase transition as mentioned above. This induced a new series of Prigogine Phase Transitions powered by the flow of information (gravity) that formed the structures of the cosmos. The differentiations of stellar types (and associated planets) that form the transitions that mark the passage of a star through phases of the Hertzsprung-Russell diagram are each the result of Prigogine Phase Transitions. This is seen in the formation of a protostar from a stellar nebula and its progression through various stages in the main Hertzsprung-Russell sequence, to become a red giant, and variously a planetary nebula, white dwarf or a black dwarf. So too do Prigogine Phase Transitions create the larger scale structures of the universe including, galaxies, clusters super-clusters and larger phenomena. This has occurred and continues to occur, through the dissipative “decoupling” of gravitationally sensitive normal (baryonic) matter from gravitationally insensitive dark matter that characterizes the Prigogine Phase transition. .

This growth and differentiation of stars by Prigogine Phase Transitions also resulted in differentiated atomic structure through recursive rounds of phase transitions seen as nuclear fusion in the centre of different star types. This process created all the elements of the periodic table. These new elements were often scattered throughout space in star explosions or supernova, themselves the colossally energetic result of phase transitions, in the form of a spectacular failure of a Prigogine Phase. This is because a hallmark of a Prigogine Phase is its ability to dissipate entropy, thus ensuring stability. In the case of an exploding star, a sudden increase in entropy overwhelms the dissipative process. Boom!

WKJG (Wachterhauser Kauffman Jordan Ghin) Phase Transitions - Auto-catalysis – Optimizing the Middle Scale

This is a mouthful. What do these do? They create bio-consciousness from a non-bioconscious environment.

As we have seen, phase transitions created the quantum world at the small scale and the cosmos at the large scale. The creation of planetary bodies provided a place for new phase transitions to occur. Nature, always seeking a way to optimize its processing, found fertile new ground, creating in effect, the middle scale. The surface of at least one planet, this one, was a sea of zillions of atoms and molecules at a high energy state (Morowitz, Kauffman). More particularly their associated electrons were at a high energy state. All these electrons were looking for somewhere to go and something to do. Optimization is always the name of the game. Chemical reactions (themselves Prigogine Phase Transitions) can be a helpful solution to the problem of moving electrons from a high energy state to a low one. But normal chemical reactions are relatively slow. Although such reactions occurred in this new environment, they did not relieve the tension. There remained an overwhelming crowd of electrons still looking for a way out, a fast lane to a lower energy state. Life provided a solution to the problem. Riding to the rescue come, Wachterhauser, Kauffman, Jordan and Ghin.

A closer look at the situation reveals this. Elements can combine to form a bewildering number of different types of molecules. Furthermore a number of molecules act as catalysts for the reactions whereby they themselves are

created. In other words, some molecules are self-catalytic or auto-catalytic. At a point where the ratio of the number of possible reactions between molecules to the number of possible different types of molecules becomes greater one to two, an autocatalytic network emerges (Kauffman). Voila, the WKJG Phase Transition. In other words, chemical networks that become self-sustaining, emerge at the middle scale. Indeed it is the emergence of these networks in this spatial realm that create the definition of middle scale. These networks had a huge variety of properties. Many were characterized by channels (electron transport chains) that expedited the flow of electrons, with varying degrees of efficiency. Those that most effectively allowed the flow of electrons from a high energy state to a lower state came to dominate among the large number of network types. We call these networks by their biological name...metabolism.

What is so good about metabolism? Why is it the best solution to the dissipation of electron energy, for the passage of an electron from a high energy state to a low energy state? Or stated another way, why is metabolism the best solution for the flow of information (electrons are a type of information) from a relatively higher potential to a relatively lower potential. There are a number of information processing features that favour metabolism. The first thing about metabolism is that it endures. It outlasts the one-time nature of a simple inorganic reaction for example. This provides a continuity of flow. The catalytic nature of the process, as well as the very short transmission distances involved, provide speed. Thus the express lane! The complexity of the process provides more bandwidth than simpler reactions. This combination of continuous information flow, speed, and bandwidth (complexity) allows a relatively more massive flow of electrons (information), via electron transport chains, than simpler chemical reactions. This speed and flow of rich information ignited the phase transition, the Langton Calculation that created bio-consciousness. It also provided the continuous flow to maintain the new phase, the metabolism. Furthermore the information flow flushed away the huge amount of waste information produced by the calculation of the process for the new phase (the metabolism) and produced as well by the continued maintenance of the new phase.

A quick word about the dominance of carbon in biology. Metabolism is characterized by two coupled processes, catabolism, the power source for building and anabolism, the building process itself. Carbon is an ideal building block for the anabolic process because while its outer electron shell has the ability to hold eight electrons, under normal circumstances it only has four. Due to the fact that chemical reactions involve the mutual sharing of electrons by atoms, carbon has place for four more electrons from different atoms, more than its competitors, hydrogen, helium, lithium, etc., before its outer electron shell is complete. Through the process of the natural selection of a variety of auto-catalytic anabolic structures, nature quickly favoured carbon based anabolisms as seen in the early presence of the Calvin Cycle, the reductive TCA Cycle, the 3-hydroxypropionate cycle and the acetyl-CoA pathway. This is because they favoured the efficient production of enzymes (proteins) that made their associated catabolic electron transport chains more effective than competing chains. Because they were more efficient in harnessing the power of their high energy electron environment they grew faster and more numerous and came to dominate the competition.

Auto-catalytic processing can vary in intensity as it is influenced by, among other things, the nature of the information environment. This variation in intensity results, through a process of recursive auto-catalytic formation and natural selection (Kauffman), in what we call speciation. As a consequence, we see all the different types of bio-conscious forms that have characterized the history of life, ranging from anaerobic prokaryotic bacteria, to large aerobic eukaryotes.

But there is more to auto-catalytic processing (metabolism) than this. Jordan and Ghin state that the auto-catalytic process is also characterized by phenomenology...consciousness. I believe that the WKJG Phase Transition created a new phase that is both biological and conscious, material and phenomenological ...in other words bio-consciousness. They argue that it is impossible to have metabolism without consciousness and that it is impossible to have consciousness without metabolism. They argue that this is so because the metabolism embodies the context of

the environment from which it was created. And this creation was the result of a WKJG Phase Transition. What is it about this phase transition that embodies the environment and creates a phase that is both material and phenomenological? I speculate it is the auto-catalytic process. The process locks in the characteristics of the environment and internalizes them. This stands in contrast to the Proigine Phase Transition that pulls in information from the environment but passes it through the system without any auto-catalytic processing. However as stated above, because of the mystery associated with the Langton Computation it may well be impossible to know how the abiotic becomes bio-conscious.

However assuming the correctness of the assumption that metabolism is simultaneously material and conscious, what can we say about the consciousness of the first bio-conscious creatures? It is reasonable to speculate that it was certainly very simple. It would also be reasonable to argue that the consciousness of the first anaerobic bacteria for example, was to human consciousness as the metabolism of that bacteria was to human metabolism...in other words, very simple compared to stunningly complex.

Is it possible to be more specific? Maybe. Perhaps bacterial consciousness can be described in terms of quality and quantity. First quality. In saying that the consciousness of a given metabolism (that of the first bacteria) was simple, it is reasonable to argue that it was undifferentiated. For example, it made no distinction between an inner and outer world. It merely felt what it was like to be bacteria, to use the language of present day researchers into consciousness. It experienced a very simple "something". It is possible to speculate that while the experience, feeling or sensation of what it is like to be a bacteria, although undifferentiated for a particular bacteria, was the same for all the bacteria of the same family, all of those with the same metabolism. Furthermore it is possible to speculate that the consciousness a bacteria with a different metabolism was (is) qualitatively different from that of bacteria with other metabolisms.

Is it possible to say more about the quality of bacterial consciousness. Again, maybe! As stated above, the first metabolisms, through auto-catalysis, embodied the environment, both the specific environment from which they emerged and the larger environmental context that supported the existence of that specific environment (Jordan, Ghin). What might these original environments have been like? In describing them we can appreciate the physical nature of the metabolism as a first step in understanding the quality of bacterial consciousness.

Wachterhauser speaks of a number of possibilities for such early environments that may have given rise to precursor metabolisms, consisting of an energy generation process, catabolism, powering a building process, anabolism. He speculates that electron energy from electron transport chains in sulfide based, iron-sulfur based and nickel based catabolisms may have powered anabolic building, with atoms of carbon from environmental CO, through a process described as the acetyl-CoA pathway,.

And the quantity of bacterial consciousness? Is there a way to appreciate that? Perhaps, if we look at the power source for anabolism we may gain some insight with respect to the "intensity" of bacterial consciousness. There are a number of possibilities, ranging from photons, which first powered anaerobic photosynthesis, through the electron cycle of the associated Photosystem One, through varying degrees of electrical potential (Gibbs Free Energy), from electrons provided by both organic and inorganic molecules as they passed through a variety of catabolic electron transport chains. The relative power differentials of these energy sources may provide some appreciation of the quantity of bacterial consciousness.

It may be that successive recursive cycles built increasingly complex metabolic networks, differentiating both the biological and phenomenological parts of bio-consciousness. All this was done with electron flow (information flow) and building materials (hung mostly on a framework of carbon), both from the environment. Increasing amounts of waste chemicals, heat (entropy) were flushed away allowing the growing structure to endure.

Bio-consciousness is a wonderful solution to the problem of optimization. It optimizes processing. It does this by creating, through a phase transition from a purely material world, a new phase which is simultaneously both a material and phenomenological. The medium embodies both materially and phenomenologically the environment from which it emerged. WOW!! But there is even more. Bio-consciousness fills an empty processing niche. Processing first created space. Space expanded and became characterized by scale. Optimization took advantage of the scale it created and began processing at short range (Plank distance) creating and defining the small scale, which we see as the quantum world. As space expanded, long range gravity based information processing began to occur, creating and defining what we see as the astronomical world. This new domain optimized itself once again, with the emergence of bio-consciousness creating and defining what we call the middle scale.

The concept of consciousness as a contextually emergent property of self-sustaining systems raises a number of important questions. For example, what does it mean for the development of artificial consciousness using the approach of chips and programming? The implications seem to be bleak. According to Jordan and Ghin, in order for consciousness to be part of an information processing system, the system must first be self-creating, in order to embody the context of the environment and then it must be self-sustaining or auto-catalytic, to "lock in", the properties of that environment. The technology for the creation of a context that allows the self-creation and self-sustenance of a computer is at present not available and will probably not be so, far into the future. However, using another approach that involves the ideas of Wachterhauser and Kauffman, and more specifically concept of auto-catalytic sets, (and by implication the ideas of Jordan and Ghin), scientists are exploring approaches to the experimental creation of bio-consciousness (life) in the laboratory. Chances for success seem much more promising.

What about the idea of the living universe, the living planet, the Gia? As we have seen the essence of the WKJG phase, is the concept of bio-consciousness as the contextually emergent property of auto-catalytic systems. If it is conscious, it is alive. If it is alive it is conscious. You cannot have one without the other. Well it does not look like the universe or the planet is bio-conscious. These processes and structures are certainly self-regulating, self-organizing and self-dissipative, but they are not auto-catalytic. Furthermore they are characterized by processing distances that are too great, bandwidths too narrow and topologies too simple to allow the highly coloured information flow (high speed, high volume, and high complexity) essential to create and sustain bio-consciousness. Bye-bye Gia!

Metzinger Phase Transitions – The Ultimate Middle Scale Optimization

Biology and consciousness have been differentiated through recursive rounds of WKJG Phase Transition and natural selection, a process we see expressed through speciation. The biology and the consciousness of different species have become larger, more energetic and more complex. With the progression of time, the differentiation of consciousness has manifested an increasingly wondrous number of features...the ability to "feel" disruption, alarm, emotion: the ability to distinguish between the inside and outside world: the ability to make internal representations of the inside and outside world: the ability to remember: the ability to integrate a variety of processes and make decisions: and the ability to know (cognition), among other things.

The drive to optimize, powered by electron (information) flow, created further differentiation. It created self-awareness. Self-awareness involves a differentiation of cognition. It is possible to be conscious without knowing that the consciousness that is experienced is one's own. However the emergence of self-awareness through a Metzinger Phase Transition, introduced the ability to know that the consciousness we experience is our own.

We intuit from their behavior, that insects are highly conscious creatures but that they are not self-aware. They do not know that the consciousness that they experience is their own. Humans do however know that their consciousness is their own. This involves the differentiation of cognition so that humans "know", that the feelings, sensations and other aspects of consciousness are "their" consciousness.

According to Metzinger, this is the result of what he calls the illusion of self-awareness. He states that this is due to a number of brain processes. In his view the brain creates a highly dynamic body space, one's own space, that is like an empty shell, a hollow person, the surface of which coincides with the physical surface of our bodies and which moves when we move. He states that other parts of our brain create and consolidate into a seamless whole the "experience" we call consciousness. Finally, yet other parts of the brain cause the feeling to "fill", or coincide or correspond to the hollow body space. This filling of the body space with consciousness creates what he calls the illusion of self-awareness. I speculate here that these processes are the results of what I call Metzinger Phase Transitions (MPT). A MPT creates the body space through the differentiation of a simpler feeling of body. An MPT consolidates all the elements of our consciousness into a seamless whole. Finally a further MPT associates this seamless experience with the body space.

Should this be the case it would be the logical outcome of nature's drive to optimize. It helps solve the local problem of an environment overloaded with high energy electrons looking for somewhere to go and something to do, by maximizing their passage through electron transport chains supported by auto-catalytic bio-consciousness. But more importantly it creates a new medium, that which we call self-awareness, that allows the universe not only to see and feel itself but also to know that this sensation is its own. It is nature's drive towards optimization through reflexive information processing come full circle. The universe has created a way to experience itself.

But it does not stop here. Large numbers of bio-conscious creatures, (people), interact and create new auto-catalytic information processing networks, which, through recursive phase transition based growth, and natural selection, differentiate and create what we call civilization.

The End

We have seen that as things are created some of the wavy information flow is used up (entropy) in the creation process (the phase transition). Some is also used to continually maintain the things that have been created (more entropy). But some remains unused and continues its wavy flow, (enthalpy), powering new phase transitions which continue to create new things. When all the information has flowed to the bottom of the hill (maximum entropy) everything will come to an end. Oh my!

An Appreciation of the Theory of Reflexivity

It is possible to make a few simple comments about the Theory of Reflexivity.

- The theory is simple. It states that nature optimizes itself through the continuous reflexive self-differentiation of an original undifferentiated medium by means of multiple self-organizing phase transitions powered by information flow.
- The theory is sweeping in scope. It attempts to provide a coherent explanation for everything that has ever existed and everything that will ever exist.
- The theory is internally consistent and can probably be expressed mathematically. However the discontinuities related to phase transition will be tricky to model. The mathematics of Langton, Prigogine, Kauffman and Boltzman among others may be helpful. It should be remembered that being internally consistent does not mean that something is right. The story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears is internally consistent, but of course it is a fairy tale.
- The theory makes predictions. For example one prediction is that bio-consciousness has been created zillions of times from a non-living environment beginning about 3.7 billion years ago and that this creation process continues right up to the present day. Life is being created all around us all the time, right now, because the same environment, that of high energy electrons looking for something to do, that existed billions of years ago, still exists today. Furthermore, this life creating process will continue until that environment no longer exists.
- The predictions made by the theory can be tested. Using the example mentioned above, we can be inspired to look for examples of metabolism appearing abiotically in the world around us.

Other comments about Reflexivity can also be made.

- The Theory of Reflexivity destroys the concept of cause and effect. This is because the output of reflexive processing can modify the transforming process that created it in the first place, in ways that cannot be predicted (the Langton Computation).
- The effects of the Theory of Reflexivity are manifested in such phenomena as turbulence, complexity and chaos that abound in nature.
- The effect of the Theory of Reflexivity on the limits to knowledge is expressed mathematically in Gödel's Theorem.

The infinite numbers of phase transitions that have created the world to this point and support its very existence, at this very moment, coupled with the reflexive uncertainty of each one of these transitions, create a reality that is a type of wonderful illusion. The result is that the world around us and indeed we ourselves are like a cloud, a ghost.

Finally, as mentioned above, deeper implications relating to limits on our ability to understand nature, may be somewhat unsettling. It may be that no matter how hard we try, we can never know everything. We will never have a

full knowledge of the laws of the natural world. That is the bad news. The good news is that although we can never know everything, we at least know why we cannot know!

For Further Investigation

Web Site

www.theoryofreflexivity.com

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About the Author

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The Holy Guardian Angel:

Exploring the Sacred Magick of Abramelin the Mage

By Aaron Leitch

Behold, I send an Angel before you, to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him, and obey His voice; provoke Him not, for He will not pardon thy transgressions; for My Name is in Him. But, if thou shalt indeed obey His voice, and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy unto your enemies, and an adversary unto your adversaries. [Exodus 23: 20-23]

Today we shall meet the Holy Guardian Angel. Many teachers from various spiritual paths stress the importance of this mysterious being, while each of them tend to mean something different by the term. In many cases, folks are just referring to a kind of Angelic bodyguard that keeps one (especially children) out of harm's way. In other instances, it is treated as a kind of metaphorical construct for deeper spiritual truths- an embodiment of all that is good about a person. Students of modern Western occultism might be most familiar with the equation of the Holy Guardian Angel and one's own Higher Self. It is my hope that this essay will help make some sense of the whole confusing matter.

In particular, we are going to explore an obscure magickal text from the late 1600s entitled *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* (hereinafter called the *Book of Abramelin*). This small booklet- available in any bookstore or online (Dover Publishing ISBN 0-486-2311-5.)- reveals a ritual procedure by which a spiritual aspirant might prepare for, invoke, and bond with his Holy Guardian Angel. S.L. Mathers translated the book from a French copy in the late 19th century, and since then the Holy Guardian Angel has disseminated into many areas of modern Western mysticism. While some aspirants have eschewed the Judeo-Christian spiritual philosophy within the text, the concept of the Holy Guardian Angel and the vital importance of gaining contact with this entity have had a tremendous influence upon Hermeticism, Rosicrucianism, and even Neopaganism.

Establishing contact with the Guardian Angel is supposed to be a hazardous undertaking, for the aspirant is attempting to invoke the very Voice of God into his or her life. Yet, on top of this, the book further promises that- having gained the cooperation of the Holy Guardian Angel- the aspirant can continue onward to establish control over all the spirits of nature and hell. Needless to say, the *Book of Abramelin* has been the stuff of Lovecraftian-style fable, and urban legends are easy to find surrounding the text. To attempt the magick and fail (and thus go insane) is only one of the most famous pitfalls. The talismans in the back of the book, they say, tend to work of their own accord. Just owning a copy of the text, we are told, can attract spiritual unrest or even hostile demons to your household!

Thankfully, few of these dark legends about owning, studying, or using the book turned out to be true. Therefore, we are free to explore the subject of Abramelin and the Holy Guardian Angel (or "HGA") from several different perspectives. First, we will take a look into the *Book of*

Abramelin- its history, contents, and a brief analysis of the Abramelin Rite itself. Then, we're going to step backward in time to explore the concept of the Guardian- from the most ancient spirit teachers and Patron Gods to the Genius or Daemon of Platonic philosophy. This will lead us into some discussion about classical Gnostic philosophy and how it bears upon the concept of the Holy Guardian Angel. Finally, I will offer another brief analysis of the HGA concept- this time using the Qabalah most familiar to my fellow students of Western mysticism.

The Book of Abramelin

The history of the *Book of Abramelin* is both fascinating and mysterious. In 1898, occultist and translator S.L. Mathers stumbled across the manuscript in the Library of the Arsenal, Paris, France. It was in French, but claimed to have been translated from a Hebrew original that dated back to 1458. Mathers places the French translation at the end of the seventeenth or beginning of the eighteenth centuries.

Modern scholarship has yet to solve the mysteries of the book's true origins. First of all, the French manuscript cited by Mathers in his edition has vanished from the Library of the Arsenal. (English translations, however, do remain.) Some have reported that the Library claims no such manuscript ever existed- leading many to label Mathers a fraud who "translated" his book from a copy already in English! However, this theory is highly doubtful. More recently, researchers have reported from the Library that the manuscript is merely lost or stolen. In fact, many such manuscripts were lost in a fire that broke out there early last century.

Even more mystery surrounds the contents of the book, and what they have to say about when and by whom the book was created. The supposed name of the author is "Abraham of Worms" or "Abraham the Jew" (likely a pseudonym with symbolic relation to the father of Judaism). He was a physician, Qabalist, magus, and political advisor to such men as Emperor Sigismund of Germany (1368-1437 CE). However, for the last century, literary scholars have doubted the book could have been written in the late 1400s. For instance, one might note the similarities between Abraham's autobiography (given in the first part of the *Book of Abramelin*) and the *Fama Fraternalis* published in 1614. If Mathers' French translation were actually the original, even it was only dated to the late 1600s.

Equally dubious were "Abraham's" claims of being Jewish. There are many inconsistencies in the text that point to a Christian author. For instance, the numbering from the Vulgate Bible is given for Psalms, and there are references to the Apostles, St. John, and several Catholic prayers. The Christian holy day of Easter is mentioned (rather than the Jewish Passover), and the Talismans given in the book include such names as "Lucifer" and other demons from Christian mysticism. Not only this, but the *Book of Abramelin* resembles no known Jewish mystical text - such as the *Zohar* or *Sepher Yetzirah*. (Nor has there ever been a Hebrew version of the manuscript found.) Instead, it resembles (in parts) the Christian grimoires and exorcism handbooks of the medieval period. The mythology presented in the rhetoric of the book (including Lucifer's rebellion in heaven, etc) also strikes me as more Christian than Judaic.

This would all seem to make perfect sense. After all, it was common for Christian grimoires (such as the *Key of Solomon* and the *Goetia*) to claim both Jewish authorship and false antiquity.

Since Mathers released his edition into the West, *Abramelin* has been considered just another example of the same. Yet, somewhat recently, the plot has thickened! A researcher by the name of Georg Dehn discovered yet another version of the text- this one older than the French!- written in German.

The French/English translation of *Abramelin* bears some striking differences from the older German. First of all, the French translator systematically reduced the length of the magickal Rite- from one and a half years to merely six months. The French version is also described as much less elaborate, is missing an entire portion of the original text, and a large number of its Talismans are incomplete. More importantly to our discussion here, at least some of the Christian references I mentioned above are not found in the German. (I.e.- the reference to “Easter” in the French was originally to “Passover” in the German.) While this does not prove that Abraham was Jewish, it throws some very reasonable doubt upon the theories surrounding the French version. Now, it is just as likely that Abraham was indeed a Jew, and the Christian bias of the text imparted by the unknown French translator. At this point we cannot be certain.

Mr. Dehn’s research has led him to believe the author of the *Book of Abramelin* is exactly what he claims. This is likely because he found a historical personage who fits the description of Abraham the Jew- Rabbi Jacob ben Moses Molin (ca 1365-1427). He lived in approximately the same time period claimed by *Abramelin*’s author, had a similar education and career, and even a “missing period” in his life that would match the period described in Abraham’s autobiography. If this is our man, then it follows that “Abraham of Worms” is merely a symbolic pseudonym for the Rabbi.

However, the enigma doesn’t end here! Mr. Dehn also tells us that he has discovered- in a library in the town of Wolfenbuttel- a copy of the *Book of Abramelin* dating to 1608. If this is true, the implications are staggering! It would mean that the *Fama Fraternitatis* (published in Germany in 1614) either borrowed its story from the autobiography of Abraham the Jew, or both of these tales were borrowed from some earlier undiscovered source. In my own opinion, it makes some sense that the tale of Christian Rosencreutz would have originally been a tale of a “wandering Jew” (symbolic of the Diaspora)- later adapted by the Rosicrucians to star a Christian in its principal role.

Mr. Dehn’s work is already available in German, and an English translation is on its way. (Edition Araki Publishing - ISBN 3-936149-00-3) This will greatly expand our understanding of *Abramelin*, its origins, and its place in Western spirituality.

However, for the last century, it has been the Mathers translation of the French version that has been loved, feared and misunderstood throughout the West. Therefore, without further delay, we shall explore the text as S.L. Mathers presents it.

The *Book of Abramelin* is divided into three sub-books. The first is the autobiography of Abraham the Jew. He describes his years of questing for the True and Sacred Wisdom, and his several disappointments along the way. (Here are shades of the tale of Christian Rosencreutz in

the *Fama Fraternalis*.) He learns several forms of magick, but finds them all lacking, and their practitioners to be less than they claimed. At the last moments before giving up the quest, Abraham meets an Egyptian adept named Abramelin, who agrees to teach Abraham the Sacred Magick.

Abraham wrote this text for the sake of his younger son Lamech (another Biblically-inspired name). According to the story, Abraham had- in the tradition of Judaism- granted the mysteries of the Qabalah to his oldest son. However, he did not wish to leave Lamech with no key to spiritual attainment, and thus Abraham left behind the *Book of Abramelin*. This first book ends with the father instructing the son on what kind of life he must lead if he completes the Operation, how the True and Sacred magick should be properly employed.

The second two books, then, are composed of the instructions for the Sacred Magick, which Abraham claims to have copied by hand from Abramelin's original. The first part (book two of the trilogy) describes a heavily involved procedure of purification and invocation, resulting in the appearance of one's own Guardian Angel.

Abraham also spends some time in book two explaining his own philosophies about magick. This is where the text warns against using any other grimoire, sigils or barbarous names of invocation. In one chapter (Book II, Ch. 6), he relates a wonderful alternative to Solomonic magickal hours in detail.

The purifications take the standard grimoiric forms of seclusion, fasting, cleanliness, and a heavy dose of prayer. A separate room- called an Oratory (prayer room) must be maintained in utmost purity during a six month period, as this is where the Angel will appear and bond with the aspirant at the end of this time. Afterward, the Angel takes over as Teacher for the aspirant, and it is from this being (and only this being) that the True and Sacred Wisdom and Magick is discovered.

Once the cooperation of the Angel is assured, one continues to summon forth such demonic princes as Lucifer, Leviathan, Astarot, Belzebud, and several others (twelve in all). These beings are commanded to deliver an Oath of obedience to the mage, as well as the use of four familiar spirits for day-to-day practical tasks.

The third and final book is a collection of magick-square talismans, which the demonic princes and spirits must swear upon when giving their Oaths. Each talisman can then be used to command a spirit to perform a task, in much the same fashion as those in the *Key of Solomon the King*. The functions of the talismans are those common to grimoiric material- finding treasure, causing visions, bringing books, flight, healing the sick, etc, etc.

The magick squares provided by this text are often mistaken as *Goetia*-style Seals, where the mere presence of the talismans equals the presence of the spirits themselves. This has led to urban legend-style stories of the "dangers" posed by the possession of the talismans- or even possession of the book itself. However, there is nothing of signatures or Seals about these talismans. Only rarely are the letters of the Abramelin squares formed into recognizable names, and then they are not always the names of the spirits who are actually associated with the

talisman. They are only like the *Goetia* in that the spirits are bound to the squares- but this only occurs *after* the six month operation. On their own, the talismans seem quite inert and harmless.

In fact, it might be possible to suggest the talismans provided in *Abramelin* are actually useless. The first clue comes with the fact that Book II provides a long list of the spirits which Abraham the Jew bound by his own performance of the operation, yet Book III states that each aspirant should demand from the Princes a list of personalized spirits. The talismans given in the text are specifically associated with the list of spirits already provided. Theoretically, if one receives his own list of spirits, one should also receive his own book of talismans to go with them.

The second clue is provided by the state of Book III itself. While the first two parts of the work are generally consistent and well (if obscurely) written, Book III persistently shows forth errors, omissions, and outright contradictions. I've seen it suggested that Book III was a later addition to the text- written in an obviously different style, and with an obviously different (goetic) intent, from the rest of the Celestial-aimed Operation. It could even be that Book III was added to the work as a blind (to divert the attention of the curious), or even as a kind of bait to lure would-be aspirants who might otherwise pass over the book for more popular *Goetia*-style operations. Perhaps, we might consider these talismans as mere examples of what Abraham the Jew received from his Guardian Angel for his own personal use. As the *Book of Abramelin* stresses again and again, the Holy Guardian Angel will instruct one in all necessary areas after contact is made- making anything written in the operation past that point tentative and exemplary at best.

The Abramelin Operation

In this section, I will outline the Abramelin Operation as it is presented in *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*. While I have passed over some details (such as specific Psalms, etc), I do believe this is the first time the Operation has been outlined in its original form since Mathers' publication over a century ago. (There are no inclusions from the Golden Dawn or Thelema in what follows.)

Abramelin has a very detailed chapter on the creation of the Oratory, found in Book II, chapter 11 (Concerning the Selection of the Place). It first suggests one erect it in a natural setting, if you happen to live in the country. It should be in a "small wood," or (one might assume) a small clearing completely enclosed by trees. The Altar is erected in the center of the clearing, built of "stones which have never been worked or hewn, or even touched by the hammer." (See Exodus 20:25, Deuteronomy 27:5, I Kings 6:7)

Abramelin continues its instruction for the wooded Oratory by building a shelter (tent or tabernacle) of "fine branches" over the Altar to protect it from rain (i.e.- for when the Lamp and Censor are burning). Surrounding the Altar at a distance of seven paces one must plant a "hedge of flowers, plants, and green shrubs." If these are high enough, they would provide better privacy than the surrounding trees alone. In any case, they serve to divide the space into an outer area and an inner Holy of Holies (the shelter and Altar). The general idea behind this arrangement can be found in scripture at Exodus 26, where Yahweh instructs Moses in the construction of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and includes the separation of the Holy of Holies with a veil.

Of course, few people will have the luxury to establish such a wonderful natural Oratory. Abramelin accounts for this and offers an "urban" alternative. This Oratory needs only be an apartment (room) with a north-facing window leading to a balcony or terrace. The floor and walls should be made of (or covered in) white pine. A Lamp that burns (preferably olive-) oil should be hung from the ceiling or placed upon the Altar. The terrace (used for summoning earth-bound spirits) is covered in pure river sand of "two fingers depth at least."

The Altar in this case is not made of stones, but is a hollow wooden cabinet (perhaps made of pine after the walls and floor) for the storing of the magickal tools. Upon the Altar must be a silver or brass Censor, and a brass tray to hold charcoal and excess ashes. ONLY the tray may leave the Oratory at any time- in order to dispose of the ashes in some pure place such as a garden.

The bulk of the magickal tools are secluded within the Altar cabinet during the six months of preparation. (Most of them come into play only during the final seven days- which is the Rite of Abramelin proper.) Here we find the magickal vestments: a white linen Robe used to approach the Angel, and an additional red silk over-robe, white silk girdle, and a white and gold silk crown (like a filet) used for commanding the lower spirits. There is also included a set of funerary garments- consisting of a robe of sackcloth (called a robe of mourning) and two silk veils (black and white).

All of the talismans from Book III (assuming one should use them at all) are supposed to be drawn beforehand and stored within the Altar. Interestingly, Abramelin makes no use of consecrated pens, inks, or papers. In Book II, chapter 20, the author insists that drawing the symbols clearly with any pen and ink- so that the operations intended by each is not obscured- will suffice. (This is only one such pointed departure the author takes from typical grimoiric literature- the bulk of which he feels to be false and vain.)

Regardless of the talismans, the primary tool used to command the spirits is a Wand made of almond-tree wood. This likely arises from Numbers 17, where a branch of almond wood miraculously sprouted blossoms, and thus established Moses' brother Aaron as the High Priest of Israel, chosen by God.

It is also necessary to make a blank Talisman from a square of silver. This is wrapped in white silk and stored with the other tools in the Altar. The meaning of this odd Silver Talisman is obscure. However, the text makes it clear that it belongs in some way to the Guardian Angel, and it may even serve as a kind of scrying mirror. My own impression is that- mirror or no- it is intended to facilitate the connection between human and Angel.

This connection is also greatly assisted by the final two items found upon the Altar- the Holy Oil and Incense . (Their recipes are found in Book II, chapter 11.) The Incense is employed for all purposes from the invocation of the Guardian Angel to the conjuration of the infernal spirits. Like many aspects of the Abramelin system, the perfume is derived from Biblical authority. Exodus 30 contains a recipe given by Yahweh to Moses for the composition of the Perfume for use in the Tabernacle. One can compare this with the recipe given in the *Book of Abramelin*:

One part of Incense in Tears (Olibanum, Frankincense), one-half part of Stacte (Storax, Benzoin), and one-quarter part Lignum-aloes (or Cedar, Rose Petals, or Citron). Reduce all of these to a fine powder (or purchase them as such and mix them thoroughly), and keep the result in a sealed container.

I would advise against simply purchasing "Abramelin Incense," since such perfumes rarely contain the actual ingredients as listed in the grimoire.

There is also a Holy Anointing Oil prescribed by Yahweh in Exodus 30, which was intended to consecrate the Priesthood, and all of the vessels, tools, implements, and furnishings of the Tabernacle. As with the Holy Perfume above, we can easily compare the similarities between the Biblical original and Abramelin's version:

One part Myrrh (in resin form). Two parts fine Cinnamon. One-half part Galangal. And half the total weight of these drugs of the best olive oil. Mix together according to the Art of the Apothecary to make a balsam (ointment) and keep in a glass vial.

The mention of the "Art of the Apothecary" in the creation of the Holy Oil is likely a reference to an aspect of the alchemical arts- by which essential oils are extracted from plant matter. It is acceptable to purchase all of the above ingredients in an essential oil form, and mix them according to the directions. Again, beware of ready-made Abramelin Oil, as it may or may not include the proper ingredients.

Typical of the ritual outlined in grimoiric literature, the *Book of Abramelin* employs a regimen of cumulative abstinence and ceremony. The requirements are few in the first phase of the Rite, but they increase in number and complexity as the aspirant progresses. Abramelin is perhaps the best of all examples, because its process is extended over a daunting six month period. (Other grimoires may require as little as a month or just nine days.) Dedication to such a lengthy period of purification really does bring about drastic changes in one's lifestyle and habitual patterns.

The first two months impose no major restrictions other than an attempt to live purely, honestly, serenely, and moderately. One is told to "seek retirement as far as possible." As for ceremonial procedure, one needs only to enter the Oratory twice a day- once in the morning and once in the evening. Each time, a confession is uttered, followed by a prayer to the Highest- the structure of each left completely to the discretion of the aspirant. For six days of the week, nothing else is required in the way of ritual. Only on the Sabbath day (Saturday or Sunday) must one light the Lamp and burn Incense upon the Altar. This represents the extent of the first two months' difficulty. Procedural mistakes are hard to make, and this leaves these months open for adjustment to the new lifestyle.

For the second two months, the ceremonial procedure increases to a certain degree. One must fast every Friday night (the Sabbath Eve), wash with purified water before entering the Oratory at dawn and dusk, and generally prolong the prayers themselves. The isolation continues as before, and the aspirant is told: "Only it is absolutely necessary to retire from the world and seek

retreat." At this point, most of the novice mistakes will have been made and corrected, and one will have faced and dealt with a good number of heretofore unconscious habits. More than anything, the novelty of the entire affair will have worn away, and the aspirant will be reaching a point of mental exhaustion.

The final two months switch the Operation into high gear- involving a lot more formal ritual.. A third prayer (at noon) is added to the daily regimen- each time washing in pure water, donning the White Robe, and kindling the lamp and incense. As well, a second prayer is added to each session- this one to the Guardian Angel. If it is at all possible, the aspirant must cease to work- or to leave the home for nearly any reason. He is told to "shun all society except that of your Wife and of your Servants" and that "ye shall quit every other matter only permitting your recreation to consist in things Spiritual and Divine." The aspirant is told to avoid sexual stimulation like the plague, and is likewise barred from performing any magickal work (except for healing).

All of this gives the aspirant much more to concentrate upon, resulting in a heightened mental focus. It tends to occupy the aspirant totally, and the increased isolation can induce new mental stress. Fortunately, if one has overcome the exhaustion felt in the second two months- literally passing through it rather than retreating- this stage of the Operation can produce a second wind.

After these six months of slowly increasing restriction and purification, the Abramelin Rite proper- by which permanent contact with the Guardian Angel is established- takes place over a seven day period. These days are extremely intense- including total seclusion (even separating from one's family), heavy fasting, hours of prayer, very specific magickal tools and procedures, and the summoning of several classes of spiritual entities. All of the preparations undertaken in the previous six months have served to induce an altered state of consciousness- the stresses and exhaustion establishing the necessary mental condition for the ego-death to follow.

The seven days are divided into one, three, and three. That is- one day for the consecration of everything necessary to perform the magick, three days for the "convocation of the good and holy spirits" (where the HGA is invoked), and three days for the "convocation of the evil spirits" (where the earth-bound and infernal spirits are bound).

The first day is the Day of Consecration. One is to enter the Oratory almost as usual- though with two exceptions. First, one is instructed to enter with bare feet, and to never wear shoes in the Oratory again. (This is likely due to the Divine injunction given to Moses in Exodus: "Put thy shoes off thy feet, for the ground upon which thou standest is holy." Exodus 3:5) Secondly, one is not to don the White Robe.

Instead, the White Robe is placed upon the Altar- along with the Red Robe, Girdle, Crown, and the Wand of Almond. Kneeling at the Altar with the Holy Oil in hand, a long prayer is recited asking for the Divine to touch and consecrate both the aspirant himself and his magickal tools. As before, the composition of this oration is left up to the aspirant. It is followed by the anointing of the aspirant, all of the items on the Altar and the Altar itself with the Holy Oil. Finally, the

usual two prayers are recited before leaving the Oratory, and nothing more is required on this day.

The second day is the first day of the invocation of the Angel. This is where the funerary symbolism of the Rite comes into play. At dawn, one is not to wash or don the White Robe, but instead must put on the Robe of Mourning. Once inside, ashes are taken from the Censor and placed upon one's head (a funeral custom found in Biblical literature- such as the Book of Job), and a black veil is placed over the head and face.

Now, the Abramelin Rite employs a small child (between six and eight years of age) as a scryer at this point in the process. As shocking as this may sound at first, we have to keep in mind that child clairvoyants are no strangers to the grimoiric traditions. As should be clear from Biblical literature, a small child is the epitome of the Christian concept of spiritual purity- just what the grimoires insist is necessary to communicate with Angelic beings. Also, children yet lack the boundaries to the imagination from which adults suffer, making them much better potential clairvoyants.

Today's cultural environment might make the service of a child scryer problematic. However, the reasoning behind the instruction is sound. The aspirant- still in sackcloth and ashes- is in no state of childlike purity or imagination. Thus, Abramelin employs the child (for this one session only!) to see and hear the Angel that may be invisible to the aspirant himself.

The child is placed at the Altar before the Silver Lamén, and a white silk veil (similar to the black one worn by the aspirant) is placed over his or her head and face. The aspirant- clad for his own funeral- is to lay prostrate at the door of the Oratory and recite Psalms and prayers without looking even once upon the Altar. He is to pray for the appearance of the Angel, and for the Angel to communicate any last-minute instructions to the Child.

The text implies the Silver Lamén is used to scry this information. After the Angel has departed, the Child is to bring the Lamén to the aspirant, and- once the aspirant has looked into it himself- return it to the Altar. Then, both leave the Oratory and the aspirant is to remain in complete solitude and silence for the rest of the day. (Presumably because he is now ceremonially dead.)

Day three (the second of the convocation of the good spirits) continues the funeral rite. At dawn, one enters the Oratory as in the previous day, wearing the same Robe of Mourning. Now, the aspirant must lay prostrate upon the floor, with his head at the foot of the Altar, and pray silently for three hours or more. This is the symbolic "laying within the tomb" found in many solar Dying and Rising God mythos. (Such as the crucifixion of Jesus and his three days in the tomb.)

This procedure is repeated again for an hour at noon, and then again in the evening. This is also the time one would implement any instructions given by the Angel on the previous day. While one is not promised a vision of the Angel at this time, it is said that the splendor of the Angel's presence will surround the Altar throughout the rest of the day.

The fourth day of the seven (the third and final day of the convocation of the good spirits) progresses from the death symbolism of the previous two days into the rebirth half of the equation. Here at last the White Robe is worn once more- symbolic of the resurrection and spiritual purity of the aspirant. (The donning of a white robe at the end of such an initiation is found as far back as ancient Egypt.) One is to kneel at the Altar and begin to offer prayers of thanks to the Highest as well as invocations to the Guardian Angel. If all has gone well, it is here the first tentative contact with the Angel will be achieved.

Abramelin promises literal fireworks on this great day- as if full Knowledge and Conversation with the Guardian Angel will have suddenly been achieved. I can't say that I agree. In fact, I would warn any aspirant not to expect much at all. Both the Angel and the initiate will be all but exhausted by this process, and there are still three days of hard work to go to complete the Rite.

Yet, our author Abraham the Jew claims to have had pretty impressive visions, and assures us the Angel will communicate: all of one's blessings and sins; instructions on how one should be living; the True Wisdom and Sacred Magick; where one erred in the Operation; and a covenant to defend the aspirant his entire life, in return for the aspirant's promise to always bide the Angel's instructions. (Personally, I would not expect to resolve any of these issues before the next several years!)

Along with this, the Angel is supposed to give instruction (if needed) on how to conjure the spirits in the following three days, including the revelation of any further talismans necessary for the conjurations. One is also encouraged to ask the Angel- once only- for enough money upon which to live for the rest of one's life. As we can see from all of this, the job of the Angel on this final day (and for the rest of the aspirant's life!) is to reveal one's True Will- the proper direction his life should be taking.

This brings us to the fifth day of the Rite- which is the first day of the convocation of the evil (and earth-bound) spirits. Now the aspirant must fast completely for the next three days. He should prepare and enter the Oratory as is usual- this time donning not just the White Robe, but the Red Over-Robe, the White Silk Girdle and the White and Gold Silk Filet as well. Prayers are recited to the Highest and to the Guardian Angel for aid in the following work, and then the Almond Wand is taken into hand and the exorcisms begin.

On this day, the four chief Princes of Hell- Lucifer, Leviathan, Satan, and Belial- are summoned upon the river sand on the terrace. From them the aspirant must demand a list of servient spirits who are best matched to one's personal psychology and practical needs. (This list of spirits will be those governed directly by the Four Princes and the Talismans associated with them. Of course, this list should be different from that offered by Abraham at the end of the second book.) Finally, an Oath of Loyalty is demanded from the Princes- which is sworn upon the authority vested within the consecrated Almond Wand.

The next day (the sixth of the seven, and the second of the convocation of the evil spirits), the same procedure is repeated to summon the Four Princes. Then, eight Sub-Princes- Astarot,

Magot, Asmodee, Belzebud, Oriens, Paimon, Ariton, and Amaimon- are called onto the terrace. (This total of 12 Princes is likely in reference to the Zodiac, and the final four- Oriens to Amaimon- are the traditional spirits of the four cardinal directions.)

The same demands are made of these Eight as were made of the first Four- a list of servient spirits (ruled specifically by the Eight Sub-Princes) and an Oath of Loyalty. Further, Abramelin tells us to demand of the four Princes of the cardinal directions the names of four Familiar Spirits who are destined for the servitude of the aspirant. After this, the entities are sent away again and the aspirant exits the Oratory.

Now, at long last, the final day of the Rite has arrived- being the third day of the convocation of the evil spirits. Once again the procedures are the same for the exorcism of the twelve Princes of Hell. Then, they are commanded to bring all of the servient spirits they listed for you in the previous days, including the four Familiar Spirits. The spirits are then addressed in groups based on which Prince or Princes rule over them, and they must swear Oaths of Loyalty upon the Talismans they will respond to later.

Even the Familiars are bound to a set of Talismans- found in *Abramelin* Book III, chapter five, "How we may retain the Familiar Spirits bond or free in whatsoever form." This consists of twelve talismans intended to bind the familiars in various illusory shapes. Some of the shapes are an Old Man, a Soldier, a Page, or even a Flower. However, the majority of the talismans serve to bind the Familiars into the shapes of animals- such as a Lion, Eagle, Dog, Bear, Serpent, or Ape. This would seem to be a survival of the shamanic practice of keeping Familiars in animal form- which is closest to such spirits' inherent nature.

Each Familiar has its own natural time of operation- depending on the course of the Sun. The first Familiar remains on "guard duty" with his master from dawn until noon; at which point the second Familiar takes its shift from noon to dusk. The third Familiar then operates from dusk until midnight, leaving the fourth to guard from midnight until dawn. This solar rotation of the Familiars' shifts reflect the four quadrants of the horoscope: East/dawn, South/noon, West/dusk and North/midnight. This further indicates that the Familiars are likely of a directional or even Elemental nature. Thus, for the aspirant, the four Familiar Spirits plus the Guardian Angel constitute a pentagonal mastery of the Elemental Forces (Earth, Air, Water, Fire, and Spirit).

After the Rite is ended, there are just a few instructions for finishing up. If the Oratory is to be dismantled, the river sand must be removed from the terrace and thrown in some hidden place. (NOT a river or the navigable sea.) If the Oratory is left intact (even if it is packed away), it can be used later for further communication with the Guardian Angel. The Sabbath is suggested as the best time for such invocation.

Also, the new initiate must continue to fast after the Operation for another three days. For seven days, he is instructed to do no servile work and to give his time to prayers of thanks and blessing unto the Highest for granting such a gift. In no way should the Sacred Magick be put into use

during these seven days of rest. After that, it is ordained that one help others as much as possible with one's new-found power- else it will depart forever.

Further rules for using the magick follow the Operation in Book II, chapter 20- in the form of a long list categorized by numbers. Interestingly, I have never once heard a student ask about or refer to this list- and this is a shame because it clearly answers many of the most common questions about the Abramelin system. Perhaps what has hidden it from public view for so long is the fact that it does purport to be a list of rules to follow after completing the Operation. Because the Angel, and not the Book of Abramelin, is to instruct one in all necessary points afterward, these rules are likely overlooked as superfluous. Yet, the secret is that the list also contains rules to follow during and even before the Operation. Here are a few examples:

-Rule 13 instructs the aspirant to read and re-read the Book of Abramelin many times over the space of six months before attempting the Operation. This is done for two reasons. First, because Abraham scattered obscure bits of information throughout the three books, the six months of study are necessary to discover them all. Second, it ensures the aspirant will be well-versed in all of the instructions and procedures before making the attempt. At the same time, we can see how this rule- in its own way- makes the Abramelin Operation a year-long undertaking rather than a mere six moons.

-Rule 15 forbids the aspirant to sleep during the daytime- unless some condition makes it unavoidable. Meanwhile, rule 24 advises against attempting any magick during the nighttime.

-Rule 17 sets the age restrictions of the aspirant between 25 and 50 years.

-Rules 28 and 29 both give information on proper fasting during the Operation.

-Rules 33-35 all concern ritual taboos. During the entire six month process, one must take heed to lose no blood from the body (unless your body expels it naturally), to avoid any contact with a dead body, and to refuse any food that includes the flesh or blood of a dead animal.

-Rule 38 contains instructions for one to read all 72 Psalms of David at least twice each week during the six months.

Of course, these examples do not cover all of the instructions hidden in this list of rules. However, they do highlight those which answer some of the most commonly asked questions about Abramelin.

Plus, as I stated above, similar information is hidden in this way throughout the three books. As just one example, all the way back in book two, chapter 10, Abraham describes many activities that are allowed or disallowed for the entire length of the Operation. (Meditation, prayer and the healing arts are allowed. Magick and sorcery are disallowed.) Thus the vital importance of devouring every word of this grimoire for at least six months before beginning the Rite.

The Mysteries of Abramelin

So, now you have seen the Abramelin Operation in its original form. At this point, we can continue forward and ask: What is going on behind the scenes? What are its foundational philosophies and how does it all work? We've seen some clues already: a shift in lifestyle, mental exhaustion, isolation, and disruption of habitual patterns that all contribute to the necessary altered consciousness and ego-death.

Just as importantly, we have seen some hint of the solar death-rebirth symbolism that spans the three days of the convocation of the good spirits. When we then step back and look at the larger picture of the Operation, we can see the Sun peeking through many subtle cracks in the symbolism.

To begin with, the six-month purification commences on the spring equinox (Easter or Passover) and ends on the autumnal equinox (Feast of Tabernacles). (See Book II, Ch. 5) The equinoxes mark two very specific stations of the waxing and waning Sun throughout the year- when the length of the day and night are equal. At the fall equinox, the merciless Sun of the summertime is finally dethroned- and the days begin to grow shorter as winter deepens. But at the spring equinox, the Sun once again overtakes the darkness- and the days will steadily grow longer and hotter until the Sun begins to wane once more. The Abramelin Rite, then, begins upon the religiously important spring equinox, when the Sun takes the Throne of Heaven and begins to wax in power. It comes to a close when the Sun is slain- and even ends with a Solar funeral.

Notice, too, that the daily observances in the Oratory are based upon the daily course of the Sun from Eastern to Western horizon- dawn, noon, and dusk. In this same vein, I might again mention the rotating shifts of the four Familiar Spirits- as they are based on the four daily "stations" of the Sun around the horoscope. The Lamp is a solar symbol- the embodiment of the Invisible Sun of the Spirit. Even the ingredients for the Holy Incense are attributed Solar correspondences. Sleeping during the day, as well as working magick by night, are forbidden unless absolutely required- as if it is necessary to have the Light of the Sun present in order to work the magick. (In his section on magickal timing, Abraham does insist that a planet only has power when above the horizon.)

The Holy Guardian Angel has traditionally been associated with Solar imagery. The Angel is the direct representative of God in the life of the aspirant, just as the Sun is the representative of God among the Planets. (For instance, the Sun Card of the Tarot can be interpreted as the Guardian Angel watching over His young charge.) Notice, too, how there are twelve Princes of Hell listed in this text, with one Angel to govern them- as if in reflection of the twelve Signs of the Zodiac and the Sun that governs them. (This solar-zodiacal imagery is common- such as the 12 Tribes of Israel and Levi, the 12 Apostles and Jesus, etc. This is the basis for modern associations between the number 13 and the occult.)

The foundational mythos contained within *Abramelin* is similar to that of the *Goetia* and other medieval grimoires. The infernal spirits are said to be the Angels cast upon the earth after Lucifer's failed rebellion. As part of the chastisement for their assault upon God's Throne, they were destined to live among and serve the will of mankind. (There are examples in both Eastern and Western shamanism of helper spirits who are bound to service by negative karma and past misdeeds.) Because of this enforced servitude, says Abraham, these demons menace humans at

all opportunities. However, they can be controlled by holy men. To accomplish this, one might be ordained by the Church as an Exorcist. Or, with Abramelin, one could invoke the Holy Guardian Angel for the spiritual authority to command lesser spirits.

Of course, the story of Lucifer's rebellion in heaven is principally Christian. There are parallels that have developed in Jewish and Arabic legend, but these are probably due to influence from the Christian version of the story. Besides this, in the Jewish version, the rebellious Angels did not become demons when cast to Earth. They may be been chastised by God, and set over things wrathful, but they remained Angels firmly in God's own employ. Jewish demons, meanwhile, are earth-bound creatures like any other- not any more good or bad than a tiger or wolf. (For the most part, they represent common nature spirits. They are called Jinn in Arabic.)

Yet *Abramelin* describes the spirits as both fallen Angels and as lowly demons at the command of Man. While they are obviously spirits of both nature and hell- some of them good and some bad- the text treats them all as if they were infernal. This is a starkly Christian influence. As is common in such classical grimoires, a logical shamanic philosophy has been dressed over with Christian dogma. It creates basic contradictions that simply have to be ignored. In this case, it means that Lucifer, Satan, Leviathan, and Belial rule all of the spirits of both earth and hell- the friendly and the harmful. (This makes them more neutral in their operation, while the text insists they are evil.) One who has become holy by gaining Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel will enjoy the authority of command over all of these.

Finally, while we are still on the subject of the secrets behind the Operation, I want to take the opportunity to bust the most common Abramelin myth:

The Abramelin Operation can not be performed in today's modern world!

Certainly, such a feat would have been possible for a well-off physician and political advisor in medieval Europe. Abraham the Jew could take an extended vacation from work, rent a secluded house in the country, and perform a proper spiritual retreat. However, since we today can not just walk away from work and rent to live like a monk for six months, that rules out Abramelin as an option. This leaves the text as little more than a historical curiosity.

Few people know it, but Abraham the Jew addresses this conflict right in the *Book of Abramelin*:

As regardeth the regimen of your life and actions, ye shall have regard unto your status and condition. If you be your own Master, as far as lieth in your power, free yourself from all your business... Ye shall therefore seek retirement as far as possible... (Book II, Ch. 7, p.67)

Although the best counsel which I can give is that a man should go into retirement in some desert or solitude, until the time of the Six Moons destined unto this Operation be fulfilled... nevertheless now this is hardly possible; and we must accommodate ourselves unto the era (in which we live); and being unable to carry it out in one way, we should endeavour to do so in another; and attach ourselves only unto Divine Things. (Book II, Ch. 10, p.72)

There you have it. Abraham the Jew assures us that he is giving us the Operation in its "best case scenario" version, but that it must be adapted according "to your status and condition." If you do not happen to be your own Master (i.e.- independently wealthy), then continue to work, of course! But it will be straight to work and straight home for six months.

The fact is that the Abramelin process is not so unique to Western spirituality. In fact, it represents a system of initiation that has been known in nearly every culture around the world- from ancient Shamanic practices to the most elaborate Temple Faiths. Just as Abraham suggests concerning Abramelin, the initiation has always adapted itself to the time and place in which it must be performed. For instance, to this very day, the Afro-Cuban faith of Santeria preserves an initiation called "*Ocha*"- during which initiates are bonded directly with their Patron Gods (*Orishas*). Abramelin bears some striking resemblances to this *Ocha* Rite, as well as the many other "versions" of this human-celestial bonding ceremony around the world. Hundreds of men and women undergo *Ocha* every year, and its complexity, length and expense(!) far outweigh anything an aspirant of Abramelin must bear.

The Guardian Angel, From Patron God to Genius

There are mentions of "Guardian Spirits" in written history as far back as ancient Babylon. There are even Sumerian royal seals that depict kings in the protective arms of their Patron Gods. In fact, it was likely in Mesopotamia that our modern concepts about the Holy Guardian Angels were born. However, the Guardian Spirit is not unique to Middle Eastern agricultural civilizations. In fact, a global exploration of tribal shamanic cultures reveals that the idea of the Guardian Spirit may be one of the oldest religious ideas on the planet.

In *Shamanism, Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, Professor Eliade suggests that all categories of Shamans possess helper (familiar) and tutelary (guardian) spirits. The helper spirits are usually earth-bound creatures, at the direct command of the Shaman. The Guardians, on the other hand, tend to be celestial spirits, and are very often Messengers of Father Sky Himself.

In some cases, these tutelary spirits are seen as feminine (or masculine in the case of female Shamans)- and the Shaman is literally married to this spirit during his initiation. Afterward, it is through his new celestial spouse that the Shaman will work his miracles for the rest of the tribe. She- and not other Shamans- will teach him the secrets of magick and healing, and She will provide him with familiar spirits. (A dynamic that has not changed one bit in the *Book of Abramelin*.)

Not only is this entity a companion and teacher for the Shaman, but also a protector. It is because of his Guardian that the Shaman is spear and arrow proof, and why his endeavors are successful. When the Shaman ascends the heavens during his ecstatic trances, it is his Guardian or Spirit Wife who carries him aloft and shows him around. Even more importantly, it is She who will claim his soul at the time of his passing, to carry it home to the stars. For these reasons, it is imperative to develop a real working relationship with the Guardian, and to follow the instructions and lifestyle it dictates.

This brings us back, by way of example, to the subject of Santeria's *Ocha* ceremony- by which an aspiring Santo Priest is bonded with his *Orisha*. *Ocha* is a fair representation of ancient tribal Shamanic initiations. It consists of a seven day ceremony involving the consecration of the new priest and having the *Orisha* "put to his head." This latter concept is very significant. Eliade mentions it in relation to helper spirits- where the Shaman receives one "spirit of the head" whose function is to protect him during ecstatic journeys. (In this we can see a relationship between the "spirit of the head" and the human intelligence- especially the faculties related to dreams, vision, and creativity.)

During *Ocha*, the *Orisha* is believed to literally enter the skull of the aspirant- a physical marriage that makes the celestial and the human being one. (The aspirant must even shave his or her head in order to undergo the process- so that the hair does not hinder the entrance of the *Orisha*.) Afterward, exhausted from the Rite, the *Orisha* enters a phase of hibernation. For an entire year, the aspirant must wear white and never venture out in the dark. He must live a monastic life of purity until, after the year is complete, further sacrifices and ceremonies are used to awaken the *Orisha* and establish the new *Santo*.

Compare this to the Abramelin Rite described above- which simply places the period of purification before the seven day ceremony. In Mathers' version, the aspirant only has to endure six months of such isolation and ritual work. Yet, the original German seems to preserve a full year and a half of the same- making it even closer in spirit to the year-long *Ocha* process. Even the aspect of putting the Guardian to the head is not lost in Abramelin- because the aspirant, during the "convocation of the good spirits", is told to lay with his head at the foot of the Altar for a very long period of time. This Altar is where the Presence of the Angel has been drawn down for many preceding months, and the ritual-death posture taken at this point suggests the Angel is moving into the head/intellect of the aspirant.

Moving back into the Agricultural Era and the Mid-East, we see a further evolution of the Guardian Spirit idea. While the tribal Shaman was exclusive in his ability to marry Celestial Angels, the ancient Sumerians (and possibly the Egyptians) developed the idea that everyone has a personal Patron who can be appealed to in times of need. (This is likely due to the advance of astrology- which provided everyone with their own natal chart, and therefore their own governing Deities.)

Chris Bennet has a good discussion of the Personal God in his essay entitled *When Smoke Gets in My I* (and several other closely related essays). He describes the Patron as a kind of personification of a person's intellect- or capacity for thinking and acting. Specifically, he supposes that mankind's earliest contact with the Divine came via psychoactive drugs that engaged our faculties of higher thinking. (Consciousness, intellect, imagination.) It is very common indeed for visionaries and psychonauts- even using modern laboratory-created chemicals- to establish contacts with apparently objective entities during their trips. Often these entities introduce themselves as protectors and helpers, or at least beings with some interest in the welfare of humankind.

It is doubtful that the tribal Shamans or the ancient Sumerians saw their Patron Deities as "personifications" of anything except raw forces of nature. Yet, the idea did begin to formulate in

the minds of later Greek philosophers like Plato. In *The Republic*, Plato relates a rather detailed account of the function served by the Deity:

Upon preparing for re-incarnation, each soul must approach the Spinning Wheel of the Goddesses of Fate (Lachesis, Clotho and Atropos). In Plato's view, the Wheel of Fate is composed of the Zodiac as its outer wheel, and the Planetary Spheres as its inner spokes. Therefore, the Fates who spin, measure, and cut the threads of life upon this Wheel are directly concerned with the influences of the stars upon each individual. First of all, the soul must approach Lachesis, who will give unto it a chosen Personal Deity to be its guide and protector during the next life. This Deity, then, will lead the soul to Clotho (Zodiac) and Atropos (Planets)- who will each establish the fate of the individual. During the physical incarnation of the soul, the Deity is silent and invisible to most humans. However, a select few (such as Socrates) have possessed the ability to commune and converse with their own personal Deity.

Of course, Plato meant all of this allegorically. He refers to the Personal Deity as the "Daemon", which might also be translated "Intelligence" or "Genius." All of these are terms that indicate human consciousness- something that preoccupied men like Plato and Plotinus. As we see in the above, these men saw the Genius as a director and manifestor of the astrological forces of one's natal horoscope. The horoscope, in turn, was viewed as an indicator of the destiny and personality of the individual. Thus, the Genius was the embodiment of this destiny and personality- one's Fate.

By the time we reach the Neoplatonism of the medieval era, and such Hermetic texts as Agrippa's *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, we begin to see a highly refined concept of the Guardian Genius. Agrippa goes into detail on the concept in Book III, chapters 20-22. He describes the Genius as we have seen in Plato's *Republic*, and refers to it as the "Spirit of the Nativity." It descends "from the disposition of the world, and from the circuits of the stars which were powerful in one's nativity." Agrippa discusses at length the necessity of seeking out one's Genius via astrology, and doing everything possible to make one's life sympathetic with its nature. He even gives detailed instructions for finding the name of this Angel using one's own natal chart.

However, Agrippa also chose to present a more elaborate entity than Plato described. Holding to the threefold symbolism he uses throughout the *Three Books*, he postulates that there is a "Threefold Keeper of Man." The Genius of the Nativity is merely one of three Angels assigned to every human to guide and regulate their life. The Nativity Angel is the secondary keeper, followed by the "Angel of the Profession." This latter Angel changes each time you change professions. One's career will advance if the Angel of the Profession is in sympathy with the Genius, and it will flounder if the Angel of the Profession is in conflict with the Genius.

However, Agrippa takes a major departure from all of this when describing the first (and presumably highest) Keeper of the Soul:

The Holy Daemon is one, according to the doctrine of the Egyptians, assigned to the rational soul, not from the stars or planets, but from a supernatural cause, from God Himself, the president of Daemons, being universal, above nature.

The rest of the description of the Holy Daemon fits well enough with Plato's ideas. It directs and guides the life of the soul, and often goes unnoticed by the human it protects. It can be contacted via purification and living peaceably (I am reminded here of the six months described in Abramelin). Socrates is even mentioned as an example of one who has accomplished such a feat.

Agrippa's major departure comes from the suggestion that the Holy Daemon *is not* defined by the stars and planets, but is actually above nature itself (meaning above the zodiacal sphere)- directly with God. It is also interesting to point out that Agrippa claims an Egyptian origin for his Holy Daemon concept, while the usual horoscope-based Genius traces itself through ancient Greece to Babylon. Is this an indication that the entire idea is made-up?

Agrippa's claim of an Egyptian origin for the Holy Daemon turns out to be true. However, our exploration does not take us back to the Priests of Osiris and the builders of Pharaonic Pyramids. Instead, it takes us to Egypt after its Hellenization by the Greek Empire, under the governance of the Ptolemy family. It is here that we find that curious language known as "Coptic"- which is simply a melding of the Egyptian spoken tongue with the written characters of the Greek alphabet. It is here that we find the famous "Greek Magical Papyri"- which formed the basis of what would later be called Gnostic magick.

Gnostic Influence Upon the Holy Guardian Angel

The Gnostic school of mysticism was a result of the collision of cultures in Hellenistic Egypt. The ancient Egyptian mysteries met the philosophies (Pythagorean, Platonic) and Pagan mythologies of the Greeks, along with the mystical religion of the Jewish Essene camps in that part of the world. At the same time, an entire spectrum of philosophies and religions were pouring into places like Alexandria- such as Zoroastrianism, Stoicism, Neoplatonism and Hermeticism. Once the governance of Egypt eventually shifted from the Greeks to the Romans, we finally had the cultural matrix that led to the earliest forms of Christianity (such as Coptic Christianity and Gnosticism).

The Gnostics, though Biblically oriented, developed a very unique view of the universe and interpretation of Biblical scripture. This is likely due as much to their separatist mindset as to the unique mystical culture that surrounded them. For them, the God worshipped by the Jewish people was a blind and ignorant being- a lesser God posing as the Highest. The Angels, as well as the Gods worshipped in Pagan faiths, were nothing more than Archons (that is- Governors) charged by the pretender-God to maintain the Earth as a prison.

It fascinates me how similar the Gnostic philosophies are to Eastern teachings. For instance, the Gnostics believed in reincarnation. Human souls- trapped by the Archons- are forced to reincarnate in an endless cycle. Yet, the cycle is not maintained by the Archons! They are just opportunistic feeders upon the suffering of humankind. What actually keeps the Wheel going is human passion. It is human joy and suffering that keeps us bound here, and it is only through repose that freedom is gained. Repose is a Neoplatonic concept- and what it meant to the Gnostics was that only a mind free of the torments of the passions can gain freedom from the Wheel and entrance to Heaven. (Compare this to the Eastern ideas of Samsara, Nirvana, and the meditative clarity of mind it takes to get from one to the other.)

Before this point in history, most religions accepted a threefold division of the universe: the celestial realm above (where the stars, planets and Gods lived), the infernal realm below (where the dead, Gods of the dead, and various classes of demons lived), and the natural realm in between (where humans, animals, and nature spirits lived). However, the Gnostics had classed the entire celestial realm as the home of the Archons and the pretender-God. The reason for this is discovered when we take a look into their views on astrology.

The Gnostics were staunchly *anti*-astrology. Remember that all of the religions around them were deeply embedded in astrological concerns. Most of them, in fact, had developed as religious cults that worshipped various Planets in the forms of Deities. (The Jewish God did not fit that bill, but He did claim to be the leader and director of the Planetary Deities.) Of course, to the Gnostics, these were all Archons who wished only to prolong human suffering and increase their own power over humankind. Worst of all was the natal horoscope- that visual depiction of the relationship of the Archons to the soul at the time of birth. It represented- according to Plato- the very chain of Karma that binds a soul to the Wheel of Fate. It was the singular goal of the Gnostic to free himself from this Karmic chain, and thus from the Wheel of Fate.

In the end, this philosophy happens to leave some philosophical holes to fill. If God is not really the Highest, then Who is? If one can by-pass the celestial realm for "somewhere else", then what and where is this place? The Gnostic answer looks simple on the surface: beyond the planets and the fixed stars is the Fullness (*pleroma*)- the Mind of the Highest God. The Fullness is above nature because it is the source of nature. It is the home of the Aeons- which are a kind of super-Archangel- along with all of the archetypal blueprints for the things that would manifest in the celestial and physical realms. Unlike the lower realms, though, the Fullness rests in perfect Repose. No passions can exist there. Because of this, the beings of the Fullness have little to nothing to do with what happens here on Earth.

Yet, the Gnostic believed, as a fundamental aspect of his faith, that he was himself from the Fullness. The Gnostics regarded most humans as beyond saving from the Wheel of Fate, but they believed themselves to be essentially different. The Gnostics represented an elite minority of humans who each possessed a spark of Light from the Fullness. (The mythology concerning the descent of this Light from the Pleroma to Earth is long and complicated, and I cover it in depth in my essay *Gnosticism, History and Mythology*.)

According to some teachings, every Gnostic soul (Spark) here on earth has an Angelic double in the Fullness. This double is a kind of lesser Aeon, to whom that spark of Divine Light belongs. Using the language of classical philosophy, the Gnostics regarded the soul as a feminine being. It was the promised Bride to the masculine Angel above, each one waiting anxiously for the (re-)Union. (In modern terms, we would recognize the soul as the "Self" and the Angelic double as the "Higher Self.")

All of these elements come together to form a kind of mystical drama. The separated lovers, the hostile captors, and the quest to find a way home again. Yet, there is one final player in this drama- the one player who most directly relates to our own exploration of the Holy Guardian Angel. All at once He is the hope of the lovers, the redeemer from the captors, and the guiding light homeward. He is called the Christos.

The Christos is a most fascinating figure. It is the embodiment of the consciousness- or Intelligence- of the Highest God. While its home is within the Fullness, it does not manifest naturally from any of the Aeons. Instead, the Christos arises (unborn) from the Highest Source Itself. It rules over the Aeons, and is in fact credited with teaching Them the necessity of Repose. Even the Angelic "Higher Selves" in the Pleroma are the children of the Christos and the Aeon called Wisdom (*Sophia*).

Most importantly, however, the Christos is the Redeemer. It is His job to journey into the imperfect created realm, awaken the soul and remind it of its home, and finally to lead the soul to its reunion in Heaven. Therefore, the Christos alone enjoys the special ability to cross at will the Great Barrier between the Fullness and the created world of the Archons.

This idea was certainly nothing new- especially to the Egyptians. Even the earliest shamanic religions recognized the cycles of the Planets and Stars as they passed above and below the horizon. To the ancient mind, these were the Gods moving between the celestial realm and the underworld. No living thing on earth- with the notable exception of the Shaman- possessed the power to come and go at will between life and death. The Sun, especially, was noted for its daily trips into the underworld- where it was supposed He judged among the dead during the night much as He judged among the living while in the sky. We find this pattern in such places as Sumeria, Babylon, and Egypt.

Coming from Egypt, it is no surprise that some Osirian symbolism found its way into the Gnostic conception of the Christos. Osiris, Pharaoh of the Gods, was worshipped as a dying and rising Solar Deity. His sacred mythology reflects the waxing and waning of the Sun through the year. Therefore, it was His ability to move between, and rule over, both the celestial and infernal realms that made him interesting to the Gnostics. His name is often invoked in the Greek Magical Papyri, and He is strongly related to the Christos.

Yet, for all of this adopted Solar symbolism, it is important to remember that the Gnostic Christos *is not* equated with the Sun. Quite the contrary, it is the Sun- in all of its majesty and brilliance- that is regarded as a mere imperfect copy of the Glory of the Christos. The Fullness is the true home of the Christos, well above the heavenly sphere of the Sun and, in fact, all of created nature.

Well! All of that is quite a mouthful for one simple reference Agrippa makes to "the Egyptians" in his work. While the actual Gnostic school of philosophy was all but extinct in the medieval era, many of its foundational concepts lived on in both the Christian and Jewish mystical texts of the period. Thus, the influence of Gnostic thought is apparent in the description Agrippa gives his Aeon-like "Holy Daemon." It is a holy creature from above nature (as opposed to the Genuis), who speaks to us when we find Repose, and leads us ever closer to spiritual perfection.

The Christ/Christos symbolism remains apparent and strong in Abramelin's Holy Guardian Angel as well. Like Agrippa, Abraham the Jew insists that Repose is of paramount importance if one wishes to hear and speak to the Guardian Angel. The function of the Angel is also the same- to lead one to sacred perfection. Plus, Abramelin utilizes the Solar imagery we know descends from both Osirian and Christian mysteries.

However, the Gnostic stance against astrology is preserved in the *Book of Abramelin*. While direct historical connections between Gnostic literature and this manuscript are unknown, the attitudes toward astrology conveyed in the first part of Book II, Ch. 6 (Concerning the Planetary Hours and Other Errors of the Astrologers) are a shockingly accurate portrayal of Gnostic concepts:

It is true that the Wise in Astrology do write of the Stars and of their movements, and that these attaining thereto do produce divers effects in inferior and elemental things... But that they should have power over the Spirits, or force in all super-natural things, that is not, neither can ever be.

But it will instead be found that by the permission of the Great God it is the Spirits who govern the firmament. What foolishness then would it be to implore the favour of the Sun, of the Moon, and of the Stars, when the object would be to have converse with Angels...

This indicates that- as with the Christos- it is doubtful the Guardian Angel is intended to *equate* with the Sun, nor to reside within the Solar Sphere.

There are more Gnostic influences throughout Abramelin. For instance, the text speaks of gaining "Knowledge" (*gnosis*) of the Angel as well as Conversation- implying a spiritual marriage between aspirant and Guardian rather than a simple summoning ceremony. Even aspects of the magickal procedure used during the seven days can be found in the Greek Magical Papyri- although this is unsurprising in a grimoiric text. Sadly, space prohibits me from exploring this subject further.

Before we move past this issue, I would like to bring your attention to one more philosophical gem hidden in Agrippa's description of the Guardian Angel. His chapter on the subject in his *Occult Philosophy* (Book III, Ch. 22) is entitled "That there is a Threefold Keeper of Man..." The text proceeds, as we have seen, to describe the three Angelic Daemons as separate entities. Yet, I find it interesting that the chapter title makes no reference to the "...Three Keepers of Man." Instead, we have what appears to be a reference to a single- yet threefold- entity. Given Agrippa's faithfulness to the symbolism of the Holy Trinity throughout his *Three Books*, this seems to be a likely interpretation of Agrippa's intent. Suddenly our Three Daemons become three different faces of a single Holy Guardian Angel.

The Hermetic HGA

As we near the end of this essay, I want to present a short Qabalistic analysis of the Holy Guardian Angel. If you have read about the HGA previously, you have more than likely read something influenced by Golden Dawn or Thelemic philosophies- both of which make heavy use of the language of Hermetic Qabalah to explain the nature and function of the Angel. I will do the same here, though it will be in the light of the philosophies we have discussed above.

The Qabalah is a Judaic form of mysticism that adopted much from the various schools of Gnosticism. The Fullness, for example, was adopted and called *Olam haAtziluth* (the World of Archetypes); the Aeons became the *Sephiroth* (from the book *Sepher Yetzirah*); and the Highest God they termed the *Ain* (Nothingness) or *Ain Soph* (Limitlessness). However, the Archons

remain absent from the Qabalah. Instead, the Creator God of Genesis is merely the Highest God acting as Creator. The Angelic hosts, while they are certainly charged with maintaining physical reality, are not generally considered prison wardens who feed upon human suffering.

By the time of the Hermetic Qabalah of the Golden Dawn and Thelema, all of this had been mapped out upon the standard ("Kircher") Tree of Life. The Supernal Spheres of the Tree represented the Fullness of *Atziluth*, followed by the Planetary Spheres ruled by the Angelic choirs, and finally ending in the physical Kingdom of *Malkuth*.

The human soul, too, had been applied to the Tree of Life pattern (that which is below reflecting that which is above). The Supernals here represented the Higher Self (or *Neschemah*) of an individual, while the Planetary Spheres collectively made the rational soul (or *Ruach*).

Modern Hermeticism usually interprets the HGA as the Higher Self. Many ceremonies intended to establish conversation with the Guardian Angel are designed as Qabalistic invocations of the Supernals. By opening the Supernal Spheres within one's own aura, it throws open a line of communication between the *Neschemah* and *Ruach*- allowing the Higher Self to speak to the Self. Because it is indeed the function of the HGA to transmit the True Will from the Higher to the rational soul, this "HGA as Supernals" formula works in a practical sense.

However, based on what we have learned previously, we know that the Higher Self- or Angelic Double- resides always in the Fullness in perfect Repose. Even the Qabalah preserves this- because the Supernals (*Neschemah*) do not cross the Great Barrier to enter the lower Spheres of the Tree. Meanwhile, the spiritual aspirant possesses a Divine Spark that belongs to the Higher Self, and the two long for reunification with one another.

Meanwhile, , it is just as common to see the HGA associated with the Solar Sphere of the Tree- called *Tiphareth* (Majesty). Here once again we see the common relationship assumed between the Guardian Angel and the Sun. Even the Abramelin Rite, especially with its death-rebirth ritual drama, might be classed as a *Tipharethic* initiation ceremony. Hermetic rituals for the HGA often focus upon Tiphareth, because this is the heart of the *Ruach* and the specific point where contact is made between the Higher Self and the rational soul. From this perspective, the HGA might seem to "live" in *Tiphareth*. To be more specific, however, the Solar Sphere is merely where one first encounters the HGA. *Tiphareth* represents within the Qabalah the mid-point between gross and spiritual, where man and Divine meet as one. It is merely one station in a longer journey.

As we can see, the concept of the HGA tends to be a bit slippery in Hermetic philosophy. Our predecessors like Crowley and Mathers tended to jump from one extreme to another when discussing the subject. In one place, the Guardian is described as a metaphor for the Higher Self, and in another the author insists the HGA is an objective Intelligence. Sometimes there is no distinction made between the Genius and the HGA. Other times the entire Guardian Angel concept is dumped into the sphere of *Tiphareth* and forgotten about entirely.

None of this is helped by the fact that no literature has ever definitively established the Guardian's membership in any Angelic Order. The closest we have are references to the "Guardian Angels" (such as in *Abramelin*) or other inferences that the HGAs form an Order of

Their own. It also seems that Plato and Agrippa hint at the same thing- as if the Guardian Angels are held in reserve somewhere awaiting assignment to human souls. Add to this the Guardian's special relationship to the force of the Christos, and we are left with an entity that truly stands outside of the hierarchies of nature. He is under the authority of no Archangel- presumably answering to God alone. He is, in fact, a direct manifestation of the Divine Spark within each of us- the *Shekinah* (Presence of God).

The Holy Guardian Angel is a dynamic creature. He is the Redeemer who travels freely between Heaven and Earth to guide the soul to the place "which has been prepared." He is the Messenger bearing the news of the True Will from the *Neschemah* to the *Ruach*, and our prayers from the heart to the Supernal Fullness.

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Interview with Shou Wang and Shenggy of White

By Saint Natas

Saint Natas: What is the origin of White? How did it come to be?

Shou Wang: I start White in 2005 as a way of performing ideas that didn't fit into a normal rock band.

There were different versions of White, including a noise ensemble with five guitars and one with two electronic musicians, but eventually I met Shenggy, I think at one of the shows of her ex-band Hang On the Box, and we as started talking we discovered we liked the same music. We decided to try working together under the White name, and it turned out so good that we stayed together.

Sh: We met in a gig's back stage in Beijing 2005, after a short simple chatting, we found lots of similar taste with music, then decided to hang out in studio with improvising just for fine, couple of days we got a gig, that's the first gig of WHITE, we blow up the venue that night, after it, WHITE was formed, and Blixa was in there that night.

SN: How would you describe White's musical style to someone how hasn't heard it?

SW: It is very open and it allows us to do whatever we want, but it although we use electronic and percussion instruments and we are heavily influenced by New York musicians of the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s as well as German musicians of the 1970s and 80s, I think our music feels very modern Chinese. Chinese music always has very strong sense of melody and our music is very melodic, even when we are making noise there is always in our minds a melody structure inside the noise. Also Chinese music plays with the different texture of different sounds, and Shenggy and I always put together very different sounds and try to get them to harmonize.

Sh: Analogue low frequency drives multi Berlin and NY minimal sound in Beijing industrial poem's way.

SN: What was it like working with Blixa Bargeld?

SW: Of course he has been a big influence on us long before we knew him, but working with him in the studio was a great learning experience because he used his many years of performing, experimenting, and thinking about music to force us to shape our music more carefully.

Sh: We are all deeply influenced by EN, especial me, I'm also influenced by Blixa's philosophy of the world, and his soul of what music can bring to .we already known him very well, so this is the first way which make thing's easy to happened, also Blixa was living in Beijing around 05 to 07 (his wife is Chinese), that time was just WHITE be Set up, he was in our first gig, we were not mature at that moment, but he found our Potential, and kind of music way which close to him, like we all prefer to put interesting ideas as an important part to develop the sound, then he rent a recording studio, produced couple of tracks, we all very pleased with it and happy to work together, In the end, he decided to produce our whole album.

SN: Tell me about Hang on the Box and Carsick Cars.

SW: Carsick Cars is a band I started also in 2005 with two friends. We wanted to try different kinds of music and build songs around strange guitar chords, feedback and noise. Most people in Beijing did not like this music when we started and we thought we would be able to play once in a while in place like D22 and What Bar and in some people's homes but not much else. We never expected what happened to the band, I guess we were very lucky because just then many young people in China wanted something new

that fit into Chinese experiences. And before Carsick Cars I was really into Hang on the Box. I almost go to all of their gigs. I thought they were really different then anybody else.

Sh: Hangonthebox is my first band from 1999 to 2006, i was the drummer in that band, it's a all girls rock band.since 2003, i have started to listen to more different sound like Sun Ra, EN,Throbbing Gristle and more interesting in electronic sound, till 2006, i quit Hangonthebox, only tend on WHITE and my solo work.

SN: What was life like growing up for both members of White?

SW: When I was 17 I heard the Velvet Underground for the first time and I can say that it changed my life. After that I only wanted to listen to them and to other music, and by the time I was 18 I knew I want to have a band and making music. Before that I don't remember my life.

Sh: i growing up in the middle of Beijing's astronomic and scientific community cos my father working for Chinese Government's space program, Cosmos is my major since i was young to now, if i was not musician, i would be a cosmic scientist to continue my family's career.

SN: Who has influenced you the most?

SW: Of course Velvet Underground, and also Sonic Youth, Glenn Branca, Steve Reich, Yang Haisong, Elliott Sharp , two Beijing bands called Ourself Besides Me and PK14, and many others. I also like Andy Warhol a lot. He treated everything the same and could find interesting ideas in whatever he looked at.

Sh: Blixa, he made me from a regular rock band's drummer to become a real and complete musician, it is i learnt from him that how to build up the relationship between music, spirit and life.

SN: What draws you to make music?

SW: It is hard to say, but I find that my favorite time is when I am working on chord ideas and trying to build a piece of music. Maybe it is because I am not very good at other things and find it hard to talk to people who aren't musicians.

Sh: My nature.

SN: What is the story behind the song Spring House?

SW: It is for me a very beautiful piece, sound much nicer then the rest of the tracks in this album, and when we recording this track , both Blixa and us thought this one sound really like Mongolian grassland in spring, and that is what we thought about when we recorded it.

Sh: Nothing really, just the feeling when we improvising in the studio.

SN: Build a Link?

SW: To me it seems like an old Chinese song about the birds walking in a peaceful pond. We tried to make the overall feeling very still and not moving but inside the song to have small, graceful movements. We don't really think of these things when we make it but that is what it became. Some people say "build a link" means the song tries to make a bridge between modern music and old Chinese music, but I don't really think of those things.

SN: What are live performances like?

SW: A lot like rehearsals, except that we have a better idea of the song structures. Shenggy and I don't meet each other or talk often outside of rehearsals and performances, so when we get together all we do is introduce each other to ideas we have been working on and play with them.

Sh: We basically use all the analogue equipments in live, i play a very old and crazy vintage synth MS20 and drumming/ percussion, we improvising a lot in live as well.

SN: Tell me about the musical relationship between the two of you.

SW: We don't have much in common except that we are in love with the same music. The difference is that I love the loudness and energy of rock and am much more interested in ugly noises and in building chord sequences around the melody, and Shenngy likes cleaner sounds and very subtle melodies.

Sh: i play synth, sampling and percussion, we all make intro of the sound, then to develop them in the studio or live, we like the feeling of "happening" on the stage, so every time the sound in from practice and live all different, and we like this way. we never meet besides practice and gig. and now, i'm living in London, he's in Beijing, but we keep making sound in each city, once we met, we will practice a lot.

SN: What's the indie music scene like in China?

SW: In the last few years it has gotten so good that we no longer all wish we lived in New York or Berlin anymore. There are many different styles and a lot of mixing together, and so many of my friends are doing such interesting things. For some reason it all seems to come together right now. If you go to D22 on Tuesday nights, for example, there is every kind of musicians and they are all trying to do things that the other ones haven't heard before. It is full of ideas.

Sh: i don't know very much about it as i have not been there for many years.

SN: Do you have kind of personal artistic philosophy?

SW: Not really. I don't think artists make philosophy. They try to make interesting things that somehow express something very complicated about their lives. You stand on stage and you are a little afraid but then suddenly you jump into something that you found inside of you and you hope that no one laughs at you.

Sh: Less is more.

SN: What does the future hold for White?

SW: We hope to keep playing in China, Europe and the US, and we are talking about recording another CD. There are a few very interesting people who have discussed producing it and of course we would be so excited to work with any of them. When Shenngy and I are ready we will talk to Maybe Mars and then they will arrange for us to do it. It is hard because we live so far apart, but that also keeps our music fresh. We can never get tired of each other.

Sh: WHITE means unknown and future, we won't stop it and we won't expected any big plan, what we do is to make WHITE like a journey, a journey in our life also.

Was Cagliostro A 'Charlatan'?

The mention of Cagliostro's name produces a two-fold effect. With the one party, a whole sequence of marvellous events emerges from the shadowy past; with others the modern progeny of a too realistic age, the name of Alexander, Count Cagliostro, provokes wonder, if not contempt. People are unable to understand that this "enchanter and magician" (read "Charlatan") could ever legitimately produce such an impression as he did on his contemporaries. This gives the key to the posthumous reputation of the Sicilian known as Joseph Balsamo, that reputation which made a believer in him, a brother Mason, say, that (like Prince Bismarck and some Theosophists) "Cagliostro might well be said to be the best abused and most hated man in Europe." Nevertheless, and notwithstanding the fashion of loading him with opprobrious names, none should forget that Schiller and Goethe were among his great admirers, and remained so to their deaths. Goethe while travelling in Sicily devoted much labour and time to collecting information about "Giuseppe Balsamo" in his supposed native land; and it was from these copious notes that the author of Faust wrote his play "The Great Kophta."

Why this wonderful man is receiving so little honour in England, is due to Carlyle. The most fearlessly truthful historian of his age – he, who abominated falsehood under whatever appearance – has stamped with the *imprimatur* of his honest and famous name, and thus sanctified the most iniquitous of historical injustices ever perpetrated by prejudice and bigotry. This owing to false reports which almost to the last emanated from a class he disliked no less than he hated untruth, namely the Jesuits, or – lie incarnate.

The very name of Giuseppe Balsamo, which, when rendered by cabalistic methods, means "He who was sent," or "The Given," also "Lord of the Sun," shows that such was not his real patronymic. As Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie, F.T.S., remarks, toward the end of the last century it became the fashion with certain theosophical professors of the time to transliterate into Oriental form every name provided by Occult Fraternities for disciples destined to work in the world. Whosoever then, may have been Cagliostro's parents, their name was not "Balsamo." So much is certain, at any rate. Moreover, as all know that in his youth he lived with, and was instructed by, a man named, as is supposed, Althotas, "a great Hermetic Eastern Sage" or in other words an Adept, it is not difficult to accept the tradition that it was the latter who gave him his symbolical name. But that which is known with still more certainty is the extreme esteem in which he was held by some of the most scientific and honoured men of his day. In France we find Cagliostro – having before served as a confidential friend and assistant chemist in the laboratory of Pinto, the Grand Master of the Knights of Malta – becoming the friend and *protégé* of the Prince Cardinal de Rohan. A high born Sicilian Prince honoured him with his support and friendship, as did many other noblemen. "Is it possible, then," pertinently asks Mackenzie, "that a man of such engaging manners could have been the lying impostor his enemies endeavoured to prove him?"

The chief cause of his life-troubles was his marriage with Lorenza Feliciani, a tool of the Jesuits; and two minor causes his extreme good nature, and the blind confidence he placed in his friends – some of whom became traitors and his bitterest enemies. Neither of the crimes of which he is unjustly accused could lead to the destruction of his honour and *posthumous* reputation; but all was due to his weakness for an unworthy woman, and the possession of certain secrets of nature, which he would not divulge to the Church. Being a native of Sicily, Cagliostro was naturally born in a family of Roman Catholics, no matter what their name, and was brought up by monks of the "Good Brotherhood of Castiglione," as his biographers tell us; thus, for the sake of dear life he had to outwardly profess belief in and respect for a Church, whose traditional policy has ever been, "he who is not *with us* is *against us*," and forthwith to crush the enemy in the bud. And yet, just for this, is Cagliostro even to-day accused of having served the Jesuits as their spy; and this by Masons who ought to be the last to bring such a charge against a learned Brother who was persecuted by the Vatican even more as a Mason than as an Occultist. Had it been so, would these same Jesuits even to this day vilify his name? Had he served them, would he not have proved himself useful to their ends, as a man of such undeniable intellectual gifts could not have blundered or disregarded *the orders of those whom he served*. But instead of this, what do we see? Cagliostro charged with being the most cunning and successful impostor and charlatan of his age; accused of belonging to the Jesuit Chapter of Clermont in France; of appearing (as a proof of his affiliation to the Jesuits) in clerical dress at Rome. Yet, this "cunning impostor" is tried and condemned – by the exertions of those same Jesuits – to an ignominious death, which was changed only subsequently to life-long imprisonment, owing to a mysterious interference or influence brought to bear on the Pope!

Would it not be more charitable and consistent with truth to say that it was his connection with Eastern Occult Science, his knowledge of many secrets – deadly to the Church of Rome – that brought upon Cagliostro first the persecution of the Jesuits, and finally the rigour of the Church? It was his own honesty, which' blinded him to the defects of those whom he cared for, and led him to trust two such rascals as the Marquis Agliato and Ottavio Nicastro, that is at the bottom of all the accusations of fraud and imposture now lavished upon him. And it is the sins of these two worthies – subsequently executed for gigantic swindles and murder – which are now made to fall on Cagliostro. Nevertheless it is known that he and his wife (in 1770) were both left destitute by the flight of Agliato with all their funds, so that they had to beg their way through Piedmont and Geneva. Kenneth Mackenzie has well proven that Cagliostro had never mixed himself up with political intrigue – the very soul of the activities of the Jesuits. "He was most certainly unknown in that capacity to those who have jealously guarded the preparatory archives of the Revolution, and his appearance as an advocate of revolutionary principles has no basis in fact." He was simply an Occultist and a Mason, and as such he was allowed to suffer at the hands of those who, adding insult to injury, first tried to kill him by life-long imprisonment and then spread the rumour that he had been their ignoble agent. This cunning device was in its infernal craft well worthy of its primal originators.

There are many landmarks in Cagliostro's biographies to show that he taught the Eastern doctrine of the "principles" in man, of "God" dwelling in man – as a potentiality *in actu* (the "Higher Self") – and in every living thing and even atom – as a potentiality *in posse*, and that he served the Masters of a Fraternity he *would not* name because on account of his pledge *he could not*. His letter to the new mystical but rather motley Brotherhood the (Lodge of) Philalethes, is a

proof in point. The Philalethes, as all Masons know, was a rite founded in Paris in 1773 in the *Loge des Amis Réunis*, based on the principles of Martinism,¹ and whose members made a special study of the Occult Sciences. The Mother Lodge was a philosophical and *theosophical* Lodge, and therefore Cagliostro was right in desiring to purify its progeny, the Lodge of Philalethes. This is what the *Royal Masonic Cyclopædia* says on the subject:

On the 15 February 1785 the Lodge of Philalethes in solemn Section, with Lavalette de Langes. royal treasurer; Tassin, the banker; and Tassin, an officer in the royal service; opened a Fraternal Convention, at Paris . . . Princes (Russian, Austrian, and others). fathers of the Church, councillors, knights, financiers, barristers, barons, Theosophists, canons. colonels, professors of Magic, engineers, literary men, doctors, merchants, postmasters, dukes, ambassadors, surgeons, teachers of languages, receivers-general. and notably two London names – Boosie, a merchant, and Brooks of London – compose this Convention. to whom may be added M. le Count de Cagliostro, and Mesmer "the inventor" as Thory describes him (*Acta Latomorum*, vol. ii. p. 95), "of the doctrine of magnetism!" Surely such an able set of men to set the world to rights, as France never saw before or since!

The grievance of the Lodge was that Cagliostro, who had first promised to take charge of it, withdrew his offers, as the "Convention would not adopt the Constitutions of the Egyptian Rite, nor would the *Philalethes* consent to have its archives consigned to the flames, which were his conditions *sine qua non*. It is strange that his answer to that Lodge should be regarded by Brother R. H. Mackenzie and other Masons as emanating "from a Jesuit source." The very style is Oriental, and no European Mason – least of all a Jesuit – would write in such a manner. This is how the answer runs:

. . . The unknown grand Master of true Masonry has cast his eyes upon the Philaletheans. . . . Touched by the sincere avowal of their desires, he deigns to extend his hand over them, and consents to give a ray of light into the darkness of their temple. It is the wish of the Unknown Great Master, *to prove to them the existence of one God* – the basis of their faith; *the original dignity of man; his powers and destiny*. . . . It is by deeds and facts, by the testimony of the senses, that they will know GOD, MAN and *the intermediary spiritual beings (principles) existing between them*; of which *true* Masonry gives the symbols and indicates the real road. Let then, the Philalethes embrace the doctrines of this real Masonry, submit to the rules of its supreme chief, and adopt its constitutions. But above all let the Sanctuary be purified, let the Philalethes know that light can only descend into the Temple of Faith (based on knowledge), not into that of Scepticism. Let them devote to the flames that vain accumulation of their archives; for it is only on the ruins of the Tower of Confusion that the Temple of Truth can be erected.

In the Occult phraseology of certain Occultists "Father, Son and Angels" stood for the compound symbol of physical, and astro-Spiritual MAN.² John G. Gichtel (end of XVIIth cent.), the ardent lover of Boehme, the Seer of whom St. Martin relates that he was *married* "to the heavenly Sophia," the Divine Wisdom – made use of this term. Therefore, it is easy to see what Cagliostro meant by proving to the Philalethes on the testimony of their "senses," "God, man and the *intermediary* Spiritual beings," that exist between God (*Atma*), and Man (the *Ego*). Nor is it more difficult to understand his true meaning when he reproaches the Brethren in his parting letter which says: "We have offered you the truth; you have disdained it. We have offered it for the sake of itself, and you have refused it *in consequence of a love forms*. . . Can you elevate yourselves to (*your*) God and the *knowledge of yourselves* by the assistance of a Secretary and a Convocation?" etc.³

Many are the absurd and entirely contradictory statements about Joseph Balsamo, Count de Cagliostro, so-called, several of which were incorporated by Alexander Dumas in his *Mémoires d'un Medicin*, with those prolific variations of truth and fact which so characterize Dumas *père's*

romances. But though the world is in possession of a most miscellaneous and varied mass of information concerning that remarkable and unfortunate man during most of his life, yet of the last ten years and of his death, nothing certain is known, save only the legend that he died in the prison of the Inquisition. True, some fragments published recently by the Italian *savant*, Giovanni Sforza, from the private correspondence of Lorenzo Prospero Bottini, the Roman ambassador of the Republic of Lucca at the end of the last century, have somewhat filled this wide gap. This correspondence with Pietro Calandrini, the Great Chancellor of the said Republic, begins from 1784, but the really interesting information commences only in 1789, in a letter dated June 6, of that year, and even then we do not learn much.

It speaks of the "celebrated Count di Cagliostro, who has recently arrived with his wife from Trent *viâ* Turin to Rome. People say he is a native of Sicily and extremely wealthy, but no one knows whence that wealth. He has a letter of introduction from the Bishop of Trent to Albani. . . . So far his daily walk in life as well as his private and public status are above reproach. Many are those seeking an interview with him, to hear from his own lips the corroboration of what is being said of him." from another letter we learn that Rome had proven an ungrateful soil for Cagliostro. He had the intention of settling at Naples, but the plan could not be realised. The Vatican authorities who had hitherto left the Count undisturbed, suddenly laid their heavy hand upon him. In a letter dated 2 January, 1790, just a year after Cagliostro's arrival, it is stated that: "last Sunday secret and extraordinary debates in council took place at the Vatican." It (the council) consisted of the State Secretary and Antonelli, Pillotta and Campanelli, Monsignor Figgerenti performing the duty of Secretary. The object of that Secret Council remains unknown, but public rumour asserts that it was called forth owing to the sudden arrest on the night between Saturday and Sunday, of the Count di Cagliostro, his wife, and a Capuchin, Fra Giuseppe Maurijio. The Count is incarcerated in Fort St. Angelo, the Countess in the Convent of St. Apollonia, and the monk in the prison of Araceli. That monk, who calls himself "Father Swizzero," is regarded as a confederate of the famous magician. In the number of the crimes he is accused of is included that of the circulation of a book by an unknown author, condemned to public burning and entitled, "The Three Sisters." The object of this work is "to *pulverize* certain three high-born individuals."

The real meaning of this most extraordinary misinterpretation is easy to guess. It was a work on Alchemy; the "three sisters" standing symbolically for the three "Principles" in their duplex symbolism. On the plane of occult chemistry they "pulverize" the triple ingredient used in the process of the transmutation of metals; on the plane of Spirituality they reduce to a state of pulverization the three "lower" *personal* "principles" in man, an explanation that every Theosophist is bound to understand.

The trial of Cagliostro lasted for a long time. In a letter of March the 17th, Bottini writes to his Lucca correspondent that the famous "wizard" has finally appeared before the Holy Inquisition. The real cause of the slowness of the proceedings was that the Inquisition, with all its dexterity at fabricating proofs could find no weighty evidence to prove the guilt of Cagliostro. Nevertheless, on April the 7th, 1791, he was condemned to death. He was accused of various and many crimes, the chiefest of which were his being a Mason and an "Illuminate," an "Enchanter" occupied with unlawful studies; he was also accused of deriding the *holy* Faith, of doing harm to society, of possessing himself by *means unknown* of large sums of money, and of inciting others, sex, age

and social standing notwithstanding, to do the same. In short, we find the unfortunate Occultist condemned to an ignominious death for deeds committed, the like of which are daily and publicly committed now-a-days, by more than one Grand Master of the Masons, as also by hundreds of thousands of Kabbalists and Masons, mystically inclined. After this verdict the "arch heretic's" documents, diplomas from foreign Courts and Societies, Masonic regalias and *family relics* were solemnly burned by the public hangmen in the *Piazza della Minerva*, before enormous crowds of people. First his books and instruments were consumed. Among these was the MS. on the *Maçonnerie Egyptienne* which thus can no longer serve as a witness *in favour* of the reviled man. And now the condemned Occultist had to be passed over to the hands of the civil Tribunal, when a mysterious event happened.

A stranger, never seen by any one before or after in the Vatican appeared and demanded a private audience of the Pope, sending him by the Cardinal Secretary a *word* instead of a name. He was immediately received, but only stopped with the Pope for a few minutes. No sooner was he gone than his Holiness gave orders to commute the death sentence of the Count to that of imprisonment for life, in the fortress called the Castle of St. Leo, and that the whole transaction should be conducted in great secrecy. The monk Swizzero was condemned to ten years' imprisonment; and the Countess Cagliostro was set at liberty, but only to be confined on a new charge of heresy in a convent.

But what was the Castle of St. Leo? It now stands on the frontiers of Tuscany and was then in the Papal States, in the Duchy of Urbino. It is built on the top of an enormous rock, almost perpendicular on all sides; to get into the "Castle" in those days, one had to enter a kind of open basket which was hoisted up by ropes and pulleys. As to the criminal, he was placed in a special box, after which the jailors pulled him up "with the rapidity of the wind." On April 23rd, 1792, Giuseppe Balsamo – if so we must call him – ascended *heavenward* in the criminal's box, incarcerated in that living tomb for life. Giuseppe Balsamo is mentioned for the last time in the Bottini correspondence in a letter dated March 10th, 1792. The ambassador speaks of a marvel produced by Cagliostro in his prison during his leisure hours. A long rusty nail taken by the prisoner out of the floor was transformed by him without the help of any instrument into a sharp triangular *stiletto*, as smooth, brilliant and sharp as if it were made of the finest steel. It was recognized for an old nail only by its head, left by the prisoner to serve as a handle. The State Secretary gave orders to have it taken away from Cagliostro, and brought to Rome, and to double the watch over him.

And now comes the last kick of the jackass at the dying or dead lion. Luigi Angiolini, a Tuscan diplomat, writes as follows: "At last, that same Cagliostro, who made so many believe that he had been a contemporary of Julius Cæsar, who reached such fame and so many friends, died from apoplexy, August 26, 1795. Semironi had him buried in a wood-barn below, whence peasants used to pilfer constantly the crown property. The crafty chaplain reckoned very justly that the man who had inspired the world with such superstitious fear while living, would inspire people with the same feelings after his death, and thus keep the thieves at bay"

But yet – a query! Was Cagliostro dead and buried indeed in 1792, at St. Leo? And if so, why should the custodians at the Castle of St. Angelo, of Rome show innocent tourists the little square hole in which Cagliostro is said to have been confined and "died"? Why such uncertainty

or – imposition, and such disagreement in the legend? Then there are Masons who to this day tell strange stories in Italy. Some say that Cagliostro escaped in an unaccountable way from his aerial prison, and thus forced his jailors to spread the news of his death and burial. Others maintain that he not only escaped, but, thanks to the Elixir of Life, still lives on, though over twice three score and ten years old!

"Why," asks Bottini, "if he really possessed the powers claimed, has he not indeed vanished from his jailors, and thus escaped the degrading punishment altogether?"

We have heard of another prisoner, greater in every respect than Cagliostro ever claimed to be. Of that prisoner too, it was said in mocking tones, "He saved others; himself he cannot save. . . . let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe. . . ."

How long shall charitable people build the biographies of living and ruin the reputations of the dead, with such incomparable unconcern, by means of idle and often entirely false gossip of people, and these generally the slaves of prejudice!

So long, we are forced to think, as they remain ignorant the Law of Karma and its iron justice.

Lucifer, January, 1890

H. P. Blavatsky

Wasted My Life (A letter from prison)

By Joseph R. Gerken I

The time that I've wasted is my biggest regret
Spent in these places I will never forget
Just sitting here thinking about the things I've done
The crying, the laughing, the hurt and the fun
Now it's just me and my hand driven guilt
Behind a big wall of emptiness I allowed to be built
I'm trapped in this body just wanting to run
Back to my youth with all its laughter and fun
But the chase is over and there's no place to hide
Everything's gone, including my pride
With reality suddenly right in my face
I'm scared, alone, and stuck in this place
Now memories of my past flash through my head
And the pain is obvious by the tears that I shed
I ask myself why and where I went wrong
I guess I was weak when I should have been strong
Living for the fast and easy life
My feelings were long, afraid to be shown
As I look into the mirror of my past,
it's so easy to see the fear that I had, just afraid to be me
I'm getting too old for this tiresome game
Of acting real hard with no sense of shame

It's time that I change and get on with my life

Fulfilling my dreams for a family I care so much about...

What my future will hold, I don't really know

But the years that I've wasted my life are starting to show

I just live for the day when I'll get a new start

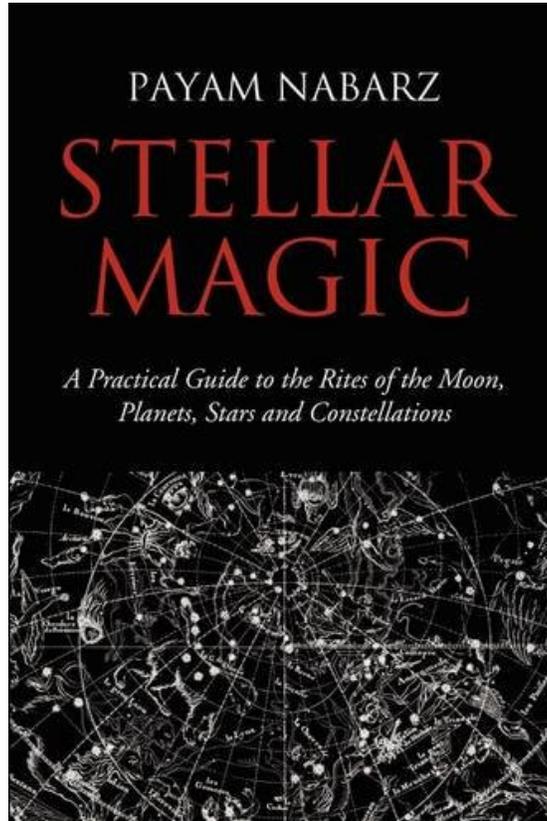
And the dream I still hold deep in my heart

I hope I can survive and make it, I at least have to try

Because I'm headed toward death

And I don't want to die.

The following is an excerpt from: 'Stellar Magic: A practical guide to the rites of the moon, planets, stars and constellations' by Payam Nabarz (Avalonia, 2009). www.stellarmagic.co.uk It was launched at the July full moon



Liber Astrum

By Payam Nabarz

To the Stars.

*WITH holy voice I call the stars on high,
Pure sacred lights and genii of the sky.
Celestial stars, the progeny of Night,
In whirling circles beaming far your light,*

*Refulgent rays around the heavens ye throw,
Eternal fires, the source of all below.
With flames significant of Fate ye shine,
And aptly rule for men a path divine.
In seven bright zones ye run with wandering flames,
And heaven and earth compose your lucid frames:
With course unwearied, pure and fiery bright
Forever shining thro' the veil of Night.
Hail twinkling, joyful, ever wakeful fires!
Propitious shine on all my just desires;*

*These sacred rites regard with conscious rays,
And end our works devoted to your praise.'* Hymns of Orpheus¹

In Plato's *Timaeus* the view of the Planets and heavenly bodies containing gods is discussed as the necessary force that moves the planets around the earth. The Greek cosmology viewed the movement of celestial bodies to be 'resembling as closely as possible the perfect intelligible Living Creature'. The laws of Newtonian physics have long ago replaced the need for gods as the necessary force for movement of stellar bodies, thus astronomy has taken over from astrology.

Yet, when walking on a clear night and staring at the stars, something does capture one's imagination. It may be the simple beauty of the stars and the planets, or perhaps a religious meme that compels one to head out night after night in the footsteps of the modern and ancient stargazers. It is not only the full moon that turns people into lunatics and poets; there are another subtle forces there too that inspire us; the constellations. There has been much written about the magick of the sun, moon and the planets, yet the gentler streams of the constellations largely remain unspoken of. The constellations that are popular are the twelve signs of the Zodiac, which are seen as part of the celestial powers that influence us from birth. However, in modern astrology the interaction with the constellations is a reactive rather proactive relationship viewed as a unidirectional flow of energy from the heavens to us; this is referred to as 'divinatory astrology' by the Swiss mystical writer Titus Burckhardt in his book *Mystical Astrology according to Ibn Arabi*². The field of divinatory astrology is well covered by thousands of books on the subject and it is part of popular culture, with many newspapers printing daily horoscopes. The divinatory astrology is practice which goes back centuries, for example in the Persian *Shah Nameh* (Epic of Kings) circa 1000AD we read:

'When Feridoun had thus opened his lips he called for the book wherein are written the stars, and he searched for the planets of his sons. And he found that Jupiter reigned in the sign of the Archer in the house of Silim, and the sun in the Lion in that of Tur, but in the house of Irij there reigned the moon in the Scorpion. And when he saw this he was sorrowful, for he knew that for Irij were grief and bale held in store. Then having read the secrets of Fate, Feridoun parted the world and gave the three parts unto his sons'.³

Another example is the well known testing of astrologers by Roman Emperor Tiberius (42 BC –AD 37), his method of testing was: *'Whenever he (Emperor Tiberius) sought counsel on such (astrological) matters, he would make use of the top of the house and of the confidence of one freedman, quite illiterate and of great physical strength. The man always walked in front of the person whose (astrological) science Tiberius had determined to test, through an unfrequented and precipitous path (for the house stood on rocks), and then, if any suspicion had arisen of imposture or of trickery, he hurled the astrologer, as he returned, into the sea beneath, that no one might live to betray the secret. (Astrologer) Thrasyllus accordingly was led up the same cliffs, and when he had deeply impressed his questioner by cleverly revealing his imperial destiny and future career, he was asked whether he had also thoroughly ascertained his own horoscope, and the character of that particular year and day. After surveying the positions and relative distances of the stars, he first paused, then trembled, and the longer he gazed, the more was he agitated by amazement and terror, till at last he exclaimed that a perilous and well-nigh fatal crisis impended over him. Tiberius then embraced him and congratulated him on foreseeing his dangers and on being quite safe. Taking what he had said as an oracle, he retained him in the number of his intimate friends.'* -6.21 The Annals by Publius Cornelius Tacitus.⁴

However, the focus of the work in this book is on divinatory astrology's less popular cousin, which Titus Burckhardt refers to as 'spiritual astrology'. The aims of following stellar workings are to make such relationships a bidirectional flow of energy and to honour the constellations in a same many modern Pagans honour earth, moon, sun and the planets. To draw down powers of the constellations as some modern Pagans draw down the moon or the sun, or as some magicians work with planetary hours and days of the week for the ideal time in which to achieve their aims or create talisman as we see in works like the *'Picatrix'* or *'The Key of Solomon'*.

In following the approach of using star lore for spiritual astrology and not just divinatory purposes, we are in good company as this is in line with *'The Chaldaean Oracles'*:

*'Theurgists fall not so as to be ranked among the herd that are in subjection to Fate.' The Oracles also tell us: 'Direct not thy mind to the vast surfaces of the Earth; for the Plant of Truth grows not upon the ground. Nor measure the motions of the Sun, collecting rules, for he is carried by the Eternal Will of the Father, and not for your sake alone. Dismiss (from your mind) the impetuous course of the Moon, for she moves always by the power of necessity. The progression of the Stars was not generated for your sake. The wide aerial flight of birds gives no true knowledge nor the dissection of the entrails of victims; they are all mere toys, the basis of mercenary fraud; flee from these if you would enter the sacred paradise of piety, where Virtue, Wisdom and Equity are assembled.'*⁵

The point is succinctly made by W.W. Westcott in his introduction the Chaldæan Oracles:

'Although destiny, our destiny, may be 'written in the Stars' yet it was the mission of the divine Soul to raise the human Soul above the circle of necessity, and the Oracles give Victory to that Masterly Will, which:

Hews the wall with might of magic,

Breaks the palisade in pieces,

Hews to atoms seven pickets . . .

Speaks the Master words of knowledge!

*The means taken to that consummation consisted in the training of the Will and the elevation, of the imagination, a divine power which controls consciousness.'*⁶

In another words, an initiate has to exceed the total sum of their programming, and using their spiritual training, go beyond the boundaries set at time of birth, be they social, intellectual, physical, astrological, or religious boundaries. An initiate at all times aspires consciously to improve themselves, and, for example, as Sufis aim to become an *'Insan Kamil'* (a perfect or complete human). An intellectual study of the occult and mysticism on its own is not enough; let us look at magical arts and witchcraft. The word art is important here, magic can be an art like any other art; witch-craft is a craft like any other craft. When someone practices an art or craft, be it painting, academic research, music, gardening or sport etc... they are all going on similar skill journey to their fellow magical arts practitioners. It is the journey, the trials, approbations, and continuous overcoming of obstacles and pushing oneself to improve that makes the difference and can result in making contact with your divine spark, the higher self or according to Greek philosophy your Daimon or the Holy Guardian Angels in Christian and Zoroastrian religions. The rough Ashlar stone becomes smooth or the grape turns to Sufi's wine of ecstasy, the comic transformation and metamorphosis. What is interesting is when someone masters their art or craft or

sport; their piece of music, or performance, or spell or rite, or painting etc. This transforms them, and also influences others in a major way too.

The Chaldean Oracles encourage us to: *'Explore the River of the Soul, whence, or in what order you have come: so that although you have become a servant to the body, you may again rise to the Order from which you descended, joining works to sacred reason....Every way unto the emancipated Soul extend the rays of Fire.....Let the immortal depth of your Soul lead you, but earnestly raise your eyes upwards..... Who knoweth himself, knoweth all things in himself.'* This is a highly significant text which draws upon Neo-Platonism and other teachings; therefore the whole text of the Chaldean Oracles is part of the recommended reading and bibliography, which is detailed at the end of this book.

This magical and religious approach to the constellations is not a new idea; indeed it can be viewed as the root of many ancient religions. Prof Franz Cumont in his *'Astrology and Religion among the Greeks and Romans'* raises the issue of *'the idea that the primary source of religion was the spectacle of celestial phenomena and the ascertainment of their correspondence with earthly events, and he (Dupuis) undertook to show that the myths of all peoples and all times were nothing but a set of astronomical combinations.'*⁷ The field of archaeoastronomy has shown us numerous religious structures since the megalithic had cosmological roles and were aligned to the stars, moon or the sun. For example from the period Callanish in Scotland, Stonehenge in England, the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt, and Newgrange in Ireland,

The central role of the stars in root of religions is echoed in our time also in a myriad of manifestations; from Star Gate fans, to UFO enthusiasts, to fanatical Solar Temple cult followers. From the ancient stargazers to modern astronomers and New Age astrologers the stars still inspire - the thoughts of the Magi still resonate today.

The place of stellar magic in modern occultism is best seen in works of Rudolf Steiner and Aleister Crowley. Aleister Crowley talks of the Star Goddess Nuit in his *Book of the Law (Liber AL vel Legis)* in depth, indeed the first chapter of this book is of Nuit speaking directly to the reader; for example, she states: *'I am the blue-lidded daughter of Sunset; I am the naked brilliance of the voluptuous night-sky.'* and *'Had! The manifestation of Nuit, The unveiling of the company of heaven, Every man and every woman is a star.'*

He also refers to Nuit in a number of his other works, for example: *'It is written in The Book of the Law: Every man and every woman is a Star. It is Our Lady of the Stars that speaketh to thee, O thou that art a*

star, a member of the Body of Nuith! Listen, for thine ears become dulled to the mean noises of the earth; the infinite silence of the Stars woos thee with subtile musick... For inasmuch as thou hast made the Law of Freedom thine, as thou hast lived in Light and Liberty and Love, thou hast become a Free-man of the City of the Stars...'- Liber CVI.⁸

Rudolf Steiner the founder of Anthroposophical Society also developed a stellar based approach philosophy, and, in 1913 built the first Goetheanum, a physical temple so to speak, to connect to the stars. In his words:

The stars once spoke to man.

It is world destiny that they are silent now

To become aware of this silence can be pain for earth humanity

But in the deepening silence

There grows and ripens what human beings speak to the stars

To become aware of this speaking

Can become strength for Spirit Man.

In his view the stellar connection was a crucial step in one's spiritual journey: *'Steiner explained that to know the human being, one must take ... the heavens and the earth as your province and discern the rhythm that beats between them'.⁹*

نُورج نامہ



نور پر آسمان کسین زمانہ نگاہ

نور پر آسمان چوہ شہنی نور نامہ

Figure: Orion Altar and Orion Constellation: as above, as below. (Image credit: NASA, ESA, M. Robberto (Space Telescope Science Institute/ESA) and the Hubble Space Telescope Orion Treasury Project Team). Persian text from the *Burj Nameh*.

My own interest in theurgy and stellar magic is rooted in the Mithraic Mysteries. In this stellar religion, the individual's soul is seen to have descended from the starry heavens to earth and at death the soul makes its journey upwards again into the firmament, a vision similar to vision of Jacob's ladder. The initiatory system allowed the neophyte to become familiar with the cosmos, and learn the star 'signposts' which would have allowed his return journey to be smoother and reach a state of henosis. The cave-like temple, (called a Mithraeum) was a representation of the universe; here the initiate ascended through various planetary degrees and learned about the constellations and their meanings. The Mithraeum is an authentic microcosm, literally a model of the heavens. Roger Beck describes the Mithraeum as an 'image of universe'. The Planetary initiates were:

- Mercury (Corax/Raven)
- Venus (Nymphus/ bee chrysalis or male bride)
- Mars (Miles/ soldier)
- Jupiter (Leo/ lion)
- Moon (Perses /Persian)
- Sun (Heliosdromus)
- Saturn (Pater)

According to the Porphyry, *On the Cave of the Nymphs* : 'Thus also the Persians, mystically signifying the descent of the soul into the sublunary regions, and its regression from it, initiate the mystic (or him who is admitted to the arcane sacred rites) in a place which they denominate a cavern. For, as Eubulus says, Zoroaster was the first who consecrated in the neighbouring mountains of Persia, a spontaneously produced cave, florid, and having fountains, in honour of Mithra, the maker and father of all things; a cave, according to Zoroaster, bearing a resemblance of the world, which was fabricated by Mithra. But the things contained in the cavern being arranged according to commensurate intervals, were symbols of the mundane elements and climates.'¹⁰

The central iconography of Mithraism (For full details see *The Mysteries of Mithras: The Pagan Belief That Shaped the Christian World* by Payam Nabarz) is called 'Tauroctony' or the Bull Slaying, this was a representation of the night sky and structure of the Mithraeum building lends itself to contain all the

symbols of macrocosm. The scene shows that Mithras, while facing away from the bull, has one leg on the back of the bull, one hand holding the bull's head, and the other hand stabbing the bull in the neck, where blood pours forth. Around him are a dog, a raven, a scorpion, a snake, a lion, and a cup. From the tip of the bull's tail, a shaft of wheat is growing. The cloak of Mithras is the night sky with stars; the signs of the zodiac surround the whole scene. The symbols of the seven planets are present; the two torchbearers of Mithras stand at either side of the bull-slaying scene. One of the Mithraic mysteries is that the bull slaying scene is a representation of the constellations the Perseus (Mithras), Taurus (bull), Canis Minor (dog), Hydra (snake), Corvus (raven), and Scorpio (scorpion). The wheat is the star Spica (the brightest star in the constellation Virgo); where the knife enters the bull, it is the Pleiades; the life giving blood of the bull is the Milky Way. The two torchbearers, Cautes and Cautopates, symbolise the equinoxes. Cautes' torch is pointing upward: the spring equinox. Cautopates' torch is pointing downward: the autumn equinox.



**Mithras slaying the bull. Rotating double-faced altar panel, side A. Musée du Louvre, Paris.
(Photograph by P. Nabarz with kind permission of the museum.)**

Several key images around the central Tauroctony scene are important because they contain a creation story. In the beginning Mithras is asked by the Sun to kill the first bull, but he is reluctant to do this. The Raven, messenger of the Sun, comes to him again with the message. Mithras goes into the field and captures the bull, and with his might, lifts the back legs of the bull over his shoulder and drags him to the birth cave. The crescent moon over the bull suggests its connection to the moon. As Mithras kills the bull, from his blood come wine and all the plants that cover the earth. The tail becomes wheat, which gives us our bread. The seed and the genitals of the bull are taken to the Moon Goddess and purified,

giving rise to all the animals. Hence, by this slaying of the first bull, life comes onto the earth. The new life on Earth is growing very slowly, due to drought. Mithras as the mediator between Heaven and Earth is asked to solve this problem; however, this means a conflict with the Sun, who has been burning the land. The battle between Sol (the sun) and Mithras results in Mithras overcoming the planetary sun and becoming the Invincible Sun. Sol kneels in front of Sol Invictus while Mithras holds the constellation the Great Bear in one hand. This emphasizes his power as the stellar god, one who moves the cosmic pole as well as causing the precession of equinoxes. Mithras and Sol then become friends and shake hands with their right hands. Mithras is referred to *kosmokrator* (ruler of cosmos) and also rules the movements of the earth and the seasons as his number is 365, number of days in a year.



Seven grades of initiation, Mithraeum of Felicissimus, Ostia, Italy. (Photo: P.Nabarz).

The emblems for first Grade the Corax, appear toward the bottom of the left photo and the grades proceed upward in order to Grade seven, the Pater, at the top of the right photo. The emblems, or tokens, for each grade are shown as follows. The tokens of Corax under the planet Mercury are: a Raven, a Caduceus, and a small beaker. The tokens of Nymphus under Venus are: an oil lamp and a diadem. The tokens of Miles under Mars are: a lance, a helmet, and a soldier's sling bag. The tokens of

Leo under Jupiter are: a fire shovel, a rattle (sistrum), and a thunderbolt. The tokens of Perses under the Moon are: a sickle, a Persian dagger, and a crescent moon with a star. The tokens of Heliodromus under the Sun are: a torch, a seven-rayed crown, and a whip. The tokens of the Pater under Saturn are: a Phrygian cap, a libation bowl, a staff, and a sickle.

In making their Hermetic ascent, the Mithraic initiates were magical cosmonauts, making astral journeys and making preparations for their final destination; returning to the Milky Way. The Neoplatonic based ideals allows the ascent of the soul through the planetary spheres, an initiatory voyage to purify the divine aspects hidden in mankind from its contact with matter from birth. For further details of Mithraic cosmic soul travelers and star talk see *'The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire: Mysteries of the Unconquered Sun'* by Roger Beck.



Figure: Pleiades altar and Pleiades Constellation: as above, as below. Pleiades Constellation photo credit: NASA, ESA AND AURA/CALTECH.

The following rites are experimental and designed to help to increase our knowledge of the stars, to learn about their myths and finally to allow connection to these stellar bodies and revelation of their mysteries to each person in their own way.

This is indeed the basis of Aleister Crowley's saying of 'Every Man and Woman is a Star', and we all aim for our one star in sight. A view that we have inherited from the Ancient Greeks, as we see in Plato's *Timaeus*:

*'Thus he spoke, and once more into the cup in which he had previously mingled the soul of the universe he poured the remains of the elements, and mingled them in much the same manner; they were not, however, pure as before, but diluted to the second and third degree. And having made it he divided the whole mixture into souls equal in number to the stars, and assigned each soul to a star; and having there placed them as in a chariot, he showed them the nature of the universe, and declared to them the laws of destiny, according to which their first birth would be one and the same for all,-no one should suffer a disadvantage at his hands; they were to be sown in the instruments of time severally adapted to them, and to come forth the most religious of animals; and as human nature was of two kinds, the superior race would here after be called man. Now, when they should be implanted in bodies by necessity, and be always gaining or losing some part of their bodily substance, then in the first place it would be necessary that they should all have in them one and the same faculty of sensation, arising out of irresistible impressions; in the second place, they must have love, in which pleasure and pain mingle; also fear and anger, and the feelings which are akin or opposite to them; if they conquered these they would live righteously, and if they were conquered by them, unrighteously. He who lived well during his appointed time was to return and dwell in his native star, and there he would have a blessed and congenial existence.'*¹¹

According to the classical writers it is not only the human souls that originate in the stars and strive to return to them. The gods too have their origins among the stars, in the Hermetica (the Greek *Corpus Hermeticum*) we read about the birth of the universe and life and a creation story which is centred on the stars:

*'In the deep there was boundless darkness and water and fine intelligent spirit, all existing by divine power in chaos. Then a holy light was sent forth, and elements solidified out of liquid essence. And all the gods (divide the parts) of germinal nature. While all was unlimited and unformed, light elements were set apart to the heights and the heavy were grounded in the moist sand, the whole of them delimited by fire and raised aloft, to be carried by spirit. The heavens appeared in seven circles, the gods became visible in the shapes of the stars and all their constellations, and the arrangements of (this lighter substance) corresponded to the gods contained in it. The periphery rotated (in) the air, carried in a circular course by divine spirit.'*¹²

The scope of this book does not extent to the whole of 88 modern constellations, it only covers some of the main classical constellations from the 48 classical constellations as seen in works such Ptolemy's *The Almagest* (circa 150A.D.), Aratus' *Phaenomena* (275B.C.), Eratosthenes' *Constellations* (1st/2nd century A.D.), and Hyginus' *De Astronomia* (1st century B.C.).^{13, 14} These are the most ancient known

constellations that are mentioned in Babylonian 'A Prayer to Gods of the Night' (circa 1700B.C.) and Mul.APIN tablets (600B.C.) where the origin of our modern constellation is rooted in.¹³⁻²⁰

In Stellar Gnosis the four Persian Royal Stars or the Stellar Chieftains are notes as holding the celestial throne. One of the references to the Royal Stars is in the Persian Pahlavi Texts:

5 .As a specimen of a warlike army, which is destined for battle, they have ordained every single constellation of those 6480 thousand small stars as assistance; and among those

constellations four chieftains, appointed on the four sides, are leaders.

6. On the recommendation of those chieftains the many unnumbered stars are specially assigned to the various quarters and various places, as the united strength and

appointed power of those constellations.

7. As it is said that Tîstar is the chieftain of the east, Satavês the chieftain of the west, Vanand the chieftain of the south, and Haptôk-rîng the chieftain of the north.²¹

The four Royal Stars were recognised around 3000 BC and were used as a marker of the seasons, the equinoxes and the solstices. However, due to the Procession of the Equinoxes, their prominences has shifted as seasonal markers and relate more to the time of the fire festivals now. The four Stellar Chieftains or Persian Royal Stars, are the Watchers and the Guardians of sky, these are thought to be:

East: Aldebaran, eye of the constellation Taurus. It was associated with the vernal equinox.

South: Regulus, in the constellation Leo. It was associated with the summer solstice.

West: Antares, in the constellation Scorpio, and heel of the Serpent Bearer (Ophiuchus). It was associated with the autumnal equinox.

North: Fomalhaut, in the stream of the Water Bearer (Aquarius) constellations, and in the head of the Southern Fish (Pisces Australis). It was associated with the winter solstice.

The four Persian Royal stars also feature in Christianity, the four faces of the Cherubim (the Bible book of Ezekiel. 1:10, 10:14) are the four Persian Royal Stars.²² Their symbols are the lion, eagle/serpent, man and wild ox (unicorn). The four royals stars (four creatures), are said to found on each side of the throne of God (the Bible Book of Revelation 4:7). The four Persian royal stars and their constellations also feature further in Christianity as the four Evangelists as well as the Cherubim. The symbol for the four Evangelist are: Matthew as Human/Angel (Aquarius), Mark as Lion (Leo), Luke as Ox (Taurus), John as Eagle (Aquila/Scorpio).

The practical nocturnal rites and ceremonies here are created using a myriad of hymns and tales, drawing inspiration and material from many ancient, classical and medieval sources including: the *Hymns of Orpheus*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Plato's *Timaeus*, the Hermetica: The Greek *Corpus Hermeticum* and the Latin *Asclepius*, the *Greek Magical Papyri*, the *Chaldean Oracles*, the Persian *Shah Nameh 'Epic of Kings'* by Ferdowsi, *Scipio's Dream* by Cicero, the Persian *Pahlavi Texts*, book of Enoch, Bible Ezekiel chapter, Egyptian temples and texts, *The Golden Ass* by Lucius Apuleius, the Zoroastrian Yasht hymns, Sufi works of Ibn Arabi and Rumi, the Kabalistic *Sefer Yetzirah*, the *Mithras Liturgy*, Persian *Burj Nameh*, Hesiod *Works and Days*, Homer's *The Odyssey*, Porphyry's *On the Cave of the Nymphs* and Aratus' *Phaenomena*.

In bringing these ancient rites into modern times, stellar related material and ideals by modern poets such as WB Yeats, Robert Graves, Sylvia Plath, and esoteric writers such as John Milton, John Dee, Elias Ashmole, Francis Barrett, Rudolf Steiner, Aleister Crowley, Gerald Gardner have also been included, giving a Bardic blend of the ancient and the modern. The rites here 'set the scene' and after all the poems and invocations are uttered, the point is reached in the rite where the magus has to make his/her direct connection, and to draw inspiration from the stellar well directly. The rites here are the beginning steps on your stellar journey, it is recommended that you write your own poems and invocations to the constellations and make your Path to the stars.

Included amongst the rites are ceremonies with the constellations of Perseus & Andromeda, Cygnus, Orion, the Pleiades, the Great Bear, Draco, the twelve signs of the Zodiac, the star Sirius, the Moon, the Persian Royal Stars, the seven classical Planets, and the Stellar World Cave: the Mithraeum.

In the end of the journey the initiate will connect to ideal of: *'When you ascend to the sky, your power upon you, your terror about you, your magic at your feet, you are helped by Atum just as he used to do, the gods who are in the sky are brought to you, the gods who are on the earth assemble for you, they place their hands under you, they make a ladder for you that you may ascend on it to the sky, the doors of the sky are opened for you, the doors of the starry firmament are thrown open for you'*²³ - The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts.

This is a highly accessible, succinct and practical book on this complex subject. It is written in such a way that it can be used as a manual and workbook for practicing stellar magic or simply read for gaining insight into star lore.

Author Biography:

Payam Nabarz is author of *'The Mysteries of Mithras: The Pagan Belief That Shaped the Christian World'* (Inner Traditions, 2005), *'The Persian Mar Nameh: The Zoroastrian Book of the Snake Omens & Calendar'* (Twin Serpents, 2006), and *Divine Comedy of Neophyte Corax and Goddess Morrigan* (Web of Wyrd, 2008). He is also editor of *Mithras Reader An academic and religious journal of Greek, Roman, and Persian Studies. Volume 1(2006), Volume 2 (2008)* and *Stellar Magic: a Practical Guide to Rites of the Moon, Planets, Stars and Constellations* (Avalonia, 2009) For further info visit: www.stellarmagic.co.uk

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Figure: Draco Constellation Altar.

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