

ROSALEEN NORTON'S
CONTRIBUTION
TO THE WESTERN ESOTERIC
TRADITION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the contribution of the Australian witch and trance artist Rosaleen Norton (1917-1979) to the 20th century Western esoteric tradition. Norton's artistic career began in the 1940s, with publication of some of her earliest occult drawings, and reached a significant milestone in 1952 when the controversial volume *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* – co-authored with her lover, the poet Gavin Greenlees – was released in Sydney, immediately attracting a charge of obscenity. Norton rapidly acquired a reputation as the wicked 'Witch of Kings Cross', was vilified by journalists during the 1950s and 1960s, and was branded by many as evil and demonic. Norton's witchcraft coven was dedicated to the practice of heathen worship and ceremonial sex magic and attracted a small number of dedicated inner-circle followers, most notably the renowned musical conductor Sir Eugene Goossens (1893-1962), whose personal and professional career would be irrevocably damaged as a result of his contact with Norton's magical group.

Within the social context of post-World War Two Australia Norton was unquestionably an unconventional figure at a time when the local population was approximately 80 per cent Christian. Norton claimed to be an initiated follower of the Great God Pan and also revered other ancient figures, most notably Hecate, Lilith and Lucifer. Norton claimed to encounter these mythic beings as experientially real on the 'inner planes' which she accessed while in a state of self-induced trance. Many of her most significant artworks were based on these magical encounters.

Norton is presented in this thesis as a magical practitioner and artist whose creative work and thought has made a substantial contribution to the 20th century Western esoteric tradition – and, in particular, to the magic of the so-called 'left-hand path', which is a significant part of this modern occult tradition. Norton's artworks are also compared to those of the notable British trance artist and occultist Austin Osman Spare (1886-1956), who is now widely regarded as a major figure in the 20th century magical revival.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to present a detailed overview of Rosaleen Norton's magical practices and to evaluate her contribution to the Western esoteric tradition. The selection of this topic immediately raises two specific issues: is the controversial and bohemian 'Witch of Kings Cross', Rosaleen Norton, an appropriate subject for academic study and can she be positioned within a social, intellectual or historic context which makes such a study worthwhile?

I will argue in this thesis that Rosaleen Norton (1917-1979) is a significant figure within the 20th century Western esoteric tradition considered as a whole, and that within the context of 20th century Australian esoteric practice she is one of its most notable, albeit controversial, figures. After providing an overview of key aspects of the Western esoteric tradition, as it is generally understood, I will also present evidence that the practice of Western magic became fragmented and highly polarised in the early 20th century, substantially as a result of the widespread influence of the well known British ceremonial magician Aleister Crowley (1875-1947), and that Norton can be considered a practitioner of the so-called 'Left-Hand Path', a branch of Western magic associated mainly with Crowley and his followers. The influence of Crowley on the Left-Hand Path in modern Western magic is described in detail in Chapter Three.

With regard to the academic study of modern magical practices (as distinct from the anthropological study of magic in pre-literate societies, which is well established as a discipline), it is significant that an increasing number of highly regarded scholars are now turning their attention to the study of modern magical beliefs as expressions of 'contemporary alternative spirituality' (or, in some cases, New Age spirituality) as well as exploring the historical nature of esotericism in general. Recent academic studies of modern magical practices include Luhrmann (1989), Hutton (1999), Owen (2004), Greenwood (2005), Bado-Fralick (2005) and Urban (2006).¹ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, Chair in Western Esotericism at the University of Amsterdam, believes that the study of Western esotericism has been gaining ground in academic circles and that 'it has become more and more apparent...that the traditional neglect of Western esotericism as a domain of historical inquiry has led to serious gaps in our knowledge, with predictably negative effects upon the understanding of our own cultural

heritage.’² Michael D. Bailey similarly observes in his recently published journal article, ‘The Meanings of Magic’ (2006) that scholars in many fields now recognize magic as an important topic since its ‘rites, rituals, taboos, and attendant beliefs...might be said to comprise, or at least describe, a system for comprehending the entire world.’³ The European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism was established in 2005 ‘to advance the academic study of the various manifestations of Western Esotericism from late antiquity to the present and to secure the future development of the field’⁴ and several scholarly journals have been established to cater to the increasing academic interest in this subject area, including *Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft* (University of Pennsylvania Press), *Esoterica: Journal of Esoteric Studies* (Michigan State University), *Nova Religio* (University of California Press), *Journal for the Academic Study of Magic* (University of Bristol, UK), *Aries* (European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism) and *The Pomegranate* (Equinox Publishing, UK). Clearly the diverse range of modern magical practices, including such controversial topics as sex magic and Tantra, are no longer considered taboo subjects unworthy of academic study. As Hugh Urban has noted in the preface of his recently published *Magia Sexualis* (2006) such study ‘opens some critical insights into the shifting attitudes towards sexuality, gender, religious authority, and social liberation over the last two hundred years’.⁵ Norton herself receives significant coverage in Lynne Hume’s academic study *Witchcraft and Paganism in Australia* (1997).⁶

Meanwhile the nature of esotericism itself has been discussed in a recent scholarly article by Arthur Versluis, editor of *Esoterica* at Michigan State University. Versluis acknowledges the pioneering work on Western esotericism undertaken by Antoine Faivre at the Sorbonne, noting that Faivre identifies Correspondences and Interdependence, Living Nature, Imagination, Transmutation, Praxis of Concordance, and Transmission as the six defining characteristics of Western esoteric systems.⁷ However Versluis notes that in his definitive book *Accès de l’ésotérisme occidental* (1996) Faivre has omitted *gnosis*, or spiritual knowledge, as a key element in the Western esoteric tradition. Versluis defines *gnosis* as ‘direct spiritual insight either into hidden aspects of the cosmos, or into transcendence’ and maintains that without *gnosis* the concept of Western esotericism is impoverished because it is central to various currents of thought found in the Western esoteric tradition.⁸ I agree with Versluis on this crucial point and in Chapters Two and Three of this thesis will seek to demonstrate not only that the quest for *gnosis* is a central feature of modern Western magic but that both the left-hand and right-hand paths in modern magic have specific Gnostic precursors.

Who was Rosaleen Norton?

During the 1950s Norton was well known in Sydney as ‘the Witch of Kings Cross’ and was portrayed in the popular media as a colourful and ‘wicked’ bohemian figure from Sydney’s red-light district. Her provocative ‘pagan’ art, exhibited first at the University of Melbourne Library in 1949 and later in the Apollyon and Kashmir coffee-shops in Sydney’s Kings Cross, plunged her into legal controversy, and her 1952 publication *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* was, for a time, banned in Australia on the basis that it contained allegedly obscene material. Norton was involved in a number of court hearings and was widely criticised in the media for engaging in



Plate 1: Rosaleen Norton in the 1950s

bizarre sexual practices with her lover, the poet Gavin Greenlees. She was later associated with the scandal that eventually engulfed the professional career of renowned musical conductor and composer, Sir Eugene Goossens (1893-1962), who had arrived in Australia in 1947 and later became a member of Norton’s magical coven in Kings Cross (see Chapter One).

Norton was invariably depicted in the popular media as a pagan rebel and portrayed in such ungracious terms as ‘the notorious, Pan-worshipping Witch of Kings Cross...a person known to the police through two prosecutions for obscenity’.⁹ Most of her mainstream print media coverage was generated by popular gossip-driven magazines like *The Australasian Post*, *People*, *Truth* and *Squire* that inclined towards sensationalist articles, and tabloid newspapers like *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Daily Mirror* and *Sun*.¹⁰ But all of this salacious media interest in Norton has to be seen in

an historical context. During the immediate post-World War Two period Australia was both socially and politically conservative, ruled by the highly traditional Sir Robert Menzies, an 'ultraconservative prime minister, who reigned supreme in the 1950s with his anti-communist manifesto and harsh stance on censorship'.¹¹ Norton was portrayed in the media as a Devil-worshipping harpy, ever eager to flaunt accepted social conventions at a time when the appropriate place for a woman was perceived to be within the home, focusing on domestic concerns and attending to the needs of husband and children. As Marguerite Johnson has observed, 'Rosaleen was presented as society's scapegoat, the witch on the outskirts of the community, a demon required to reinforce family values and Christian morality.'¹² During the 1960s, with its increasing intake of migrants from many European and Asian countries, Australia began a process of becoming a multi-cultural, multi-faith society associated in turn with a range of new religions.¹³ However, from the 1860s up until the period immediately after World War Two, Australia's religious profile remained relatively stable. In 1947 Anglicans, Presbyterians and Methodists collectively comprised over 60 per cent of the population and Roman Catholics made up an additional 20.7 per cent,¹⁴ which meant that in the immediate post-war environment Australia was more than 80 per cent Christian.

Because witchcraft has long remained linked to medieval and early modern Western Christian demonology¹⁵ it is hardly surprising that in most media depictions of Norton during the 1950s and 1960s she was portrayed as a renegade from mainstream society, as an anti-Christian Devil worshipper, and as a practitioner of 'black magic'. It seems to me that this perception of her was substantially distorted and uninformed. Nevertheless, the distinctions I make in this thesis could be considered finely delineated, since I believe that there are undoubtedly shades of grey between the familiar polar opposites of 'black' and 'white' magic (see Chapters Three and Seven). Norton's chthonic magical orientation is clearly evident, both in her writings and in her artistic imagery, and, as I seek to demonstrate in subsequent chapters, Norton was both a pantheist and a practising witch who paid homage to a range of ancient pagan deities associated with the primal forces of Nature and the Underworld. The latter included Pan and Hecate, to whom she dedicated her ritual altars. Norton was also involved in sex magic, pursuing forms of ritual practice derived principally from the occult teachings of the British ceremonial magician Aleister Crowley, referred to earlier. For reasons that I describe in detail, I do not believe that Norton was a practising Satanist in the literal sense of the word. However it is clear that her inclination was toward the 'night' side of magic and much of her occult imagery as a visionary artist is associated with the so-called

Qliphoth, or dark, negative energies of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life – a central motif in the study and practice of modern magic. A substantial section of this thesis is spent in describing Norton's magical beliefs, cosmology and ritual practices because this is vital to any understanding of Norton herself. The connections between Norton's visionary art and her magical perspectives are also described in detail.

What was less well-known to readers of the popular tabloids published in Sydney during the 1950s was that Norton was a natural trance artist. She began experimenting with self-hypnosis in 1940, at the age of 23, and as a result of her visionary explorations of trance states began to portray a wide range of supernatural beings in her paintings and drawings. Norton believed that the Great God Pan, the principal deity in her personal magical pantheon, was not simply a figure from ancient Greek mythology but a vibrant and living archetypal 'presence' in the world. By paying ritual homage to Pan, Norton believed that she was responding to the Earth as a sacred, living organism. To this extent she can be considered a significant precursor of those members of the environmental and Goddess spirituality movements who, since the late 1970s, have affirmed the need to 'resacralize' the planet. Any evaluation of Norton must necessarily consider these aspects of her magical philosophy as well.

My thesis begins with a concise overview of Norton's life. Chapter One is essentially a condensed historical biography; her magical ideas and visionary art practices are described more specifically in later chapters.

In Chapter Two, I describe the principal strands of the Western esoteric tradition which, by common consensus, include the Jewish Kabbalah, the Hermetica, Alchemy, the Tarot, Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry.¹⁶ All of these esoteric strands in turn became central elements in the magical philosophy and ritual practices of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn which more than any other comparable organisation led to the resurgence of interest in Western magic in the 20th century. The Order of the Golden Dawn was established in England in 1888 and began to fragment into splinter magical groups soon after 1900. The Order's ritual symbolism and grade structure, which derived from Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism, employed the symbol of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life as a central motif and operative framework. The principal activities of the Golden Dawn focused on the practice of ceremonial and visionary magic. Its membership included such figures as the renowned poet W.B. Yeats (1865-1939), occult historian Arthur Edward Waite (1857-1942), the controversial magician Aleister Crowley, novelist Dion Fortune (1890-1946), London coroner Wynne Westcott (1848-1925), actress Florence Farr (1860-1917), and S.L.

MacGregor Mathers (1854-1918), a translator of Kabbalistic texts and medieval magical grimoires. In this thesis I present the Golden Dawn as a magical organisation drawing on the Gnostic and Hermetic traditions and also as a group aligned with the Right-Hand Path in magic, as distinct from the Left-Hand Path described in Chapter Three.

Norton established her witchcraft coven in Sydney's Kings Cross district in the early 1950s and during this period made brief contact with Gerald Gardner (1884-1964), one of the principal figures involved in the rise of modern pagan witchcraft in Britain. To place these events in context I have described the rise of modern witchcraft, or 'Wicca' as it is generally known, since there is evidence that Norton sought to emulate Gardner's leadership role in Australia. Wicca is now regarded as an 'invented tradition' – that is to say, a 'tradition' presented as belonging to an ancient lineage but whose actual origins are much more recent. The birth of modern witchcraft can be dated specifically to September 1939 and the New Forest region of Hampshire, but Wicca nevertheless drew on many archaic elements which helped establish an impression of an ancient Celtic lineage (see Chapter Two). British witchcraft was exported to the United States in the mid-1960s and, following the advent of the American counterculture and the influence of feminism, subsequently gave rise in the late 1970s to a form of feminist witchcraft known as Goddess spirituality, which has since attracted an international following. This development is also described in Chapter Two.

Chapter Three focuses on the esoteric doctrines and practices of the so-called 'Left-Hand Path' which includes the ritual sex 'magick' [Aleister Crowley's unique spelling]¹⁷ practised by members of the Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.), an international organisation that Crowley joined in 1910 and headed from 1922 until his death in 1947,¹⁸ as well as the magical philosophy and practices associated with the rise of modern Satanism (with specific reference to the American Church of Satan and the Temple of Set). The term 'Left-Hand Path' can be used (and is so used, by many of the practitioners themselves) to refer collectively to occult practitioners who focus on individualism, antinomianism and the chthonic or 'dark' side of magic. This 'nightside' tradition¹⁹ in modern Western magic is distinguished from the 'Right-Hand Path' which is aligned with the more mystically oriented Hermetic tradition that found expression in the Golden Dawn and also in those derivative magical groups influenced principally by Dion Fortune (such as the Fraternity of the Inner Light and the still extant Servants of the Light), that emphasize spiritual rebirth, transcendence, and ultimately mystical union with the Godhead.

The relevance of the Left-Hand Path magical material presented in Chapter Three is that Norton was strongly influenced by Crowley and practised a comparable form of sex magick both with the poet Gavin Greenlees and also with the well known musical conductor and composer Eugene Goossens (later Sir Eugene).²⁰ Goossens was already interested in Crowley's approach to magick prior to coming to Australia, having apparently learned of this type of occult ritual practice from his friend and fellow musical composer Philip Heseltine (1894-1930). Heseltine was a member of Crowley's Ordo Templi Orientis²¹ and had dabbled with various forms of demonic magic found in medieval grimoires. I also describe the principal characteristics of modern Satanism in Chapter Three since Norton was frequently accused of being a Devil-worshipper and it is important to consider whether such charges could possibly have any substance.

One of the principal findings presented in this thesis is that Norton is best understood as a magician aligned with the Left-Hand Path, rather than with witchcraft alone (modern witchcraft has distinctly chthonic elements but also some characteristics more specifically associated with the Right-Hand Path in magic – see Chapter Seven). Norton's worship of Pan and Hecate, her sex magic practices (associated with Crowley), and her trance-art and visionary magic (which parallel the chthonic visionary art and trance techniques of Austin Osman Spare – see below) provide evidence of this esoteric alignment.

Norton's magical cosmology, ritual practices, and visionary art are the subjects of Chapters Four, Five and Six and collectively present the core material that is central to this thesis. Also included in Chapter Six is an overview of the visionary art and trance-magic of Austin Osman Spare (1886-1956), whose artistic and magical approach closely parallels Norton's in several key areas and therefore provides the basis for some useful and intriguing comparisons. Spare is now regarded as one of the major figures in the 20th century magical revival, alongside Crowley and Dion Fortune, and I believe that it is within the context of this post-Golden Dawn magical revival that Norton's contribution to the Western esoteric tradition should be considered. Such a summation necessarily includes a discussion of both the similarities and also a number of crucial differences between her magical approach and that of Austin Spare. In my view both Spare and Norton should be considered as significant 'visionary' magicians aligned with the magic of the Left-Hand Path.

Chapter Seven begins by describing various academic approaches to the practice of magic. I initially intended this chapter to be part of the

Introduction but because it explores perspectives both from academia and also modern occultists themselves, it seemed more appropriate to locate this material towards the end of my thesis, following on from the presentation of the major data on Norton's art and magic, and an exploration of her position within the Western esoteric tradition itself. Chapter Seven draws attention to the fact that because most anthropological perspectives on this subject are based on the study of pre-literate societies around the world, most of these academic models have only very limited application in describing contemporary Western magic as practised in modern, largely urban contexts. Fortunately, many modern occult practitioners are themselves highly literate, and they have described their various philosophies and practices in detail, both in books and more recently on the Internet. Norton was one of these highly literate practitioners. In addition to presenting her magical philosophy in the introduction to *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Norton also described her magical approach in a series of informative autobiographical magazine articles published in the 1950s and I have drawn extensively on this important primary material. Such data makes possible a systematic study of Norton's beliefs and ritual practices from what is known in the field of academic anthropology as an *emic* perspective – that is to say, a perspective that draws substantially on the 'insider' point of view (in this context, the beliefs and viewpoints of Norton and her magical associates) rather than focusing primarily on imposed 'external' or 'outsider' models of analysis (*etic* explanations of magic). In Chapter Seven I extend this *emic* analysis by proposing a 'spectrum' approach to the study of 20th century Western magic which, in my view, allows us to consider not only the familiar polarities of 'black' and 'white' magic but also the various shades of grey found somewhere in-between. Throughout this thesis I have made numerous references to the beliefs, practices and stated viewpoints of a number of influential modern occultists since their perspectives have been extremely valuable in locating Rosaleen Norton within the Western esoteric tradition as a whole. Many of these themes carry through to my concluding remarks in Chapter Eight, which considers the contribution Norton has made to this tradition and positions her both as a modern witch and also as a practitioner aligned with the magic of the Left-Hand Path.

A note on sources

Shortly after Norton held her exhibition at the University of Melbourne Library in 1949, she was interviewed at length by L.J. Murphy, a psychologist from that University. A lengthy transcript of this interview has survived, and because Norton discusses her magical philosophy, trance magic methods and attitudes to sexuality, it is of considerable interest as a primary source document. In 1951 Norton also compiled a range of

extensive notes on the symbolism of the occult artworks reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (published in Sydney in 1952). I have drawn on this unpublished manuscript material, which was passed to me in the 1980s by Norton's publisher, the late Wally Glover, and which remains in my possession.

Glover had first contacted me in 1981 following publication of a book I co-authored with Gregory Tillett on occultism in Australia (*Other Temples, Other Gods*, 1980) and I subsequently became involved in the republication of a facsimile edition of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (published in Sydney in 1982, three years after Norton's death). This publication was financed by Glover and I contributed an introduction to the new edition. At the time, Glover assembled numerous documents and wrote personal notes about his reminiscences, all of which have been extremely useful as background for this thesis. The publication of the facsimile-reprint edition of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* also led to an approach from Mrs Cecily Boothman, Norton's elder sister, who suggested that I write a biography of Rosaleen Norton. This eventually resulted in the publication of *Pan's Daughter: the Strange World of Rosaleen Norton* (Sydney 1988). Mrs Boothman provided me with pertinent family details and other relevant material which, like Glover's reminiscences, provided key insights into Norton's background. *Pan's Daughter* was aimed at a general rather than academic audience, was written in a journalistic style, and was around 35,000 words in length, approximately 80,000 words shorter than the present thesis.

Since the publication of *Pan's Daughter*, which remains the only biography of the artist, a substantial body of new information has emerged which has effectively demanded that Norton's approach to magic and visionary art should be researched and evaluated in much greater depth. This has been the underlying aim of this thesis, which contains a substantial amount of previously unpublished material. The new data includes transcripts from the 1949 University of Melbourne transcripts not previously available [see Appendix A], records of interviews provided by key members of the NSW Police Department following the arrest of Sir Eugene Goossens, and copies of letters sent by Goossens to Norton which contain specific magical content [see Appendix B]. None of these sources of information was available to me at the time I wrote *Pan's Daughter*. I have also been able to draw extensively on an archive of 1950s newspaper clippings compiled by Wally Glover's friend, Jock McKenna. Unfortunately, Glover, McKenna and Boothman are now all deceased. I should also mention here that in *Pan's Daughter* I did not seek to position Norton as a magical practitioner of the Left-Hand Path as I do here, and I did not describe in depth Norton's

magical relationship with Sir Eugene Goossens, the nature of which has become much clearer to me since I began work on the detailed research required for this thesis. The nature of Crowley's influence on Norton's magical practice, a factor greatly enhanced by her relationship with Goossens – who in turn shared Norton's interest in Crowley and the *Goetia* – has also become apparent to me only in more recent times.

It is pertinent to mention that I interviewed Rosaleen Norton at her home in Roslyn Gardens, Kings Cross, in 1977, two years before her death. Some of my notes from that interview have been useful in the preparation of this thesis. Also, I was fortunate in December 1984 to take part in the filming of a 90-minute international television documentary, *The Occult Experience* (Cinetel Productions, Sydney, screened on Channel 10 in 1985 and later distributed in the USA through Sony Home Video). My role as the co-producer, researcher and interviewer for that documentary gave me direct personal access to several key figures in the Wicca and Goddess spirituality movements (some of whom have since died) and information acquired at that time has proved invaluable by way of historical background as I researched Norton's involvement with witchcraft and trance-magic.

On a personal note I would like to mention that if the University of Newcastle had not been bold enough to offer a course on Neopagan studies, which remains something of a rarity on Australian university campuses, I may never have contemplated undertaking this thesis in the first place. I am very grateful for the support of the University and for the gracious and generous assistance of my supervisor, Dr Marguerite Johnson. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Robert Ansell, Publishing Manager of Fulgur Publishers, London, who provided valuable feedback on the section of text in Chapter Six which deals with the visionary art and trance-magic of Austin Osman Spare.

¹ Four of these publications focus on modern and contemporary magic in Britain. Tania Luhrmann's *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1989) explores contemporary Wicca and white magic in England, Ronald Hutton's *The Triumph of the Moon* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 1999) is considered the definitive historical study of modern pagan witchcraft and explores the birth of Wicca in England and events leading up to it, Susan Greenwood's *The Nature of Magic: An Anthropology of Consciousness* (Berg, Oxford 2005) describes nature magic, witchcraft and neo-shamanism in contemporary Britain, and Alex Owen's *The Place of Enchantment* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2004) is a highly regarded scholarly overview of occult practices in Victorian and Edwardian England. Nikki Bado-Fralick's *Coming to the Edge of the Circle: A Wiccan Initiation Ritual*

(Oxford University Press, New York 2005) is of special interest because the American-based author is both an academic and a high priestess within a Wiccan coven, and Hugh Urban's *Magia Sexualis* (University of California Press, Berkeley, California 2006) looks likely to become the most authoritative academic source-work on sexual magic in the West for many years to come.

² W.J. Hanegraaff, 'Some Remarks on the Study of Western Esotericism', *Theosophical History*. Wheaton, Illinois, Spring 1999.

³ M.D. Bailey, 'The Meanings of Magic', *Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Summer 2006: 1.

⁴ See European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism website: www.esswe.org.

⁵ H. Urban, *Magia Sexualis: Sex, Magic and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism*, University of California Press, Berkeley, California 2006: x.

⁶ See L. Hume, *Witchcraft and Paganism in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne 1997: 32-34; 189-191.

⁷ A. Versluis, 'What is Esoteric? Methods in the Study of Western Esotericism', *Esoterica: Journal of Esoteric Studies*, IV (2002) 2. According to Faivre, the first four elements are especially crucial to the study of esoteric thought. 'Correspondences' includes the symbolic relationships between the visible and invisible cosmos; the concept of 'Living Nature' arises in all forms of *magia* which regard Nature as being essentially alive – traversed by light or 'hidden fire'; 'Imagination and Mediations' includes such intermediaries as rituals, symbolic images and spirit entities; and 'Experience of Transmutation refers to the transformation or 'metamorphosis' experienced by the esoteric practitioner. 'Praxis of the Concordance' refers to the attempt 'to try to establish common denominators between two different traditions', and 'Transmission' refers to the transmission of esoteric teachings from master to disciple. See also J. Santucci, 'Esotericism, the Occult and Theosophy', paper presented at CLE lecture series 'Cults, Sects and New Religions', Department of Comparative Religion, California State University, 2000.

⁸ A. Versluis, loc cit: 3.

⁹ D. Salter, 'The Strange Case of Sir Eugene and the Witch', *Good Weekend/Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 3 July 1999: 17

¹⁰ As I demonstrate in Chapter One and Chapter Seven, Norton also received more serious critiques of her visionary art and pagan symbolism in small literary magazines like *Pertinent* and *Arna* but these were specialist publications with low printruns and did not reach the mainstream Australian public.

¹¹ M. Johnson, 'The Witch of Kings Cross: Rosaleen Norton and the Australian Media', conference presentation, Symbiosis: Institute for Comparative Studies in Science, Myth, Magic and Folklore, University of Newcastle, 2002.

¹² Ibid: 1.

¹³ C.M. Cusack, 'Tradition and Change: Australian Churches and the Future', *Australian Review of Public Affairs*, University of Sydney 2003:1

¹⁴ D. Cahill, G. Bouma, H. Dellal and M. Leahy, *Religion, Cultural Diversity and Safeguarding Australia*, Australian Multicultural Foundation, Melbourne 2004:41.

¹⁵ M.D. Bailey, 'The Meanings of Magic', loc cit: 22.

¹⁶ The Cambridge Centre for Western Esotericism, an academic organisation, lists relevant areas of investigation within the field of esotericism as 'alchemy, astrology, Gnosticism, Hermeticism, Kabbalah, magic, mysticism, Neoplatonism, new religious movements connected with these currents, nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first century occult movements, Rosicrucianism, secret societies, and theosophy'. See www.ccwe.wordpress.com.

¹⁷ Crowley allegedly added the additional 'k' to the word 'magic', taking it from the Greek word *kteis*, meaning 'genitals' – a clear allusion to the sexually oriented doctrines of Thelema. See S. Greenwood, *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld*, Berg, Oxford and New York 2000: 20, fn 1.

¹⁸ Sabazius X° and AMT IX°, *History of Ordo Templi Orientis*, U.S. Grand Lodge, 2006 : 5, 17 available on-line at www.oto-usa.org/history.html.

¹⁹ This term is used by members of the Dragon Rouge, a contemporary Scandinavian Thelemite organisation aligned with the teachings and occult philosophy of Aleister Crowley and Kenneth Grant. See www.dragonrouge.net/english/general.htm.

²⁰ Goossens was knighted in June 1955. See Chapter One.

²¹ See listing of O.T.O. members provided by O.T.O. practitioner Ithell Colquhoun in *Sword of Wisdom: MacGregor Mathers and the Golden Dawn*, Spearman, London 1975: 207-208.

Chapter One

ROSALEEN NORTON – A BIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

Norton's family background

Rosaleen Miriam Norton was born in Dunedin, New Zealand on 2 October 1917.¹ Norton was the third of three sisters: Cecily and Phyllis were, respectively, twelve and ten years older than her. The family's religious affiliation was orthodox Church of England, Norton describing her parents as 'not deeply religious, but God-fearing'.² According to Norton her family's religious observance 'was more a matter of custom, rather than personal conviction and [their] sporadic attendance at church was more a token of politeness than anything'.³

Norton's English-born father, Albert Thomas Norton, was employed as a master mariner with the New Zealand Steamship Company. He had been at sea since becoming an apprentice deckhand at the age of 16. Albert Norton was often at sea for long stretches of time, visiting such locations as Vancouver, San Francisco and the Pacific Islands. In view of his travel commitments, the Norton family decided to relocate from Dunedin to Sydney, which they felt might prove to be a better base, and in June 1925 purchased a house in Lindfield on Sydney's North Shore.

Norton described her relationship with her mother, Beena, as difficult⁴ and was emotionally closer to her father. Although his visits home were sporadic, Norton's clear-cut relationship with him was more to her liking.⁵ At the time of moving to Lindfield the two older Norton sisters had already left school but Rosaleen, who had commenced her education in Dunedin at the age of four, was sent to a private infants' school and then on to the Church of England Girls' School in Chatswood, on Sydney's North Shore.

During an interview conducted with a psychologist, L.J. Murphy, at the University of Melbourne in 1949, a transcript of which has survived (see Appendix A), Norton maintained that from her infant years onward she was a rebellious child and often disobedient.⁶ In an autobiographical



Plate 2: Rosaleen, aged five

article⁷ Norton described her early life as ‘a generally wearisome period of senseless shibboleths, prying adults, detestable or depressing children whom I was supposed to like, and parental reproaches’. This apparently led to a feeling of independence:

As a child my chief aim was to be left to my own devices, and to this end I staged a hunger strike for the right to have meals alone (which I liked to eat on the roof and in other odd places). After a couple of days mother capitulated – apparently not realising that I had access to a well-stocked provision cupboard. Soon after this I acquired a tent which, pitched in the garden, became my sleeping quarters until it fell into tatters three years later.⁸

It was while sleeping in her garden as a child that Norton developed an attraction for insects, especially spiders, which would later feature in her drawings.⁹ Norton maintained that this process helped her gain an increasing familiarity with the myriad creatures of bush and garden. As a child Norton had many pets, including an assortment of cats, lizards, mice, guinea pigs, a possum, an echidna, a goat, tortoises, dogs and several toads, and she spent hours poring over her biology texts. ‘I was fascinated by zoology and entomology,’ Norton recalled in an autobiographical interview published in 1957, ‘... at 9 or 10 I could have answered a quiz on prehistoric animals with a reasonable chance of winning the jackpot.’¹⁰ Norton also claimed to find more solace among animals and insects than among most members of her family:

Family affection as such never meant anything to me, and although I was very fond of two relatives – my eldest sister [Cecily] and one of my aunts – it was because I regarded them as friends rather than relations.¹¹

Early artworks

At a young age Norton demonstrated her propensity for drawing. In an article published in *Australasian Post* in January 1957, she provided details of her early visionary memories:

My first drawings, at about 3½, were mainly creatures called ‘Nothing Beasts’ and ‘Flippers’, which I knew very well as presences. The latter looked rather like the conventional sheeted ghosts, and were hostile to me; but they were kept at bay by my friends and protectors, the ‘Nothing Beasts’, who had animal heads surmounting a mass of octopoid [sic] tentacles, with which they seemed to swim through the ether. Apropos of apparitions, various psychic manifestations, both subjective and objective, have always been an integral part of my life; consequently I accepted them unquestionably as part of the natural order of things.¹²

At the Church of England Girls’ School Norton also began producing unusual drawings for her classmates, culminating in an interpretation of Saint Saens’ *Danse Macabre* that included vampires, ghouls and werewolves. According to Norton it featured ‘...every sort of grotesque horror I could put pencil to, in a great cavern under the earth’.¹³

Norton’s teachers deemed her drawings unacceptable and her behaviour disruptive. Her headmistress subsequently wrote to her mother complaining that the fourteen-year old had a depraved nature which would corrupt the innocence of the other students. Soon afterwards, Norton was expelled from the school. Norton then enrolled at East Sydney Technical College where she studied art for two years under the tutelage of the noted sculptor, Rayner Hoff (1894-1937), who at the time was head of the Art School. Hoff encouraged Norton’s creativity and she in turn appreciated his support:

He freed me from routine and let me spend my time at figure drawing and composition, and since for the first time I was encouraged to work continuously at my own art form, I became an exemplary student.¹⁴

While attending East Sydney Technical College Norton began to consider a possible career that could follow on from her art studies. She had submitted several stories to the popular broadsheet *Smith’s Weekly* when she was only fifteen, and had had them accepted by the editor, Frank Marien.¹⁵ As a

consequence Norton considered becoming a journalist, even though this was not her preferred choice of occupation. Norton first visited Marien at *Smith's Weekly* in 1934, when she was sixteen years old. Following their meeting, Marien hired Norton to be a cadet journalist, largely on the basis of the stories she had submitted.¹⁶

Norton's early fiction

Norton's early fiction is of interest because it provides an insight into her imagination. Her first story concerned a young man who was exploring a strange street by night when he came across a waxworks – admission sixpence. Since he liked waxworks, he decided to patronise the place:

A witch-like woman took his sixpence 'in a grey talon' and led him up rickety, worm-eaten steps...The young man ultimately found himself in a vast room lit by candles as black as pitch. Leering, misshapen forms were all around him, throwing criss-cross shadows on the floor. It was like a picture painted by a decadent genius. Were they only waiting for a signal from their master, the devil, to descend from their wooden pedestals and sport in a hellish saturnalia?

Terrified of the atmosphere, the young man sought to flee, but found that he had been locked in.

Somewhere, a clock struck midnight. A low, clear note of music sounded in the room and that music came from the pipes of a waxen satyr. Carl's brain reeled in an ecstasy of horror. The pieces of the waxworks were descending from their pedestals... the light snuffed out...

Next morning two policemen on patrol heard a shriek. Entering an empty, deserted old place that had once held a waxworks, they found 'the pitiful remains of what had once been a young man... his eyes had the look of one who had seen things mortals should not see.'¹⁷

After receiving her first submission Marien invited Norton to submit another short story, and she sent in a piece titled *The Painted Horror*, a tale even more disturbing than the first. It described a young artist who, while painting in his garret, noticed his hand being mysteriously guided into painting 'a gigantic, sickening mass of purplish, bloated flesh, looking as if it had risen from a sea of corruption, topped by a squat, leering, half-human head, and great, thick, blood-bedabbled fingers like writhing worms...The vast hulk crouched on the canvas ready to spring.'¹⁸ This mysterious force fed upon the artist's mind and soul and then, one morning, he was discovered on his studio floor 'torn to

pieces and chewed'. A policeman who found the bizarre death impossible to solve noted: 'Funny the way a big canvas in his studio had a great hole in it, as if something had jumped right out of it, or through it.'¹⁹

Marien was so intrigued by these stories from the pen of a fifteen-year-old girl, that he requested a further tale for publication. Norton's third submission, *Moon Madness*, was a study of a girl who, under the influence of the full moon, murders her sisters as a sacrifice to the marble statue of a young man in an orchard. The following is a characteristic extract:

There was one shriek from Corinne as Vivienne's teeth met in her jugular. A shriek, short and horrible like a trapped rabbit – but there was nobody to hear it...only the thin carven lips of the youth seemed to smile as the warm blood of the sacrifice flowed over his feet.²⁰

Intrigued by Norton's imaginative, if gruesome, skills as a writer, Marien decided that he would offer her a job as a cadet journalist, although he realised that he would have to channel her creative energies into a more palatable form. Soon afterwards, however, Norton began to insist that she should be employed as a graphic artist rather than a journalist. Marien was unsure of her artistic talents and advised her that the sort of drawings required at *Smith's Weekly* were humorous and witty, the main aim being to make readers laugh. Norton assured him that she would be able to produce illustrations in an appropriate style.²¹

Unfortunately, Norton's first drawings for *Smith's Weekly* proved commercially unacceptable. The first composition she offered Marien showed a number of women sitting in a circle on some grass, laughing while biting their babies. Another captioned drawing showed two girls outside a tiger's cage at the zoo. One of the girls was glaring at the zoo keeper and remarking to her friend, 'Wouldn't it be a thrill if one of the beasts devoured him!'

During the next few months Marien asked Norton to present her work in a more accessible style. However Norton was unable to produce the sort of illustrations that were acceptable to the *Smith's Weekly* readership. After eight months, Norton left *Smith's Weekly* so she could paint and draw as she pleased.²²

Life after Smith's Weekly

Norton now decided that not only would she have to find a more congenial work environment than *Smith's Weekly* but she would also have to leave the family home in Lindfield. Norton's mother had recently died so there was no emotional pressure to stay at home. According to her own account Norton left a note on the mantelpiece for her father and sisters, gathered her possessions, and then walked to the nearby railway station.²³ However she very quickly realised that her departure had not been properly planned:

The only thing I had overlooked was money. At the railway station I realised I hadn't a farthing. I couldn't walk into town with two heavy suitcases but I managed to borrow two shillings from the local librarian. That took me in triumph – and a train –to the city.²⁴



Plate 3: Norton worked frequently as an artist's model during the 1930s. Here she is seen posing for fellow artist, Selina Muller

In the city Norton contacted several fine art studios, seeking work as an artist's model. According to Norton's older sister, Cecily Boothman, Norton also modelled several times for Norman Lindsay, visiting him at his home and studio near Springwood, in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney, and showing him some of her drawings.²⁵ Lindsay regarded Norton's supernatural artwork as rough and unsophisticated but there was no doubting his influence on her style. Norton would become notorious in the early 1950s for exactly the same type of bacchanalian art – pagan revelries, frolicking naked women and satyrs – that had made Lindsay's early line drawings controversial. In the 1940s Norton was still formulating the rudiments of her artistic style and developing her own, unique range of nightmarish images (see Chapter Six). However she was frequently employed as a model:

I was accounted a good model; not because of my curves, which were and are inclined to be conspicuous by their absence, but being myself an artist I knew which poses were best to draw. There was plenty of work, but all some days ahead. Meeting my current boyfriend, I was greeted by the news that he'd lost his job too; however, there was enough to take a room (eight shillings in those days) at a fabulous old building in Gloucester Street – the erstwhile Ship and Mermaid Inn, Sydney's first pub, which later became the haunt of artists, musicians and drunks.²⁶

The Ship and Mermaid Inn, built in 1841, overlooked Circular Quay, Sydney. It was while residing here that Norton first began to read esoteric literature, including works on the mystical Jewish Kabbalah,²⁷ comparative religion and medieval demonology. She also fostered her own developing interest in the Greek god Pan. During her stay at the Ship and Mermaid Inn Norton took various part-time jobs working variously as a kitchen maid in a hospital, as a designer for a toy manufacturer, and as a waitress in a bohemian nightclub. She also began to search for a suitable outlet for her drawings and writing. Norton eventually made contact with the editor of a small magazine called *Pertinent*, a pocket-sized monthly which proclaimed itself to be a blend of 'fiction, fotos [sic] and fact'.²⁸

The first issue of *Pertinent* was published in August 1940 and was edited by its founder, the poet Leon Batt. *Pertinent* differed from *Smith's Weekly* in emphasis, defining its editorial approach succinctly. 'What it does not want,' wrote Batt in a trade advertisement, are 'sentimental clichés, conventional drama, chauvinistic patriotism and romantic unrealistics [sic]. Cartoons, ideas for cartoons, and unusual photo-stories are considered, while *Pertinent* is one of the few non-intellectual publications which are interested in poetry.'²⁹

It was the free-thinking, innovative approach of *Pertinent* that attracted Norton as a potential contributor. Her first drawings accepted for publication, two fantasy works depicting ghost-like elementals and a pencil study titled *The Borgias*, appeared in the third edition, released in October



Plate 4: Norton's pencil drawing, *The Borgias*, reproduced in *Pertinent*

1941. The November and December 1941 editions also carried major articles on her work. The opening paragraph in the December feature began:

Few, if any, other Australian artists have aroused as much astonishment, as well as technical controversy, as Miss Rosaleen Norton. Further studies by this most remarkable artist discovery will be published in future issues of *Pertinent*. Originals of such work may be purchased.³⁰

The November 1941 edition of *Pertinent* included three visionary drawings: *The Rite of Spring*, showing a bearded centaur; *The Dream*, with a mix of Egyptian and Saturnalian images, and *Sorcery*, featuring a horned version of Merlin wearing a conical tower-like headpiece surrounded by a cluster of leering ghouls and hobgoblins. The accompanying article acknowledged no author and was probably written by Batt himself. After

exploring Norton's pagan influences it went on to state that the artist's work, 'apart from the alleged "unorthodoxy" of theme and outlook, [was] undeniably advanced far beyond the ordinary; it merits more interest and attention than it has been afforded in the past'.³¹ This was possibly an implied criticism of *Smith's Weekly* and Frank Marien, who had not appreciated Norton's artistic talents. Leon Batt clearly believed that *Pertinent* had made a substantial discovery in the art of Rosaleen Norton: '*Pertinent* feels that in Miss Rosaleen Norton, has been found an artist worthy of comparison with some of the best Continental, American and English contemporaries.'³²

The December 1941 edition of *Pertinent* provided Norton with further pictorial coverage. The article *More from the Folios of Miss Rosaleen Norton's Art* opened with a watercolour and pencil rendition of 'The Goat of Mendes' (reproduced in Chapter Six), a stylised interpretation of the Devil as a leering goat-headed monster. Also featured were two other drawings: *Nightmare* and *Desolation*.

Norton was encouraged by the coverage in *Pertinent*; for her it represented a breakthrough to receive such recognition, albeit in the pages of a minor magazine. However, in one important way Norton's connection with *Pertinent* would have an enduring impact on her life, for the journal would soon begin publishing the works of a young writer who would become her lover and also her partner in magic: the poet Gavin Greenlees.

Norton and Gavin Greenlees

Greenlees was unquestionably a precocious talent; two of his early poems were published in *Pertinent* in 1943, when he was only thirteen.³³ Greenlees was born in the Melbourne suburb of Armadale on 15 April 1930. His parents were middle-class, if not especially affluent. His father, Gavin senior, was a journalist, and his mother Gladys a social worker. Greenlees' parents sought to instil in their son a love of literature and ensured that he had a sound and rigorous education.

Greenlees began his education at Elwood Public School, later becoming a pupil at Christian Brothers' College, St Patrick's, Ballarat, and Melbourne High School. When he was twelve Greenlees won three successive poetry competitions sponsored by the Australian Broadcasting Commission and

several of his works would later appear in the *Australian Weekend Book*. In the early 1940s several of Greenlees' poems were also published in the *ABC Weekly* and in *Australia Monthly*.³⁴

Greenlees' earliest intellectual influence was Surrealism, which he discovered when he was twelve. In a personal commentary in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* – a collaborative work between Norton and Greenlees first published in 1952 – Norton noted that Surrealism 'excited his imagination to such a degree that he became obsessed... Intuition sensed mysterious, unknown realms and the possibility of evoking them...'³⁵

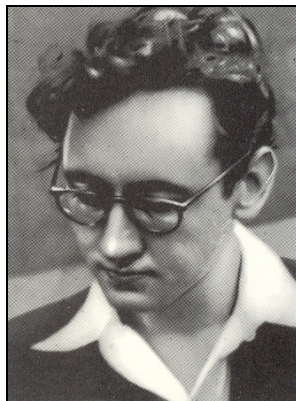


Plate 5: Gavin Greenlees in 1952 – jacket photograph for *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*

It is unlikely that Norton knew Greenlees personally during the early years of *Pertinent*, for he was still a schoolboy living in Victoria, but it can be argued that the journal was nevertheless the vehicle that brought them together as part of a common *milieu*. A further article on Norton's occult and visionary art appeared in the June 1943 edition of *Pertinent*, and the same issue contained a poem by Norton titled *Winter Night Thoughts*. The new article on Norton was subtitled 'A Vision of the Boundless'. Here Norton was presented as a psychic who could provide a glimpse of 'hidden worlds', a mystic able to penetrate dimensions of consciousness only dimly perceived by ordinary mortals.

Norton had recently been granted a painting exhibition at Pakie's Club in Sydney, a popular night-spot in Elizabeth Street frequented by artists, journalists and bohemians. The *Pertinent* article, written by an author identified simply as 'Paul', was a critique of the exhibition.³⁶ In his review Paul explained how, when he first looked at Norton's pictures, 'many appeared unpleasant because they [were] presentations of evil.' Most of the

works disgusted him, but he blamed himself, and not the artist, for this response:

If I am to analyse this feeling quite honestly now, I find only one explanation: to the impure all is impure. There is nothing disgusting about them, not even those which depict horrible, terrifying, even repulsive ideas or images. One and all, the drawings and paintings shown are perfect in drawing and design, and even where they remain somewhat sketchy due to the subjects used, they are well balanced, considered and complete.³⁷

Paul presented Norton as a person well versed and interested in ‘occult and psychic phenomena’ but he also emphasised that she was a *practitioner*, someone who had experienced these phenomena first-hand:

From a practice of self-hypnosis, she had developed a most exceptional ability to actually enter the psychic sphere, to transport her personality to other planes than the physical one, and to sensually perceive that which, to most of us, remains for ever hidden...³⁸

The article was accompanied by three drawings. One, titled *Challenge*, showed a naked woman wrestling with a spider. Another, *Medieval Scene*, portrayed a cluster of jovial monks, magicians, warlocks and court jesters. *Nightmare* showed an archetypal god-form rising up from the naked prostrate body of a woman who was clearly Norton herself.

Nightmare provided a representation of human consciousness transcending temporal boundaries and penetrating astral and mythic realms, a clear depiction of trance states manifesting in art (see Chapter Six). It was to be the precursor of the many visionary illustrations which would later accompany Greenlees’ poems in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*.

It is not known when Norton and Greenlees actually met each other but in mid-July 1949 they hitchhiked together from Sydney to Melbourne to find a venue for an exhibition of the artist’s most recent works. Following contact



Plate 6: Norton's drawing *Nightmare*, showing an astral form arising from her comatose body

with a student from the University of Melbourne named Ian Stapleton,³⁹ a booking was made at the gallery of the university's Rowden White Library for an exhibition. The forty-six works selected for the exhibition included some of Norton's finest drawings to date: *Timeless Worlds*, *Lucifer*, *Triumph*, *The Adversary*, *The Initiate*, an early version of *Individuation*, *Merlin*, and *Loosing* (sic) *of the Whirlwind*.⁴⁰

It was intended that the exhibition would be attended mainly by students and academics but two days after the opening, members of the Victorian police entered the gallery, seizing four of the exhibited drawings. Charges were subsequently laid under the Police Offences Act of 1928 alleging that Norton's *Witches' Sabbath*, *Lucifer*, *Triumph* and *Individuation* were decadent and obscene artworks and were likely to arouse unhealthy sexual appetites in those who saw them.⁴¹

During the ensuing court hearings at Carlton Court, Melbourne, counsel for the Crown, representing the Victorian police department, argued that Norton was displaying works inspired by medieval demonology. However, in Norton's defence, Mr A.L. Abrahams argued that the artist's allegedly obscene pictures were mild compared with illustrations published in *The History of Sexual Magic*, a publication which had been cleared by the censors and which was readily available in Australia.⁴² Abrahams also maintained that

for Norton to be declared guilty as charged, her art would have to be found to be of a nature 'likely to corrupt those whose minds were open to immoral influences'. In his legal summation Stipendiary Magistrate Addison found in Norton's favour, dismissing the charges against her and awarding £4/4/- costs against the police department.



Plate 7: Norton's controversial drawing *Witches' Sabbath*, which was included in the 1949 exhibition in Melbourne.

While in Melbourne Norton was contacted by Professor Oeser, Head of the Department of Psychology at the University of Melbourne. Many of Norton's exhibited works were photographed in colour, although these colour slides did not emerge again until 1982.⁴³ Norton also undertook a Rorschach-Behn Test with Professor Oeser's colleague, psychologist L.J. Murphy at the University of Melbourne. The insights into Norton's magical and artistic processes provided by this test and Murphy's interview are discussed in Chapter Four.

After returning from Melbourne, Norton and Greenlees moved to Sydney's Kings Cross district, a suburb that attracted eccentrics, poets, vagrants and

artists and which was known for its bohemian lifestyle. Kings Cross had witnessed a long line of colourful characters as residents, and represented Sydney's counterpart to New York's Greenwich Village and London's Soho district. Originally, the area around Bayswater Road, Darlinghurst Road and Victoria Street had been exclusive, and the province of the well-to-do. During the Victorian and Edwardian eras successful merchants had built their mansions there, making it a place of elegant reserve. But then it began to change demographically and in the 1920s, as Frederick C. Folkard has observed in *The Rare Sex* (1965), it became 'the hangout of writers and poets, painters and sculptors, musicians and bums'.⁴⁴

Norton's sister, Cecily Boothman confirmed⁴⁵ that by 1949 Norton and Greenlees had become lovers although at the time Norton was married to a young tradesman named Beresford Conroy.⁴⁶ It would seem, however, that initially the possibility of a sexual relationship was not the original



Plate 8: After returning to Sydney from Melbourne, Norton quickly acquired a reputation as an 'occult' eccentric in Kings Cross. This photograph of Norton was published in an early issue of *People* magazine, 15 March 1950

attraction. It appears that Norton's and Greenlees' contributions to *Pertinent* had drawn them together, she as a visionary artist and he as an aspiring visionary poet. According to Boothman, the age difference between Norton

and Greenlees led initially to a nurturing relationship. Norton was thirteen years older than Greenlees and became protective of him: she encouraged his poetry, provided him with warmth and friendship, and offered him a degree of emotional security that he did not receive from his own family, especially his father.⁴⁷

Norton and Greenlees took up residence in a three-storey terrace house located at 173 Brougham Street, Kings Cross – in the ‘red light’ district of Sydney. The house was located near William Street, a short distance from such familiar landmarks as the Mansions Hotel in Bayswater Road and the Arabian café in Darlinghurst Road, where some of Norton’s paintings were on public exhibition. The terrace house itself was in a state of disrepair and was occupied by a mixture of vagrants and bohemians. Norton and Greenlees’ basement room was cluttered and drab: animal skulls, bones, shells and stones lay strewn around the room amidst discarded cigarette cartons and coffee cups. The main furnishings were an old armchair, a large mirror draped with colourful beads, and an orange crepe paper lampshade which hung down from the ceiling on a long lead. Broken battens in the ceiling had caused sections of the plaster to flake and crumble, and cobwebs adorned the dimmer recesses of the room. A sign in the corridor outside the flat read ‘The Female Vagrant’ while a placard on the door offered a greeting to visitors: ‘Welcome to the house of ghosts, goblins, werewolves, vampires, witches, wizards and poltergeists’.⁴⁸

In New South Wales in 1951 it was a legal requirement that residents had to be able to demonstrate visible means of financial support. Failure to do so could lead to a charge of vagrancy.⁴⁹ In September 1951 Norton and Greenlees’ flat was investigated by members of the Sydney Vice Squad and the couple were arrested on a charge of vagrancy. They were later remanded at Central Court and given two weeks to find gainful employment. Through an act of fortunate coincidence, they were approached by a freelance publisher and editor named Walter (‘Wally’) Glover, who offered them a chance of employment and asked them to come to his office.⁵⁰



Plate 9: 179 Brougham Street, Kings Cross was in run-down condition when Norton and Greenlees lived there



Plate 10: Publisher Walter Glover, c.1951

Born in 1911, Glover had left school at the age of thirteen and then worked for various trade journals like *Decoration and Glass*, *Package Parade* and *Signs and Showcards*. During World War Two he served in New Guinea as a sergeant in the Australian Army, rising eventually to the rank of captain in the Army Education division. After the war he became a freelance publisher and

worked part-time as editor of *The Pastrycook's Review*. Glover has provided a personal recollection of the day Norton and Greenlees arrived at his office:⁵¹

They arrived at my office late in the afternoon, both freshly groomed and sparkling, as if they were straight out of a tub – but they were dressed like hippies two decades ahead of their time. Gavin displayed a propensity for copper. His spectacles resting on the end of his nose were held together with copper wire, as were his well-worn footwear. Rosaleen was more concerned with demons although at that stage she had not cultivated the acute features that characterised her later appearance. They showed me their extraordinary work. It had not been prepared specifically for the occasion, hence it was a genuine cross-section of their capabilities. It was so different to anything I had seen, that I was impressed with its obvious potential.⁵²

Glover has stated that initially he did not understand the content of Norton's symbolic drawings and Greenlees' surrealistic poetry and, although he was working both as a publisher and editor, there was no proposal to produce a limited edition art book. At this stage Glover was looking for assistants to help him with his freelance advertising and journalism.⁵³ Later, however, Glover came to believe that a publication featuring works by Norton and Greenlees could be commercially viable and he arranged for a contract to be drawn up, naming him [ie. Glover] as copyright holder of all of Norton's past, present and future artworks in return for providing regular income to Norton and Greenlees.⁵⁴

Publication of The Art of Rosaleen Norton

During the next few months Norton and Greenlees spent much of their time gathering drawings and poems for the proposed limited edition art book. Among the selected illustrations were depictions of Lilith, 'Queen of Air and Darkness', a horned devil named Fohat – whose phallus took the form of a snake – and a male leonine deity named Eloï, who resembled an ancient Persian monarch. Also included were *Rites of Baron Samedi*, an artwork based on a ritual invocation inspired by the Voodoo tradition, and *Black Magic*, which showed a woman embracing a black panther – a work which, according to Norton represented the mystical experience of 'union with the night'.⁵⁵

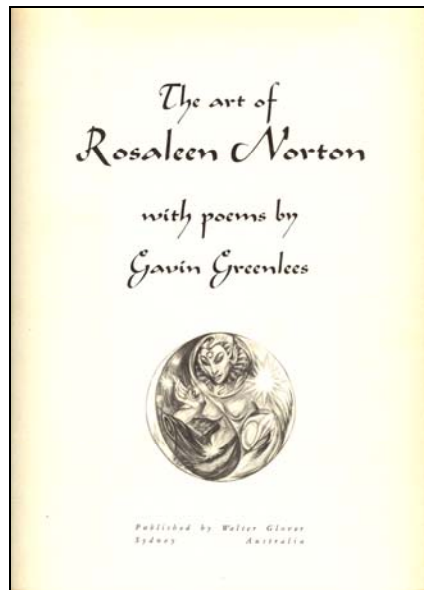


Plate 11: Title page of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Sydney 1952

Not all the images were sinister or demonic. One of the works, *Entombment of Count Orgaz*, was a parody of a celebrated painting by El Greco. Another drawing, *A Room at Castle Issusselduss*, showed clocks, vases and chairs coming magically to life as if in a child's fairytale; *Mosque of Eidolons* and *Fishers of Men* were caricatures of figures in the Church, and *Edith Sitwell* was a tribute to a writer whose work Norton had recently been reading. Greenlees, meanwhile, was engaged in compiling some of his most evocative poetry. The poem selected to accompany *The Angel of Twizzari*, was a work intended to depict the dream world as an aspect of the 'astral plane' (see Chapter Four for an explanation of the magical conception of the 'astral plane'):

*He is the castle of echoes,
And the walking mill, sideshow attraction behind sleep.
We created those dissolving, mobile corridors,
From the dream logged, archaic flesh,
Of giants no longer valid...*⁵⁶

While Norton and Greenlees were selecting the poems and accompanying illustrations, Glover was engaged with the logistics of printing and binding the published work. Fine quality deckle-edged Glastonbury Antique paper was ordered from B.J. Ball, Tonecraft of Marrickville was appointed as the printer,

and a retired flight captain, Alan Cross, was selected as bookbinder. Glover had not revealed to the printer and binder, however, that he had insufficient capital reserves to cover all the production costs, and he was hoping that book sales would help to pay the print-bill.⁵⁷

Advance copies of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* arrived from the printer in August 1952. Bound in red leather with gold blocking, the book had a Tibetan-blue dust-jacket featuring an impressive Norton line drawing and the retail price was set at eight guineas a copy. However, on the same day that advance copies of the book were expected from Alan Cross, both Glover's and Norton's fathers died, severely affecting the release of the book. Glover later recalled these events:

I hurried out to my parents' suburban home to assist with arrangements for the funeral. I left at midday, met Alan Cross, collected the books and rushed a copy to each newspaper. Copies of the book were sent off to New York, London and my representative in Paris. Then everything crashed. We had no books and no distribution ... The publicity created demand but nobody knew where to buy the books...⁵⁸

On 27 August 1952 Glover was charged with producing an obscene publication; attending Central Court, Sydney, on 25 November 1952 he registered a plea of 'not guilty'. The Crown was represented at the hearing by Mr D.J. Vine-Hall, while Glover was defended by Mr Jack W. Shand, QC. The noted newspaper magnate Frank Packer, who had taken a personal interest in the case, agreed to pay Glover's legal expenses. Opening the prosecution before Magistrate Solling, the Crown solicitor maintained that the book itself provided all the evidence required to support a charge of obscenity. Debate over the contents of the publication proved to be a protracted affair, extending through to February 1953, and Norton was asked to explain her drawings to the Court. Mr Vine-Hall drew special attention to the illustrations featuring a black panther (*Black Magic*), a winged hermaphrodite (*Individuation*) and a naked woman rising from an egg (*Esoteric Study*). Norton responded by referring to the psychology of Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud and explained that many of her works referred to the 'fusion of the conscious and subconscious mind'.⁵⁹ Describing *Black Magic*, a re-worked version of one of the artworks that had been successfully defended in the Melbourne obscenity trial following the Rowden White exhibition, Norton claimed that the black panther represented the secret forces of the night, while

Esoteric Study ‘concealed a hidden side of religion which only a select few could recognise’.⁶⁰

Magistrate Solling closed proceedings by fining Glover £5 plus costs, and ruling that two of Rosaleen’s works, *The Adversary* and *Fohat*, were ‘obscene and an offence to chastity and delicacy’. Existing copies of the book were required to have these specific pages blacked out.⁶¹ Norton responded by writing a poem titled *Odium Psychopathologicum*, which expressed her feelings about the magistrate’s decision.⁶²

The Art of Rosaleen Norton began to attract widespread publicity in the Australian press⁶³ and copies of the book sent to New York were confiscated and burnt by U.S. Customs.⁶⁴ As a consequence the publication automatically became a prohibited import to Australia.⁶⁵ Glover also found his publication difficult to advertise and his marketing arrangements became



Plate 12: *Fohat* – one of the controversial images in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* that had to be blacked out before publication of the 1952 edition could proceed. The same drawing presented no legal problems when the 1982 facsimile edition was published

rapidly dysfunctional. In 1957 Glover was declared officially bankrupt, publication of the book having contributed significantly to his insolvency.⁶⁶ Copyrights to Norton's artworks, which had been assigned to him through his contract with Norton and Greenlees, were now passed to the Official Receiver in Bankruptcy and would not be returned to him until May 1981 when his state of bankruptcy was rescinded.

Accusations of a 'Devil's Cult'

Following publication of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* and the subsequent controversy surrounding its publication, Norton acquired popular notoriety in the Kings Cross district and became a figure of curiosity to casual passers-by. Specific coffee shops, like the Apollyon café in Darlinghurst Road, Kings Cross and the Kashmir café, in Macleay Street, Potts Point, were alleged to be the haunt of her 'Devil's cult'.⁶⁷ In early November 1955 the proprietor of the Kashmir, David Goodman, faced charges in Central Summons Court, Sydney, alleging that three of Norton's paintings which hung in the Kashmir café – *Black Magic*, *Belphegor* and *Beelzebub* – were obscene. On 19 November 1955, Mr K.M.Dash found Goodman guilty of exhibiting obscene works of art and he was fined £5 plus £1 costs.⁶⁸

Two months earlier, on 14 September 1955 a New Zealand migrant, Anna Karina Hoffmann, had been charged with vagrancy by Constable Ikin of Darlinghurst Police Station. At the time Hoffmann claimed that she and Norton had attended a Black Mass in Kings Cross. This claim was widely reported in the media, greatly damaging Norton's reputation.⁶⁹ During legal proceedings at Central Court, Sydney, Hoffmann alleged that she had attended rites of Devil worship with Norton, that all the participants wore black – 'the Devil's colour' – and that they had performed a Black Mass accompanied by 'sex orgies and parties'.⁷⁰ Hoffmann later denied taking part in a Black Mass and confessed that the alleged 'connection' with Norton was based purely on hearsay. Hoffmann was sentenced to two months in jail, Judge Holden describing her during an appeals session as 'a menace'.⁷¹

The Hoffmann incident was followed by further controversial claims in the popular press. Two Sydney journalists published an 'eye-witness account' describing how they had visited a Black Mass in Kings Cross and observed a gowned witch and wizard performing a mock imitation of the Christian Mass

during which a rooster was sacrificed.⁷² Norton was angered by these charges, maintaining not only that they were false but also that she would never condone any activity that harmed animals.⁷³

Then on 3 October 1955 – in a raid that would prove to have highly significant consequences – Vice Squad police from Darlinghurst Police Station entered Norton's premises at 173 Brougham Street, Kings Cross and laid charges against Norton and Greenlees for performing 'an unnatural sexual act'.⁷⁴ The cause of the police raid was the prior discovery of a collection of film negatives that allegedly provided proof of a witchcraft cult in Kings Cross. During the subsequent court proceedings it emerged that two men, Francis Honer and Raymond Ager, had offered 'obscene' photographs to the Sydney *Sun* newspaper and were attempting to sell them for £200.⁷⁵ It was further established that Honer had stolen the film negatives from Norton and Greenlees' residence.⁷⁶ The photographs allegedly showed Norton and Greenlees involved in a rite of flagellation. Norton was strapped by her wrists and ankles to a pedestal and Greenlees was garbed ceremonially.⁷⁷ Evidence was provided that the photographs had been taken at Norton's recent birthday party: Honer had stolen the films from a couch in the flat while Norton and Greenlees were temporarily out of the room.⁷⁸ Honer and Ager were subsequently jailed for four months, but the court case and extended hearings with Norton and Greenlees attracted widespread coverage in the popular press.⁷⁹ Norton was obliged to defend her belief in pantheism in court, describing it as the heathen worship of ancient Greek gods.⁸⁰ (The significance of the Honer/Ager incident is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five which focuses on Norton's magical practices. It is thought that Honer and Ager were members of Norton's coven.)⁸¹

Norton and Sir Eugene Goossens

One of the most significant episodes of Norton's life concerned her highly controversial magical relationship with the distinguished English conductor and composer, Sir Eugene Goossens (1893-1962), whose musical career was already well established long before his arrival in Australia in 1947. Born in London on 26 May 1893, Goossens attended Liverpool College of Music and won a scholarship to the Royal College of Music. He became an accomplished violinist, playing in the Queen's Hall Orchestra from 1912-1916. Goossens had also begun conducting in 1912, and in 1916 was encouraged by Sir Thomas Beecham to concentrate on this particular aspect of classical music.⁸²

In June 1921 Goossens gave a series of concerts in London which included a critically acclaimed first concert performance in England of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* which Stravinsky himself attended. Goossens also directed Diaghilev's Les Ballets Russes and the Carl Rosa Opera Company at Covent Garden in 1922.⁸³

In 1923 Goossens became the conductor of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra in New York State and in 1931 succeeded Fritz Reiner as permanent conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, a post he held for fifteen years. In 1947 Goossens was appointed director of the New South Wales Conservatorium and the first resident conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. At this time Goossens was already a Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur (awarded 1934) and he would later receive a knighthood at Buckingham Palace for his services to music (bestowed 1955). He is also credited with proposing the original idea for the Sydney Opera House.⁸⁴



Plate 13: The distinguished conductor, Eugene Goossens (later, Sir Eugene)

However, it was his fascination with paganism and magic that would attract him to Rosaleen Norton and lead ultimately to his professional and personal downfall.

Shortly after the publication of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* in August / September 1952⁸⁵ Goossens purchased a copy of the book from a Sydney gallery bookshop and this rekindled his long-standing interest in magic and

the occult.⁸⁶ While living in England during the 1920s Goossens had been a close friend of the British musical composer Philip Heseltine (1894-1930, also known as Peter Warlock).⁸⁷ Heseltine was in turn deeply interested in



Plate 14: Composer Philip Heseltine, who is thought to have introduced Goossens to Crowley's sex magick

the *Goetia* and the sex magic of ceremonial occultist Aleister Crowley (see Chapter Three) and according to Goossens' younger sister, Dame Sidonie Goossens-Millar (1899-2004), it was Heseltine's involvement with magic that first attracted her brother to the occult.⁸⁸ After acquiring a copy of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* Goossens wrote to Norton, expressing admiration for both the book and her artistic work.⁸⁹ Norton subsequently invited Goossens to her residence in Brougham Street, Kings Cross, which was located close to the rehearsal rooms at the Australian Broadcasting Commission where Goossens frequently worked. Goossens told Norton that he admired her authentic approach to paganism, and a friendship began to develop. Goossens was subsequently invited to become a member of the small magical group that met periodically in Norton's flat to discuss magical ideas and perform rituals sacred to Pan.⁹⁰

According to David Salter, who researched Goossens' career for the Australian Broadcasting Commission television documentary *Sir Eugene Goossens: Sex, Magic and the Maestro* (2004),⁹¹ Goossens' relationship with Norton quickly developed a 'sexual intensity'. When Goossens' conducting work took him away from Sydney he would write detailed letters to her about her rituals and occult paraphernalia.⁹² He was also seeking an intimate magical relationship with her. Goossens wrote to Norton: 'I need your physical presence very much, for many reasons. We have many rituals and indulgences

to undertake.’⁹³ Unfortunately for Goossens it was precisely his importation from Europe of ‘occult paraphernalia’ and other prohibited articles that would prove his undoing, shattering both his professional career and his magical relationship with Norton and Gavin Greenlees.

On 9 March 1956, after returning on a flight from London to Sydney Goossens was apprehended by Customs officers at Sydney’s Mascot Airport. The Customs officers discovered that Goossens was carrying over 800 erotic photographs, a spool of film, a number of ritual masks and a quantity of incense sticks. Goossens was officially charged under Section 233 of the Customs Act, which prohibited the possession or importation of ‘blasphemous, indecent or obscene works or articles’.⁹⁴

Goossens’ legal defence was brought before Mr J.M. McCauley, SM in the Martin Place Court of Petty Sessions with the noted barrister Jack Shand



Plate 15: Sir Eugene Goossens, shortly after his arrest at Sydney’s Mascot Aiport

QC acting as counsel for Goossens. The conductor himself did not attend the court hearings but a plea of ‘guilty’ was entered and Goossens was fined the maximum penalty of £100.⁹⁵ Soon afterwards Goossens resigned from his positions with the New South Wales Conservatorium and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, bringing both his career as an internationally renowned musical conductor and also his personal relationship with Norton and Greenlees to a close.⁹⁶ After his departure from Mascot Airport, Goossens’ Sydney solicitors issued a statement which quoted Goossens as saying: ‘It is

my misfortune that I allowed myself to be used to bring prohibited matter into this country as a result of persistent menaces I could not ignore involving others.’⁹⁷ However, this statement was both ingenuous and misleading, and represented a clear attempt to shift the blame for Goossens’ downfall to Norton and her occult coven. As I will show in Chapter Five, Goossens was both a willing and enthusiastic member of Norton’s coven and offered to instruct her in ‘black magic’ techniques associated with the *Goetia*. According to transcripts of an interview given by Vice Squad detective Bert Trevenar in June 1999, Goossens also tried to recruit musicians from the Sydney Symphony Orchestra to join Norton’s coven.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, Goossens’ fall from grace was extremely unfortunate and the consequences for his musical career both dire and unintended. Goossens’ sex magic involvement with Norton and Gavin Greenlees is described in detail in Chapter Five.

Norton’s subsequent relationship with Greenlees

A few months prior to the apprehension of Sir Eugene Goossens⁹⁹ at Sydney’s Mascot Airport, Gavin Greenlees had been admitted to Callan Park Hospital, in the Sydney suburb of Rozelle.¹⁰⁰ Details of Greenlees’ medical condition were released to Judge Clegg during sessions at Darlinghurst Court relating to the Honer/Ager obscenity charges.¹⁰¹ According to a statement prepared by Dr S.G.Sands, acting medical superintendent of Callan Park Hospital, in conjunction with Macquarie Street psychiatrist, Dr R.J. Kiely, Greenlees had been medically assessed as a schizophrenic and was hallucinating voices which would perpetually torment and ridicule him. According to Dr Sands, Greenlees was also ‘obsessed with sex’ and ‘wanted to escape from the real world’. He would take books on occultism into the corner of his room and ‘could only be aroused to any action by constant prodding’.¹⁰² However, Greenlees’ medical decline did not mark the end of his relationship with Norton. She continued to support him, emotionally and maternally, as she had done since the beginning of their relationship, and visited him regularly at Callan Park Hospital, taking him books to read and showing him drawings and sketches she had recently completed. On allotted visiting days Greenlees was also permitted to visit Norton in Kings Cross. Norton remained Greenlees’ most valued contact with the outside world, and they maintained regular contact throughout Greenlees’ long period of medical supervision. Greenlees did not receive a full medical discharge until 1983, nearly four years after Norton’s death.¹⁰³

Norton's persona as the 'Witch of Kings Cross'

Norton received extensive media coverage in the Sydney-based tabloid press throughout the 1950s, and more particularly towards the latter part of that decade following Goossens' departure. Major articles included the anonymous 'She Hates Figleaf Morality', published in *People*, Sydney, 29 March 1950, Dave Barnes' 'Rosaleen says she could be a Witch' (1952)¹⁰⁴ and 'I am a Witch' (1956),¹⁰⁵ and a series of autobiographical articles by Norton herself, published in *Australasian Post* in January and February 1957.¹⁰⁶ Other related articles in the same genre included D.I. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!' (1955)¹⁰⁷ and P. Lucas, 'Witches in the Nude' (1958).¹⁰⁸ These articles promoted a media image of Norton as 'the Witch of Kings



Plate 16: A typical tabloid depiction of Norton in the 1950s – Norton and the 'Horned God'

Cross' – with dark mischievous eyes, plucked eyebrows and a devilish grin. Norton was often photographed sitting beside her altar in front of a mural of Pan. Various adornments were also visible: a mounted set of antlers, a ritual

dagger or *athame*, ceremonial candles, and a phallic snake's head ornament. Norton had not referred to herself as a witch during the legal proceedings associated with her obscenity charges but had described herself instead as a pantheist, or a worshipper of Pan, the ancient Greek god of Nature.¹⁰⁹ Adopting a different approach for a series of autobiographical articles in the *Australasian Post*, Norton now allowed herself to be photographed in a conical witch's hat, playing to the popular perception of an evil witch or crone.¹¹⁰ During this period articles were also published in the *Australasian Post* depicting Norton with her pet cats, a clear reference to the classic image of the medieval witch with her animal familiars.¹¹¹ During one of her interviews with Dave Barnes, who was managing editor of the *Australasian Post* and author of three major articles on the controversial 'Witch of Kings Cross', Norton remarked: 'If Pan is the Devil, then I am indeed a Devil worshipper.'¹¹² Norton also told Barnes that occult powers were a natural part of life, that she had been influenced by the psychoanalytic concepts of Carl Jung, and that she embraced many religions as part of her spiritual belief system: 'Anything can happen in Infinity...I believe in lots of Gods, Buddha, and even the Christian God.'¹¹³

Norton in the 1960s

By the mid-1960s, Norton had acquired widespread media notoriety, having developed her persona as 'the Witch of Kings Cross'. This persona was further reinforced by Dave Barnes' final article on Norton, 'Confessions of a Witch', published in *Australasian Post* in 1967.¹¹⁴ The British Witchcraft Act of 1735, which forbade the practice of witchcraft, had not yet been repealed in New South Wales – that would not take place until January 1971 – but Norton was earning a day-to-day living making magical charms and occasionally performing hexes¹¹⁵ for a small group of clients, as required. Occasionally she would also produce new occult paintings to sell. These would range in price from £5 for a small work to £100 for a large canvas. Sometimes she would recycle her more familiar themes, such as portraits of Pan and Lucifer.¹¹⁶

During this time Norton moved house several times. For a number of years she lived at 8 Hargrave Street, East Sydney, a house owned by Gavin Greenlees' parents. On 17 January 1964, Greenlees returned on temporary release from Callan Park Hospital and caused havoc, threatening to kill Norton with a knife and hurling her furniture and ritual bric-a-brac into the street

during one of his schizophrenic attacks.¹¹⁷ Detective Sergeant Harry Giles, who was called to the house by neighbours, found Greenlees leaning over a sink running a knife across his throat. Giles later found Norton kneeling before the altar in her living room. Giles arrested both Greenlees and Norton as vagrants and Norton was also charged with ‘offensive behaviour’ and using ‘indecent’ language. Later she was acquitted of the vagrancy charge and fined £2 for using indecent language. Greenlees was sentenced to a month’s jail for carrying a knife with intent to harm, a seemingly inappropriate sentence in view of his mental condition.¹¹⁸

After this incident Norton went to stay with her sister Cecily, who was living in a flat in Kirribilli, overlooking Sydney Harbour. Cecily was close to Norton and made her feel welcome if ever she needed a ‘retreat’. Cecily was also Norton’s only close surviving relative¹¹⁹ so it was understandable that Norton would turn to Cecily in times of crisis. Norton remained with her older sister for several months and spent long sessions meditating beneath a large Moreton Bay Fig tree which grew in the garden near the foreshore. This tree became a symbol in several of Norton’s later paintings: an archetypal and symbolic tree that reached up to the heavens – a secure haven for Nature-spirits as well as for Norton herself.

By June 1967, Norton was again living in Kings Cross, this time in a derelict house in Bourke Street, between William Street and Woolloomooloo. Norton lived in a small room, dimly illuminated by an oil lamp. She had constructed a new altar in the fireplace and had retained her familiar range of occult ornaments, various masks, portraits of Pan, trinkets, a metal gong and several small statuettes of cobras. Continuing her lifelong fascination with animals, Norton also had a range of pets, including two rats named Percy and Moonstone and turtle obtained from a pond in Centennial Park, which she believed was a gift from Pan.¹²⁰

When *Sun* journalist Nan Javes interviewed Norton in February 1969, Norton referred to herself as a ‘coven master’, a term not previously used in the three Dave Barnes interviews in *Australasian Post* or in her own autobiographical articles for the same magazine.¹²¹ Norton also presented a more confrontational interpretation of witchcraft in her interview with Javes, depicting herself and the unnamed members of her witchcraft coven as potentially hostile and dangerous:

It's ridiculous to say we never do harm. If we weren't capable of fighting people through hexes and charms we couldn't survive. But here we are in the twentieth century, stronger than ever. Of course, we sometimes do good turns too. The sort of people I might put a spell on are those who harm me or someone close to me. I mightn't do it immediately if the circumstances weren't propitious, but you can bet your life I'd get around to it in time – and it works!¹²²

Norton confirmed to Javes that she was now conducting Witches' Sabbaths at Candlemas, May Eve, Lammas and Halloween, the major ceremonial events of the witch's annual calendar, representing a more structured approach to her witchcraft practice that may possibly have developed as a result of her brief



Plate 17: Norton in the 1960s – Pan is shown within an inverted pentagram

contact with British witchcraft practitioner Gerald Gardner.¹²³ According to Javes, Norton was now claiming to have two hundred followers in Sydney and hundreds more throughout the country.¹²⁴

The Anglican Commission of Inquiry into the Occult

In response to the increasing popular interest in astrology, tarot cards, magic and the spiritualist use of ouija boards during the late 1960s and early 1970s¹²⁵ vocal fundamentalists within the ultra-conservative Sydney diocese of the Anglican Church began arguing that the occult was influencing school children. As a result of this concern among members of the Anglican congregation in Sydney the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, Marcus Loane, agreed to the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry into the Occult in 1974.

The Anglican Commission of Inquiry into the Occult was chaired by the Dean of Sydney, Lance Shilton, and included four clergymen from the Anglican Church, several of whom had already expressed fervent opposition to all aspects of the occult. One of these members, Rector Peter Hobson of St Michaels, Surry Hills, was already conducting exorcisms to banish the ‘spirits’ of Hare Krishnas, tobacco smoking, Theosophy, homosexuality, spiritualism and other ‘deviant’ practices.¹²⁶

The Commission of Inquiry was required to examine the current fascination with the occult, especially among young people; to explore the biblical basis of spiritualism and associated practices, as well as provide warnings against dabbling in the occult, and to examine the various current expressions of the occult and its effects. The report of the Commission would then be published to provide guidelines ‘about the attitudes Christian people ought to take and any action the Church as a whole ought to pursue’.¹²⁷

The Commission of Inquiry received submissions from Christians, occultists, academics, teachers and psychologists and released its report on 13 August 1975. The report stated that the ‘most sinister’ of all modern ‘crazes’ was occultism and Satanism, spread by the mass media; it was further alleged that these practices were quickly becoming respectable. The report suggested that interest in the occult was related to the increase in violence and pornography in literature since occultism could provide pornography with a religious base to work from. The general conclusion of the Inquiry as to why there was such a current fascination with the occult reflected the opinions of several churchmen: the failure of organised religion, the loss of personal identity and meaning in life resulting from the sterility of modern technological society, and the fact that this in turn left a vacuum filled by alternative belief systems disapproved of by the Church. The Commission was also interested in a

submission by one of its members, Dr David Collison, a practising psychiatrist, who had developed the concept of a 'possession syndrome'. This syndrome was said to be characterised by mental disturbance following involvement in occult practices. Dr Collison maintained that the 'possession syndrome' failed to respond to conventional medical treatment but could be effectively treated by using exorcism. Collison had, at this time, already begun using exorcism to treat patients afflicted by the syndrome. Collison counselled his colleagues that psychiatric disturbances resulting from involvement in the occult were becoming much more common and could lead to great mental suffering and disturbance, and perhaps even suicide.¹²⁸

The Commission of Inquiry was concerned about the paraphernalia of the occult, including tarot cards, ouija boards and various 'alternative publications', and recommended that the media should present the occult in a realistic way, mentioning the harmful effects as well as the fascination. The Commission of Inquiry also maintained that there was a need for restrictions on occult literature and equipment, just as there were already restrictions on objects linked to violence or pornography. The Commission recommended that the space currently devoted to horoscopes and fortune-telling in popular magazines and newspapers should be replaced by articles on the Christian faith, since this was the religion 'nominally accepted by the majority'.¹²⁹

For several weeks following the release of the Commission of Inquiry report, the popular media in Sydney featured sensationalist headlines and articles based on its findings. There were also several illustrations of medieval witches, and sinister photographs of modern occult practitioners.¹³⁰ Rosaleen Norton was interviewed by Gus de Brito of the *Sunday Mirror* in August 1975, to obtain her response to the Commission of Inquiry report. Norton, who at the time was living in a basement flat in Roslyn Gardens, Kings Cross, told de Brito that she agreed with Dean Shilton's view that amateurs meddling in the occult could get into difficulties:



Plate 18: Norton in her later years

Magic can send you round the bend...It is as dangerous as drugs. [People attempting to use magic or witchcraft rituals without sufficient knowledge] can release various entities that they don't know anything about, and such people have no idea how to handle these entities...¹³¹

Norton also told de Brito that she disagreed with the Commission of Inquiry's proposed ban on ouija boards. Theoretically, she conceded, school children could contact spirits using equipment like this, but she personally 'couldn't see any danger in it'.¹³²

Norton's interview with de Brito was one of her final contacts with the popular media. Norton was now living as a virtual recluse¹³³ and by the mid-1970s had begun restricting her day-to-day contacts to a few close friends and her sister Cecily, who now lived down the corridor in the same block of flats.¹³⁴

Towards the end of 1978 Norton became suddenly ill and required hospital tests. She was advised by her doctor that she had cancerous growths in her colon and that a surgical operation was required. It was initially thought that this surgery was successful but the cancer quickly recurred. In November 1979 Norton was taken to the Roman Catholic Sacred Heart Hospice for the

Dying at St Vincents Hospital, Sydney. She died on 5 December 1979, survived by her older sister Cecily Boothman.¹³⁵

Events following Norton's death

Many of Norton's paintings remained in storage at the time of her death. The Sydney-based hotelier, Don Deaton, proposed an auction of these paintings, which he maintained were his property. Deaton owned the Hotel Manly, the Prince of Wales in Haymarket, and also a pub at Collector, a small country town located on the Federal Highway north of Canberra. Norton drank regularly at the Prince of Wales and sometimes paid for her gin and tonics with paintings. When the Apollyon café in Kings Cross was marked for demolition in 1970 to make way for the Eastern suburbs freeway, Norton asked Deaton to take the paintings which had been on display there, and store them in the basement of the Prince of Wales.¹³⁶ All of the paintings which would later be exhibited for auction were works from this collection. Deaton later maintained that by virtue of his agreement with Norton the paintings were his to sell, a point strongly disputed by Norton's sister Cecily, who believed that the paintings now belonged to her as next of kin.¹³⁷

In February 1981 advertisements appeared in several Sydney newspapers announcing a forthcoming art auction at the Wentworth Hotel to be held on 2 March 1981. Artworks included on the auction schedule included *Changing Times* by Sali Herman, *Bomboro Castle* by Sir Arthur Streeton, *Wimmera Landscape* by Arthur Boyd and twelve works by Norton. The latter included *Masque of Eidolons*, a drawing which had been published in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, a large and garish oil painting titled *Devil Worship*, and minor works like *The Rabbit* and *The Gomblins*. Few of these paintings were sold at the Wentworth Hotel auction and they would not be seen again in public for nearly two years.

Despite the obscenity charges which had caused his bankruptcy in 1957, Glover was keen to republish *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* as a facsimile edition. Glover was able to regain the copyright to Norton's paintings from the Official Receiver in Bankruptcy in May 1981 and this coincided with an accident compensation payment to him of around \$11,000, an amount sufficient to finance the new publication.¹³⁸ It was proposed by Glover that apart from the addition of four colour plates and a new introduction, *The Art*

of *Rosaleen Norton* would be republished in a format identical to the 1952 edition.¹³⁹ Glover also suggested to Deaton that he display a selection of



Plate 19: Walter Glover (far right) at the Exiles Bookshop launch, October 1982

Norton's works in a gallery to accompany the release of the facsimile edition. On 1 October 1982, Deaton opened a one-week exhibition in the upstairs gallery at Exiles Bookshop near Taylor Square, for the specific purpose of selling off the remaining paintings by 'slow auction'.¹⁴⁰ Intending purchasers were asked to indicate their choice of painting and to provide a maximum bid for the selected work. Deaton would later inform the successful bidders of their purchases.

Few of the works exhibited at Exiles Bookshop showed the skill of Norton's early paintings and drawings from the late 1940s. Thirty-seven paintings were displayed, including *The Cauldrons*, *Asmodeus*, *Dionysus*, *The Bells*, a large work called *The Seance*, and an obscure and amateurish painting titled *Fur Fur the Storm Demon*. At the conclusion of the exhibition the paintings did not go to individual buyers but to a single collector, Jack Parker, who purchased them *in toto* for \$5000.

Like Deaton, Parker was a hotelier and his intention was to display Norton's works at the Southern Cross Hotel, St Peters, in south Sydney. However, the paintings were not popular with patrons of Parker's hotel. Interviewed by a journalist from the Sydney *Daily Telegraph*, Parker reported that two thirds of

his patrons, most of them truck-drivers, strongly disliked the paintings.¹⁴¹ Parker later sold the paintings to a private buyer.

In 1984 Glover issued a small-format limited edition publication titled *A Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton*. Published with a spiral binding and colour prints individually mounted on cream art paper, the *Supplement* was of considerable interest because it contained reproductions of twenty works shown at the University of Melbourne in 1949. At the time of the publication of the facsimile edition of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* in 1982, many of these paintings had not yet come to light. However, following a radio interview during the publicity campaign for the facsimile edition of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Glover was contacted by Mrs Y. Raphael-Oeser, whose late husband had been Professor of Psychology at the University of Melbourne at the time of the 1949 Rowden White exhibition. Mrs Raphael-Oeser provided confirmation that many of Norton's original works had been photographed as colour slides at that time, making quality reproduction of these artworks possible.¹⁴² These early (c.1949) works were a notable component of the *Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton*.

At the time of Norton's death in December 1979, Gavin Greenlees was still a full-time patient in Alma Mater Nursing Home in Kensington. Three years later, in December 1982, a two-act play titled *Rosaleen – Wicked Witch of the Cross*, based on the relationship between Norton and Greenlees, was staged at the Tom Mann Theatre, Sydney. Both Glover and Greenlees were able to attend the opening night performance of this play, watching as they were portrayed by actors on stage.¹⁴³ Written by Barry Lowe and directed by Roddie Thomas for the Hullabaloo Theatre Company, the production starred Jane Parker as Rosaleen and Alan Archer as Pan. Glover's role was performed by Peter Laurence and Greenlees' role by Christopher Lyons. The play was unconvincingly acted and was not acclaimed a critical success. However it did attempt to portray Norton sympathetically as 'a victim of an era in which her lifestyle had no hope of being understood'. The programme notes accompanying the play explained that while the script was based on the life and times of Rosaleen Norton 'poetic licence [had] been taken with some episodes in her life and there [was] no intention that the play be literally factual'.¹⁴⁴



Plate 20: Gavin Greenlees, photographed in 1982, a year before his death

Glover was amused by the play but Greenlees, who had spent many years in hospitals and psychiatric institutions, found it upsetting and disturbing.¹⁴⁵ Greenlees was greatly saddened by Norton's death. He had not been able to attend her funeral, and although he was still granted permission to visit Norton's sister Cecily from time to time, the loss of his former friend and lover produced a substantial void in his life.

At the time of the performance of the play, in December 1982, Greenlees was writing a novel and studying European literature. He was also preparing for a trip to Germany with his language tutor.¹⁴⁶ Greenlees later returned to Sydney from Germany and took up residence in a flat in Woollahra, in Sydney's eastern suburbs. On 5 December 1983, exactly four years to the day after Norton's death, Greenlees' body was found in his Woollahra residence, slumped over a table next to a bowl of soup. Police investigating his death found no suspicious circumstances. Greenlees was fifty-four years old.¹⁴⁷

¹ Norton was born in Dunedin around 4.am on 2 October 1917 during a violent thunderstorm. She later related that, perhaps because of this dramatic start to her life, she would develop an enduring fondness for storms and the "night-side" of human existence. In her autobiographical article 'I was born a Witch' [*Australasian Post*, Sydney, 3 January 1957], Norton writes: 'Storms arouse in me a peculiarly elated, almost drunken sensation. Night is for me the time when all my perceptions are alert, when I feel most awake and function best.'

² 'Inside Rosaleen Norton', *Squire*, Sydney, April 1965: 42.

³ R.Norton, 'Witches want no recruits', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 10 January 1957: 4.

⁴ During an interview with the psychologist L.J. Murphy at the University of Melbourne on 27 August 1949 (see Appendix A), Norton portrayed her mother as 'a very difficult woman, hysterical, emotional and possessive'. She held a grudge against her mother because, as Norton put it, 'she wouldn't fight fair'.

⁵ See Murphy:1949, loc cit: 'He fought clean. If I disobeyed him he would smack me when I was a child and make me do what he wanted me to do without all the emotional upsets that I had with my mother.'

⁶ Ibid. Norton advised Murphy: 'I disliked school and I disliked the other children – I hated the way they "crawled" to the teacher. I used to love making the teachers mad by getting the other children to do naughty things. They used to follow me, but I don't think they liked me. Yet I always took the blame when anything went wrong.'

⁷ R. Norton, 'I was born a Witch', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 3 January 1957: 4.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid: 'A big furry night-spider of the orb-weaving type soon took to spinning nightly over the open tent door. I became very fond of this being, whom – regardless of sex – I named Horatius, because she guarded me from invasion single-handed. Most of my family were terrified of her, so I could stay up until morning if I felt like it, secure from interruption as long as she loomed in her great circular web over my doorway.'

¹⁰ R.Norton, 'R. Norton, 'I was born a Witch', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 3 January 1957: 4.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid: 'Some typical early examples include a ghostly 'lady in a grey dress' who was often standing beside my bed when I was 5 or 6; an apparition of a shining dragon [at 5], which together with other elements in this vision had, as I later discovered, profound symbolic significance for occultists; and a dream of a small weatherboard house surrounded by pepper trees, called 'Railway Cottage', which I located in waking life some three or four months later in Chatswood, a suburb which at the time of the dream I had never visited. My only reaction on actually seeing 'Railway Cottage', in the weatherboard if not exactly the flesh, was a feeling of 'Oh yes, there it is.' While on the subject of psychism, a recurrent experience of my early years is worth mentioning as I now recognise it as a trance condition similar to those practised in certain forms of Yoga. My name for it was 'Big Things and Little Things', and it always began with a floating state, as though disembodied. Then came a feeling of growing and expanding. Larger and larger I grew, until size became so unthinkable that it ceased to exist, and I encompassed all things and was everywhere. After a timeless pause again came movement, this time of contraction and shrinking down, down until I had returned to my starting point; but the sense of dwindling still continued. Down through successive stages becoming smaller and smaller, until at last I was a point too tiny to exist at all; a nothing that was somehow still sentient. Soon the growing, expanding process was repeated, back to the original size - and so on. It was rhythm suggesting some vast form of breathing. At seven-years-old two small blue marks very close together appeared on my left knee, and they are there still. I have since learned that two (or sometimes three) blue or red dots together on the skin are among the traditional witch marks. Although, of course, I didn't know this at the time, I remember noticing them the year we arrived in Australia, and wondering what they were: they seemed important in some way that I couldn't define.'

¹³ R. Norton, 'Hitchhiking Witch', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 7 February 1957: 14.

¹⁴ Ibid: 10.

¹⁵ *Smith's Weekly* had been founded in 1919 by two journalists, Robert Clyde Packer and Claude McKay, and Englishman Sir James Joynton Smith, the son of a Cockney gasfitter. Published originally as a tuppenny paper, *Smith's Weekly* demanded a 'fair go' for the workers, denounced 'Bolshies', the Yellow Peril, quack doctors and prostitutes, and also took a strong line against bureaucrats, inter-racial sexual relationships and white bread – as distinct from wholemeal. Despite its polemical overtones, however, the broadsheet attracted some of the best known graphic illustrators of the day, including Stan Cross, Syd Miller, George Finey, Cecil Hartt, Jim Russell, Virgil Reilly, Lance Driffield, Charles Hallett and George Donaldson. Later, Normal Mitchell, Les Dixon, Eric Jolliffe and Emile Mercier would also become associated with it. Over the years the paper became famous for promoting the Digger cause. Indeed, most of its readers were returned servicemen. Its appeal was very much to the jingoism of the day and to that extent its scope was limited to a specific generation of readers. The popularity of *Smith's Weekly* began to wane after World War II and in October 1950 it finally yielded to the imminent onset of television as the pre-eminent medium of news and popular entertainment.

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- ¹⁶ See G. Blaikie, *Remember Smith's Weekly?*, Rigby, Adelaide 1966: 88.
- ¹⁷ Quoted in G. Blaikie, *Remember Smith's Weekly ?*, loc cit: 89.
- ¹⁸ Ibid: 90.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid: 91.
- ²³ R. Norton, 'I was born a Witch', loc cit: 4.
- ²⁴ R. Norton, 'Hitchhiking Witch', loc cit: 10.
- ²⁵ Personal communication to the author in 1981, two years after Norton's death.
- ²⁶ R. Norton, 'Hitchhiking Witch', loc cit: 10. Norton's rent at the Ship and Mermaid Inn was eight shillings per week.
- ²⁷ The Kabbalah is the mystical tradition within Judaism (see Chapter Two for an account of its important contribution to the Western esoteric tradition). Although many Kabbalistic texts date from the 13th century CE, the scholar Gershom Scholem has referred to the Kabbalah as a form of Jewish Gnosticism, its emanationist cosmology resembling much earlier, possibly pre-Christian origins. The Kabbalah, with its central motif of the Tree of Life, consisting of ten creative, spiritual emanations from the Godhead [*Ain Soph Aur*, the Limitless Light] is central to the western esoteric tradition and the magical procedures of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. See G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, Schocken, New York 1961, and *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism and Talmudic Tradition*, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York 1961.
- ²⁸ This was the published by-line on the cover of *Pertinent*, May 1944.
- ²⁹ Quoted in a summary of Australian newspapers and periodicals listed in the magazine *Artist's Market*, c.1940. Batt also included the following editorial statement: 'We want simplified articles calculated to stimulate Australian cultural achievement; no political bias required. Direct, succinct writing and thinking only. *Pertinent* despises pseudo-intellectuality, and will consider any material which can help, whilst entertaining, Australians to take an added interest in the cultural emancipation of themselves in order that they may become citizens, not only of a subservient country, but of an independent cultural nation.'
- ³⁰ *Pertinent*, Sydney, December 1941.
- ³¹ *Pertinent*, Sydney, November 1941.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ The first was 'Winter Night Thoughts' in *Pertinent*, June 1943: 54; the second was 'Caricature of Women', *Pertinent*, September 1943: 49.
- ³⁴ In the September issue of *Pertinent* (1943:48) Greenlees provided a concise autobiography of his early literary achievements. His first story, 'The Mistereesee Man in the Aairoplan' was written in 1936. His first published works of verse were 'Rumours' and 'The City' which were included in *ABC Weekly* in 1942.
- ³⁵ R. Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Walter Glover, Sydney, 1952 : 6.
- ³⁶ 'Paul' was a science-fiction author named David R. Evans. Evans had sent a copy of one of Rosaleen Norton's drawings, *Challenge*, to the noted American fantasy collector and literary agent, Forrest J. Ackerman. This drawing, which depicted a naked woman embracing a spider, was published in Ackerman's newsletter and Norton would later claim on this basis that her occult art was well known in the United States.
- ³⁷ *Pertinent*, Sydney, June 1943:33.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ In 'Hitchhiking Witch', loc.cit., Rosaleen Norton refers to Ian Stapleton as 'John Bolton', acknowledging that this was not his real name. In fact, Ian Stapleton was co-editor of the Melbourne University newspaper, *Farrago*, and a picture of Stapleton, Greenlees and Norton was published in the Melbourne *Truth* on 27 August 1949: 21.
- ⁴⁰ Exhibition catalogue, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Rowden White Library, University of Melbourne, 1-23 August 1949. Forty-six artworks were listed.
- ⁴¹ The raid followed a visit to the exhibition by two policemen, Detective John Olsen and Inspector Tannahill on 3 August. Olsen spoke to Norton about the pictures, discussing with her various complaints he had received about the drawings being 'lewd and disgusting'. One person had described the works as 'stark sensuality running riot', while another claimed the exhibition produced 'as gross a shock to the average

spectator as a witch's orgy'. Norton was not impressed by these responses to her work. 'Obscenity,' she countered, 'like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. This figleaf morality expresses a very unhealthy attitude.' Quoted in the *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 4 August 1949.

⁴² Abrahams stated that this publication had already been approved by Mr Justice Reed on behalf of the Commonwealth. See *Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 20 August 1949.

⁴³ These works were reproduced in the *Supplement to the Art of Rosaleen Norton*, a small-format limited edition publication issued by Walter Glover, Sydney 1984. Norton wrote to Professor Oeser on 12 April 1955 enclosing £3/10/- for a set of 27 large prints from the Rowden White exhibition [copy of letter in the collection of the author]. The present location of these prints is unknown. Glover utilised colour slides provided by Professor Oeser's widow, Mrs Y. Raphael-Oeser, for the publication of the *Supplement*.

⁴⁴ F.C. Folkard, *The Rare Sex*, Murray, Sydney 1965: 187.

⁴⁵ Personal communication to the author, 1981.

⁴⁶ Beresford Lionel Conroy worked as a duco sprayer. He and Norton had met in 1935 and married at the registrar general's office, Sydney on 24 December 1940. Conroy enlisted as a commando during World War Two and served with the AIF in northern New Guinea, leaving Norton behind in Sydney. When Conroy returned, Norton demanded a divorce, and this was finally settled in 1951. Conroy later remarried and had three children. According to his son Lionel, Conroy rarely spoke of his first marriage to Rosaleen Norton. Comments published on-line at www.takver.com/history/rosaleen.htm.

⁴⁷ According to Boothman, Greenlees' father used to bully his son and try to convince him to turn away from fantasy poetry to 'real writing', Boothman maintained that Rosaleen stimulated Gavin to explore his inner world. Together they investigated mystical symbolism and discussed surrealist literature. They also enjoyed the same sorts of music, especially Mozart and Sibelius, and they both explored meditative and hypnotic techniques in order to induce visionary states of consciousness.

⁴⁸ D. Barnes, 'Rosaleen says she could be a Witch', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 9 October 1952: 6.

⁴⁹ Vagrancy was defined legally as having insufficient lawful means of support. Norton was charged with vagrancy on several occasions during the 1950s and 1960s. On 26 January 1964 she went to live with her sister Cecily in Kirribilli in order to sustain a plea of not guilty against a vagrancy charge.

⁵⁰ According to Walter Glover Jnr., when his father was working as a journalist he used to periodically visit the courtroom adjoining Central Police Station 'and take note of the human flotsam that had fallen foul of the law'. Interview with Ned McCann, August 1998, documented on-line at <http://nedmccann.blogspot.com>.

⁵¹ Born in 1911, Glover had left school at thirteen and worked for various trade journals like *Decoration and Glass*, *Package Parade* and *Signs and Showcards*. During World War Two he served in New Guinea as a sergeant in the Australian Army, rising eventually to the rank of captain in the Army Education division. After the War he became a freelance publisher and worked part-time as editor of *The Pastrycook's Review*.

⁵² Personal communication to the author, 1981.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Glover's original idea was to print Norton's illustrations on sheets using an office litho machine, and to tie the sheets together with pink ribbon. He therefore arranged for his solicitor, Bob Benjafield, to formalise a contract with Norton and Greenlees which provided them with royalties as an advance against future sums due from the book. Officially Glover was to pay Norton and Greenlees £8 a week each, rising to a maximum of £200, against a 15 percent royalty. In fact, because the book was a year in production, the actual sum paid was much greater than this. Significantly, it enabled Norton and Greenlees to avoid the serious charge of vagrancy even though they ceded their artistic copyrights in doing so.

⁵⁵ This specific phrase was used by Norton in her manuscript notes accompanying the drawing *Black Magic* reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*. Norton also described the controversial drawing in these terms during the 1953 obscenity hearings: see *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 8 February 1953.

⁵⁶ The remainder of the poem reads as follows:

*Units of gravity begotten on science by vertigo
He is the living dictionary of those fashions
Wherein those elegant suites, panelled in fur and fine
mirrors
In fruit and gems, ambassadors tread gathering their reasons,*

*Like hunters, sly silhouettes, throughout the long night
watches
And strangely fashioned diplomats, in silence,
Stake their claims for the lands, unknown to them, that in
daylight
Will approve or condemn their work.*

*'Night, night' ... Here are those scenes we all rehearse
When the profile of fixed and obvious purpose fades.
Here rule those iron necessities that in the patter of passing
shapes
Their children, begotten in turning mirrors of the world
You seem to elude, more truly hidden
When daylight's popular music obscure the visible lamps
Although among them, another one, made of our restless
Other, lives
A worker in dark-rooms of space
Moving along a bridge of royal hearts
That, turned to inward dances,
Take all that love and turmoil to their own.*

*Here are our favourite playful ghosts -
The seance of hands, the travelogue of medieval cities
Wherein a great scholar laboured once
Disturbed by the centuries who mutter dryly their
crepuscular lore
Behind a curtain, amid the more curious exhibits -
Figures born from the changing labyrinth
But spanned by the rainbow of his triumphant art.*

See *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Sydney 1952.

⁵⁷ Personal communication to the author, 1981.

⁵⁸ Personal communication to the author, 1981.

⁵⁹ For details of this trial see the *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 5 February 1953 and *The Sun*, Sydney, 5 February 1953.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Titled *Odium Psychopathologicum*, the poem was published in the second edition of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Sydney 1982:

*Behold, my friends the empty space
That doth this volume thus disgrace.
The drawing that should fill its place
Hath vanished :
Banned and banished!
O Puritanic Harpies, rage!
Thy breed alone doth this disgrace,
That mirrored saw its own foul face;
With mind as empty as yon space,
Whose culture (O enlightened Age!)
Is even as a missing page.
Enraged Caliban
(Whose knowledge is, to thy perdition,*

*Limited as this edition);
Snipping art, in art's expression,
Secrets of thine own repression,
Howl thy malice! Ban -
Yet know, O Ape of little sense
'Honi soit qui mal y pense!'*

⁶³ For an overview see M. Johnson, 'The Witch of Kings Cross: Rosaleen Norton and the Australian Media', University of Newcastle 2002, published online at www.newcastle.edu.au/services/library/collection/archives/int/rosaleennorton.html. See also 'Some Bats' Blood Please', *Sun*, Sydney, 26 September 1955.

⁶⁴ Personal communication from Walter Glover to the author, 1981.

⁶⁵ No-one taking a copy of the book out of Australia could legally bring it back in.

⁶⁶ Personal communication from Walter Glover to the author, 1981.

⁶⁷ See *The Sun*, Sydney, 28 November 1955.

⁶⁸ See 'Art in Café "Lewd",' *Truth*, Sydney, 4 December 1955.

⁶⁹ See especially 'Black Masses in Sydney', which appeared on the front page of *The Sun*, Sydney, 22 September 1955.

⁷⁰ Appearing before Stipendiary Magistrate Blackmore, Hoffmann at first refused to take the oath, stating that she was not a Christian. She later told the Court that she was a Buddhist, and that 'the evil eye of Buddha would follow Constable Ikin around for the rest of his days'. See 'Black Masses in Sydney', loc.cit.

⁷¹ *Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 20 October 1955.

⁷² It later came to light that the incident had been totally fabricated: the participants in the 'Black Mass' were university students who had donned ceremonial robes and used specimen bones from the Anatomy Department to create a bizarre, satanic atmosphere of 'sacrifice'. Unfortunately, such episodes only served to increase public interest in Norton and claims of alleged 'witchcraft and black magic' activities in Kings Cross continued to appear regularly in the tabloid press during the 1950s.

⁷³ In her autobiographical article 'I was born a Witch' [loc cit.: 5] Norton specifically stated: 'Instinctive kinship and sympathy with animals is an inherent part of me; I hate to see them abused in any way, while cruelty to them is one of the few things that literally makes me see red.'

⁷⁴ For a summary of the charges see 'Pedlars of Lewd Films had a Devilish Ordeal', *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 9 October 1955.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ In an interview with *Squire* magazine, Sydney April 1965; 45, Norton referred to the act of alleged ritual flagellation in these terms: 'This rite, incidentally, wasn't anything to do with witchcraft. It was just a private thing.'

⁷⁹ *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 9 October 1955.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Interview between Detective Bert Trevenar and crime writer Ned McCann, 19 June 1999, available on-line at <http://nedmccann.blogspot.com>. Trevenar makes the same point in his interview in the television documentary on Sir Eugene Goossens, *Fall of the House* (2004), directed by Geoff Burton and screened on ABC Television in October 2007.

⁸² S.Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Grove/Macmillan, London 1980: 532.

⁸³ *Australian Dictionary of Biography* – online listing for Sir Eugene Aynsley Goossens (1893-1962), published on-line at www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A140334b.htm.

⁸⁴ S.Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, loc. cit.: 533.

⁸⁵ The exact date of publication is unclear. A small advertisement announcing the release of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* appeared in *Truth* [Sydney] on 14 September 1952. An article titled 'Artist's Sex Book Called Fantastic' which appeared in the same magazine a week earlier suggests that the book may have first become available to the public on 8 September 1952. It is possible that Goossens may not have become aware

of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* until early 1953. See David Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', *Good Weekend/Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 3 July 1999.

⁸⁶ Prior to arriving in Australia in 1947, Goossens had been friendly with both Cyril Scott, author of a well known esoteric book *An Outline of Modern Occultism*. Goossens was also a close associate of the composer Philip Heseltine, who was an associate of Aleister Crowley and shared his interest in magic and paganism (see Chapter Five).

⁸⁷ See D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', *Good Weekend*, Sydney, 3 July 1999: 17.

⁸⁸ C. Rosen, *The Goossens: A Musical Century*, Andre Deutsch, London 1993: 339.

⁸⁹ D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc cit: 17.

⁹⁰ In addition to their shared interest in the pagan traditions, Goossens, Norton and Greenlees also shared a love of classical music. They discussed the possibility of working together on a musical rendition of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*: Greenlees was to write the libretto, Norton would paint the backdrops, and Goossens would compose the music. However, this project, did not proceed. Personal communication to the author from Walter Glover, 1981.

⁹¹ Broadcast on *Rewind*, ABC Television, 5 September 2004.

⁹² D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc cit.

⁹³ Ibid. It would appear that Goossens was also interested in sexually explicit material, for he closed his letter by adding '...and I want to take more photos.' Some form of sexual magic practice may have been associated with the photographs because Goossens confirmed in a police interview with Vice Squad detective Bert Travenar that he had been involved in group sex activities with Norton and Greenlees 'four or five times'.

⁹⁴ Gavin Greenlees confirmed to Walter Glover in 1982 that the ceremonial masks brought back to Sydney by Sir Eugene Goossens [he had recently been knighted] in March 1956 were intended for use in magical rituals held in the Brougham Street residence. Personal communication from Walter Glover to the author, 1981.

⁹⁵ For further details of this case see news clippings held by the Australian Archives, Department of the Navy, SP551, log books of HMC, HMS, HMA ships, 1855-1957.

⁹⁶ Ten weeks after being apprehended at Mascot Airport, Goossens boarded a flight to Rome, travelling incognito as Mr E. Gray, never to return to Australia again. Soon afterwards Goossens separated from his wife and he then tried to restore his career by working occasionally for the BBC in London. However news of the Goossens controversy had already reached the London music world and the conductor was unable to salvage his reputation. Goossens died in England from a ruptured ulcer in June 1962, shortly after returning from a trip to Switzerland where he had visited one of his daughters by an earlier marriage.

⁹⁷ D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc cit.: 21.

⁹⁸ Interview between Detective Bert Trevenar and crime writer Ned McCann, 19 June 1999, loc. cit.

⁹⁹ Goossens was knighted at Buckingham Palace in June 1955.

¹⁰⁰ Greenlees was admitted to Callan Park Hospital on 7 October 1955.

¹⁰¹ *Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 7 October 1955.

¹⁰² Reported in *Truth*, Sydney, 18 November 1956.

¹⁰³ Greenlees was discharged from the Alma Mater Nursing Home in 1983, having come to this medical facility several years after first being admitted to Callan Park Hospital.

¹⁰⁴ D. Barnes, 'Rosaleen says she could be a Witch', *Australasian Post*, 9 October 1952.

¹⁰⁵ D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 20 December 1956.

¹⁰⁶ These autobiographical articles were 'I was born a Witch', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 3 January 1957; 'Witches want no Recruits', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 10 January 1957, and 'Hitch-hiking Witch', *Australasian Post*, Sydney 7 February 1957.

¹⁰⁷ D.I. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!' *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 6 October 1955.

¹⁰⁸ P. Lucas, 'Witches in the Nude', *People*, Sydney, 5 March 1958.

¹⁰⁹ See R. Norton, 'Hitch-hiking Witch', loc.cit:15 and the interview with Norton, 'Inside Rosaleen Norton', *Squire*, Sydney, April 1965.

¹¹⁰ This particular photograph appeared in Dave Barnes' 'I am a Witch', loc cit; and also R.Norton, 'Hitch-hiking Witch', loc cit: 14. In the latter article it was described as 'fancy dress...not to be taken seriously'.

¹¹¹ Norton was quoted as saying: 'Familiar spirits are said to take the form of cats, everyone knows that!'

¹¹² See D.Barnes 'I am a Witch', loc cit. and D. Barnes 'Confessions of a Witch', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 15 June 1967.

¹¹³ D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch', loc cit.

¹¹⁴ D. Barnes, 'Confessions of a Witch', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 15 June 1967.

¹¹⁵ Hexes are magical conjurations of a positive or negative nature and involve spells and incantations. See also Chapter Five.

¹¹⁶ Norton's 1960s paintings were not of the same calibre as the major works exhibited at the Rowden White gallery in 1949. However, it was generally works from this period that surfaced after Norton's death in 1979 and were then sold at various auctions.

¹¹⁷ *Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 23 February 1964.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Norton's other sister, Phyllis, who was the second of the three sisters, had died in 1946, having spent most of her married life in Armidale.

¹²⁰ N. Javes, 'Witches of Sydney', *The Sun*, Sydney, 7 February 1969.

¹²¹ See fn. 112 for details.

¹²² N. Javes, loc. cit. 1969. Norton made similar claims during an interview with Kerry McGlynn in 1972, reported in the *Sunday Telegraph*, Sydney, 16 July 1972. Norton told McGlynn: 'Of course I have put curses on people, but only when they deserved it. If someone does something to me that hurts me, then I get back at them. I put a curse on them and it results in an illness, and accident – things like that.'

¹²³ In all probability Norton would have modified the dates for the Wiccan Sabbats to make them more relevant to the cycle of the seasons in the Southern Hemisphere. Sabbat dates currently observed by Wiccans in Australia are as follows: Lammas/ Lughnassadh – 2 February; Halloween/Samhain – 30 April; Candlemas/Imbolc – 1 August; Beltane – 31 October.

¹²⁴ See also K. McGlynn, 'Going to the Devil', *Sunday Telegraph*, Sydney, 16 July 1972, where similar claims were made. The number of close magical followers was almost certainly exaggerated. Norton's magical group in Brougham Street, Kings Cross, was very small – fewer than a dozen members – and Norton's attic was too restrictive for large ritual gatherings. Norton rarely led witchcraft ceremonies in open rural areas, parks or nature reserves.

¹²⁵ These elements were aspects of a more eclectic spirituality which had entered popular Australian culture, influenced by American and British fashions, following the rise of the counter-culture in California, London and some centres in Europe. See R. Ellwood: *The Sixties Spiritual Revival* (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey 1996) N. Drury, *The New Age: The History of a Movement* (Thames & Hudson, New York, 2004) and N. Drury and G. Tillett, *Other Temples, Other Gods: The Occult in Australia* (Methuen, Sydney 1980) for an overview of these trends.

¹²⁶ See N. Drury and G. Tillett, *Other Temples, Other Gods: The Occult in Australia*, loc cit.

¹²⁷ From an Anglican pamphlet [no date] outlining the aims of the Anglican Commission of Inquiry.

¹²⁸ See N. Drury and G. Tillett, *Other Temples, Other Gods: The Occult in Australia*, loc cit.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid. A selection of media headlines from the period is included in this publication.

¹³¹ G.de Brito, 'A Witch's Warning', *Sunday Mirror*, Sydney, 17 August 1975.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Norton was now living at 1/82 Roslyn Gardens, Kings Cross, with her two pet cats, amidst a litter of easels, paintings and books, and enjoyed watching the fish swimming in her aquarium. She also spent a lot of time listening to classical music; Mozart, Stravinsky, Beethoven, Bach and Sibelius were her favourite composers. Although her flat had a dark and gloomy sitting room because it was located below street level, it opened out onto a leafy courtyard. In the summer months Norton liked sitting in the sun near her French windows, beside a red pot containing an umbrella plant, reading her books on magic and mysticism. I first obtained an interview with her in 1977 while she was living in this apartment, material from which was used in my book *Inner Visions: Explorations in Magical Consciousness*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1979 and also in the introduction to the 1982 edition of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*.

¹³⁴ Norton remained at 1/82 Roslyn Gardens, Kings Cross until November 1979 when she was taken to the Roman Catholic Sacred Heart Hospice for the Dying at St Vincents Hospital, Sydney.

¹³⁵ It is alleged that shortly before she died in the Hospice she told her friend Victor Wain: 'I came into this world bravely; I'll go out bravely': personal communication to the author from Victor Wain, who attended Norton in Sacred Heart Hospice. After Norton's death her older sister, Cecily Boothman, provided me with a

range of family material and photographs which were incorporated into my biography of Norton: *Pan's Daughter*, Sydney, 1988. Boothman checked drafts of the text for factual inaccuracies. Boothman also advised me [personal communication, 1981] that Norton left a will, 'written in scratchy handwriting', leaving her athame, or magical dagger, and other ritual magical equipment to Bill Turnbull, who was a member of her magical group. Norton bequeathed a number of books and drawings to Boothman, and she also left an artwork of a cat – her last painting – to her friend Eve Finney. At Boothman's request these details were not included in the text of *Pan's Daughter*.

¹³⁶ Personal communication from Walter Glover, 1981.

¹³⁷ Personal communication from Cecily Boothman, 1981.

¹³⁸ Personal communication from Walter Glover, 1981.

¹³⁹ The 1982 facsimile edition of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* had a print run of 1000 copies for general trade distribution. An additional fifty limited-edition copies were numbered and bound in red leather for collectors. Publication proceeded in an uncontroversial manner and no charges of obscenity were brought against the book's re-release.

¹⁴⁰ Exiles Bookshop was also the venue for the simultaneous launch of Glover's facsimile publication.

¹⁴¹ *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 22 December 1984.

¹⁴² Mrs Y. Raphael-Oeser also sent Glover the transcript of psychologist L.J. Murphy's interview with Norton in Melbourne, 1949.

¹⁴³ I attended the opening night performance as a guest of Glover, and met Greenlees for the first time on this occasion. Greenlees had been granted leave from the Alma Mater Nursing Home, allowing him to attend.

¹⁴⁴ For reports of the play see *Campaign*, Sydney, January 1983: 50-51 and February 1983: 40.

¹⁴⁵ Greenlees' response to the play was clear: Glover and I discussed it with him after the performance.

¹⁴⁶ Personal communication from Greenlees to the author, December 1982.

¹⁴⁷ Reported in the *Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 13 December 1983.

Chapter Two

SOURCES OF THE WESTERN ESOTERIC TRADITION

This chapter explores the principal sources of the Western esoteric tradition which in turn helped generate the revival of modern magic in the 20th century. It also provides the basis for a subsequent exploration of the major shift that occurred shortly after 1900 when Western magic in Britain began to polarise into distinctive Left-Hand and Right-Hand paths – a theme examined in detail in Chapter Three. One of the central arguments in this thesis is that Rosaleen Norton can only be effectively evaluated as an occultist and visionary artist if she is placed within an appropriate magical-historical context. I believe that in a broad sense that context is the 20th century Western esoteric tradition *per se*, rather than the more localised socio-historical setting of post-World War Two Australia – which does not, in and of itself, provide us with sufficient points of reference to explore Norton’s magic or visionary art in depth. It seems to me that although Norton unquestionably made her mark in Australia during the 1950s and 1960s as the controversial and bohemian ‘Witch of Kings Cross’, and although many elements in her colourful story are distinctly local, her eclectic cosmology and remarkable forays into hypnotic trance states and the magic of sexuality are more universal in scope and demand much broader examination. While Norton was perceived by the local Sydney media as a deviant witch and Devil-worshipper – a renegade who had turned her back on the conventional morality and religious beliefs of her era – she is actually much more complex than that, and also substantially more interesting, as I will seek to demonstrate in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

In magical terms, as I will show in Chapters Four, Five and Six, Norton looked well beyond Australian shores for the sources of her occult inspiration – to the extent that in some ways she was hardly an Australian phenomenon at all. As a young artist seeking to establish herself in the late 1940s, she clearly believed she had no true contemporaries who could really share her artistic journey. In the short essay included in the catalogue accompanying her major exhibition at the University of Melbourne in 1949 (see Chapters One and Six), Norton emphasized that the world-view driving her particular form of ‘supernatural’ art was entirely different from the parochial concerns of other young Australian artists, whom she

believed were ‘hampered by a pathetic obsession with *merely temporal values*’.¹ [my emphasis in italics]. Norton went on to state:

The work in this exhibition is remarkable in its uninhibited return to that storehouse of timeless archetypal imagery on which the visionaries of all ages have drawn, a return which owes nothing to contemporary fashion...

Writing in the third person Norton said of her own artistic approach: ‘Her imagery... [is used] to symbolize the intangible forces of which human life is the playground’, and she also noted that

the artist [ie.Norton herself] has none of the intellectual’s embarrassment before the ‘supernatural’; her art is a healthy reaction from the narrow materialism of the 30’s towards an integral statement of man’s experience, human, demonic and divine.²

With this statement Norton immediately stakes her credentials on her determination to embrace the big picture – she is not concerned with the temporal and materialistic issues of her time but wishes instead to explore *the sacred and ‘demonic’ potentialities of human experience*. Here she is telling us as early as August 1949 – at the still quite youthful age of 31 – that she has a thoroughly *antinomian* bent and is willing to ‘go against the grain’ by rejecting the mainstream values and concerns of her contemporaries and depicting ‘timeless archetypal imagery’ in her artworks. As noted in Chapter One, at only twelve years of age Norton was already preparing to dispense with the Christian beliefs and practices [eg. Anglican confirmation] adopted by her immediate family and by 80 per cent of her fellow Australians. So, from an early age, Norton demonstrates that she is willing to strike out on her own. This – in large degree – is what makes her particular career as a practitioner of visionary art and pagan, chthonic magic, so fascinating. Norton is clearly a creature out of step with her own time and place, and it seems to me that we have no choice but to follow Norton’s unique expression of antinomianism and locate her own, specific context within the Western esoteric tradition itself – for only then does her true identity emerge, and her magical and visionary contribution to that tradition become more obvious.

As I have noted in Chapter One and will discuss in more detail in Chapter Four, the principal deities in Norton’s personal cosmology were far removed from her local context. They were mythic beings whose origin lay in ancient cultures from the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern world – among them Pan, Hecate, Lilith and Lucifer. And her occult and metaphysical sources were similarly diverse, encompassing the Jewish

mystical Kabbalah, esoteric Buddhism, Kundalini yoga, Voodoo, medieval demonology and 19th century Theosophy.

Within the context of the Western esoteric tradition itself, as will become more clearly evident in Chapters Three, Four and Five, Norton was strongly influenced in her magical practice by two well known British occultists – Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) and Dion Fortune (1890-1946) – both of whom are listed in the relatively short and concise bibliography in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*.³ Of the two, Crowley emerges as by far the stronger influence: a fusion of Crowleyian sex magic and the libertine worship of Pan and other chthonic deities was enthusiastically embraced by Norton during the mid-1950s (see Chapters Three and Five). Fortune is very much a lesser influence, but her novel about Pan, *The Goat-Foot God* (1936), was certainly an inspiration to Norton, as was Fortune's highly regarded volume on practical Kabbalah and the Tree of Life, *The Mystical Qabalah* (1935). Both of these books are listed in Norton's bibliography and Norton drew on many of Fortune's Kabbalistic references as part of her magical and artistic process.⁴

Crowley and Fortune are pivotal figures in the history of 20th century Western magic: both – at different times – were members of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, an organization that could justifiably be regarded as the very embodiment of the Western esoteric tradition since it brought together within a single organization a wide range of Western mystical traditions and magical perspectives that had developed over many centuries. I am therefore arguing in this thesis that Norton cannot be understood without first considering the nature of the Western esoteric tradition as a whole: it then becomes necessary to locate her approach more specifically within that tradition. Chapters Two and Three deal essentially with Norton's magical-historical context and Chapters Four, Five and Six with her unique approach to Western magic and visionary trance-art. The Golden Dawn itself is therefore an appropriate point of departure for what later becomes an exotic and colourful foray into trance magic, libertine sexuality and chthonic visionary art – an exploration of the unique occult phenomenon of Rosaleen Norton herself...

Established in England in 1888, the Golden Dawn drew on a range of ancient and medieval cosmologies and incorporated them into a body of ceremonial practices and ritual grades centred on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, an important motif within the Jewish mystical tradition which, as a unified but nevertheless complex symbol, represents the sacred 'emanations' of the Godhead.⁵ In addition to the Kabbalah, which

occupied a central position in the cosmology of the Golden Dawn, the organisation also drew on the Hermetic tradition which had its roots in Neoplatonism and underwent a revival during the Renaissance. Roscrucianism, Freemasonry and the medieval Tarot were also significant elements, as indicated below. Collectively these mystical and cosmological sources represent key elements of the modern Western esoteric tradition as exemplified by the ceremonial practices in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. As I will seek to demonstrate in Chapters Four, Five and Six, the Kabbalah, in particular, exerted a strong influence on Norton's artistic *oeuvre* and magical practice. Norton named key artworks after different *sephiroth* on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life (see Chapter Six) and she also called on Jewish archangels in her ceremonial banishing rituals (see Chapter Five). Uriel, in particular, had special significance as the archangel associated with the element Earth, and was also assigned symbolically to the direction North – the location of her sacred Pan altar (see Chapter Five).

The medieval Kabbalah

According to Gershom Scholem (1897-1982), widely regarded as one of the pre-eminent authorities on the origins and symbolism of the Kabbalah, the medieval Kabbalah belongs to an emanationist cosmological tradition that has its origins in Gnosticism.⁶ Indeed, Scholem has referred to the Kabbalah as a form of Jewish Gnosticism.⁷ In its most fundamental sense the Kabbalah can be defined as a mystical commentary on the Pentateuch: the written Torah, or 'five books of Moses'.⁸ The Hebrew word *Kabbalah* (which translates as 'that which has been received'⁹) refers to an oral or secret tradition and as Scholem has observed, the *Zohar*, the central text of the medieval Kabbalah, compiled in written form by the Spaniard Moses de Leon circa 1280 CE, has spiritual links with earlier schools of Gnosticism¹⁰ and Neoplatonism.¹¹ In all three there are references to the concept of sacred emanations from the Godhead, to the idea of the pre-existence of the soul and its descent into matter, and to the sacred names of God.

Although the Kabbalah did not exist in written form until the Middle Ages, it is thought that the *Sefer Yetzirah*, or *Book of Creation*, was composed in Palestine between the third and sixth centuries CE. The *Sefer Yetzirah* describes how God created the world by means of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the 10 *sefirot* – a term that appears for the first time in Hebrew literature.¹⁴ The 10 *sefirot* of the Tree of Life (also spelt *sephiroth*) are a central symbolic aspect of the Kabbalah.

Another early Kabbalistic text, *Sefer ha-Bahir*, emerged in Provence – where there was a Jewish community – between 1150 and 1200. Interest in the Kabbalah subsequently spread across the Pyrenees into Catalonia and then to Castile. In *circa* 1280, the Spanish Jewish mystic Moses de Leon (1238–1305) began circulating booklets among his fellow Kabbalists. These texts were written in Aramaic, and de Leon claimed that he had transcribed them from an ancient book of wisdom composed in the circle of Rabbi Shim'on bar Yohai, a famous disciple of Rabbi Akiva, who lived and taught in Israel in the second century. These booklets gradually formed the text known as *Ha-Zohar ha-Qadosh*, usually referred to as the *Zohar* (*The Book of Splendour*). Although Moses de Leon may have drawn on early material received through the secret oral tradition, it is now thought that he himself was probably the author of the *Zohar*.

According to the *Zohar*, God first taught the doctrines of the Kabbalah to a select group of angels. After the creation of the Garden of Eden, these angels shared the secret teachings with the first man, Adam. They were then passed to Noah, and subsequently to Abraham, who took them to Egypt. Moses was initiated into the Kabbalah in Egypt, the land of his birth, and King David and King Solomon were also initiated. No one, however, dared write them down until Rabbi Shim'on bar Yohai.¹² In the Kabbalah all aspects of manifested form, including the sacred archetypes or manifestations of the Godhead, are said to have their origin in *Ain Soph Aur* – also referred to as *En-Sof*¹³ or *Ein-Sof*¹⁴ – ‘the limitless light’, a realm of being entirely beyond form and conception which ‘has neither qualities nor attributes’. In Kabbalistic cosmology the subsequent emanations which emerge from this profound Mystery, and which constitute the spheres upon the Tree of Life [*Otz Chiim*], reveal different aspects of the sacred universe but are nevertheless considered as part of a divine totality. *Ain Soph Aur*, writes Scholem, ‘manifests... to the Kabbalist under ten different aspects, which in turn comprise an endless variety of shades and gradations’.¹⁵ These emanations nevertheless reflect the essential unity of the Godhead, and because the human form is said to have been created ‘in the image of God’ the spheres on the Tree of Life are also spheres within the body of Adam Kadmon, the archetypal human being.¹⁶ In the Kabbalah the quest for mystical self-knowledge is therefore regarded essentially as a process of regaining undifferentiated One-ness with the Divine.

According to the Kabbalah, the mystical universe is sustained by the utterance of the Holy Names of God: the ten emanations or *sephiroth* on

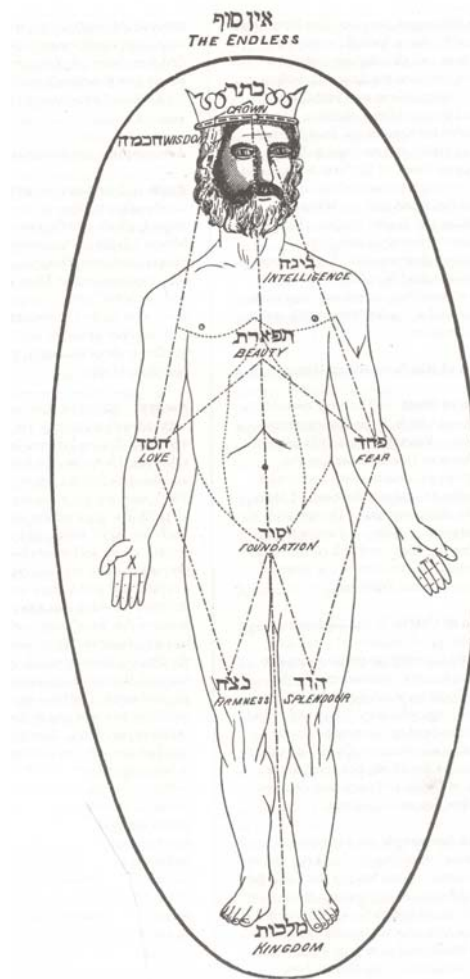


Plate 21: Adam Kadmon, the archetypal human being. His body contains the ten *sephiroth*, or emanations from the Godhead

the Tree of Life are none other than ‘the creative names which God called into the world, the names which He gave to Himself’.¹⁷ According to the *Zohar*:

In the Beginning, when the will of the King began to take effect, he engraved signs into the divine aura. A dark flame sprang forth from the innermost recess of the mystery of the Infinite, *En-Sof* [*Ain Soph Aur*] like a fog which forms out of the formless, enclosed in the ring of this aura, neither white nor black, neither red nor green, and of no colour whatever. But when this flame began to assume size and extension it produced radiant colours. For in the innermost centre of the flame a well sprang forth from which flames poured upon everything below, hidden in the mysterious secrets of *En-Sof*. The well broke through, and yet did not entirely break through, the ethereal aura which surrounded it. It was entirely unrecognisable until the impact of its breakthrough a hidden supernal point shone forth. Beyond this point nothing may be known or understood, and therefore it is called *Reshith*, that is ‘Beginning’, the first word of Creation.¹⁸

Scholem writes that the 'Primordial Point' was thought of by the majority of Kabbalists not as *Kether*, the Crown (normally considered the first emanation upon the Tree of Life) but as the Great Father, *Chokmah* or Wisdom, which is the second *sephirah*. In Kabbalistic cosmology the energy of the Great Father unites with that of *Binah*, the Great Mother (Understanding), and from her womb all archetypal forms come forth.¹⁹ As Christian Ginsburg notes in his seminal book *The Kabbalah: Its Doctrines, Development and Literature*, 'It is not the *En-Sof* who created the world, but this Trinity... the world was born from the union of the crowned King and Queen... who, emanated from the *En-Sof*, produced the Universe in their own image.'²⁰ In a symbolic sense the seven subsequent emanations beneath the trinity of *Kether*, *Chokmah* and *Binah* constitute the seven days of Creation.²¹ The Tree of Life, with its ten *sephiroth* or emanations of divine consciousness, therefore encompasses a symbolic process by which the Infinite becomes tangible.²² The ten spheres on the Tree of Life are as follows:

Kether	<i>The Crown</i>
Chokmah	<i>Wisdom (The Father)</i>
Binah	<i>Understanding (The Mother)</i>
Chesed	<i>Mercy</i>
Geburah	<i>Severity, or Strength</i>
Tiphareth	<i>Beauty, or Harmony (The Son)</i>
Netzach	<i>Victory</i>
Hod	<i>Splendour</i>
Yesod	<i>The Foundation</i>
Malkuth	<i>Kingdom, or Earth (The Daughter)</i>

These emanations align themselves into three pillars, the outer two being the Pillar of Mercy headed by *Chokmah* (symbolising light and purity) and the Pillar of Severity headed by *Binah* (symbolising darkness and impurity). Beneath them lies the Garden of Eden, with its four rivers *Chesed*, *Geburah*, *Netzach* and *Hod* converging in *Tiphareth*, which is located at a central point on the Middle Pillar. The occult historian A.E. Waite – a leading member of the Golden Dawn – has suggested that the Middle Pillar can be regarded as the Perfect Pillar, for it reaches to the Crown, *Kether*.²³ The other two pillars provide a duality of opposites and represent the 'Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil'. The sixth emanation on the Tree of Life, *Tiphareth*, is associated symbolically with the divine Son and is regarded in the western esoteric tradition as the sphere of spiritual rebirth. The final emanation on the Tree of Life, *Malkuth*, 'The World', is represented symbolically by the Daughter, *Shekinah*, who in turn is a reflection of the Great Mother, *Binah*.²⁴

In addition to recognising ten *sephiroth* upon the Tree of Life, the medieval Kabbalists also divided the Tree into ‘four worlds’ of creative manifestation. God was said to be present in each of these four worlds and each in turn was represented symbolically by a letter in the Tetragrammaton,²⁵ the sacred name JHVH (consisting of the four Hebrew letters *Yod, He, Vau, He*) usually translated as Jehovah, or Yahweh, meaning ‘Lord’. The four worlds are as follows:

Atziluth, the Archetypal World

This level of existence is closest to the unmanifested realm of *Ain Soph Aur* and contains only one *sephirah*, Kether, which is described as ‘the hidden of the hidden. It is the emergence of God’s Will, His creative urge. It is the infinite, the initiation of all that can and will be. It is infinity.’²⁶

Briah, the World of Creation

This world contains two *sephiroth*, Chokmah and Binah, representing the Great Father and the Great Mother and reflecting the highest expression of the sacred male and female principles. Their union gives rise to the World of Formation.²⁷

Yetzirah, the World of Formation

This world contains the *sephiroth* Chesed, Geburah, Tiphareth, Netzach, Hod and Yesod. As indicated by its name, Yesod literally provides the ‘foundation’ for all that has preceded it in the creative process of sacred emanation from the highest realms of the Tree of Life.

Assiah, the Physical World

This world represents the final materialization of God’s Will in the sphere of Malkuth on the Tree of Life and is represented by *Shekinah*, the Daughter, who is spoken of variously as ‘the Bride of the Divine Son in Tiphareth’, ‘the Bride of Kether’ and the ‘Daughter of Binah’. *Shekinah* personifies the Divine Feminine on Earth.²⁸

Each *sephirah* is also said to contain an entire Tree of Life. The ‘Malkuth’ of the first *sephirah* emanates the ‘Kether’ of the following *sephirah*, and so on, through the ten emanations on the Tree. Each of these ten spheres is therefore considered a mirror of the Divine. According to the Jewish mystical tradition nothing exists beyond God, and as John Ferguson has observed in relation to the spiritual quest in the Kabbalah: ‘We must see God as the First Cause, and the universe as an emanation from his Will or Wisdom. The finite has no existence except in the light of the Infinite, which contracted so that the finite might be...Man is the highest point of the

created world, and his soul contains animal and moral elements, but also an element of pure spirit, which in the righteous ascends to God.’²⁹

The Hermetic tradition

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Hermetica, or Hermetic tradition, gained intellectual and philosophical influence in Europe. Hermetic philosophy has its roots in Hellenism.³⁰ During the Renaissance, Florence became a cultural centre where esoteric and metaphysical perspectives were strongly supported and it was in the royal courts under the rule of Cosimo and Lorenzo de Medici, that the Hermetic tradition received significant endorsement. In 1460 a monk named Leonardo da Pistoia brought with him to Florence a collection of Greek manuscripts that had been discovered in Macedonia and which would later become known as the *Corpus Hermeticum*, or *Hermetica*. These texts were presented to Cosimo de Medici (1389-1464), the Italian merchant prince who ruled Florence and who was also a noted collector of Greek manuscripts. In 1462 Cosimo passed the Hermetic texts to his young court scholar, Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), requesting that he translate them into Latin. This work was completed in 1463 and Cosimo was able to read the translation before his death the following year.³¹

The Hermetic material was essentially a body of Greek mystical and philosophical writings that drew on Platonism, Stoicism and Neoplatonism and then subsequently emerged within a Gnostic-Egyptian context. The Hermetic texts date from the latter half of the second century CE through to the end of the third century.³² In these writings the central figure, Hermes Trismegistus (Thrice Greatest Hermes) is presented as a wise spiritual teacher, a Gnostic master who is a composite of Hermes and Thoth.³³ In the Hermetic model of the universe all things were believed to have come from God and the world was therefore part of a sacred Unity. The universe itself was divided into three worlds, or emanations. The lowest sphere was the world of Nature, which in turn received divine influences from the more sanctified realms above. At the next level were the stars, spirits and ‘guardians’. Higher still was the supercelestial world of *nous*, the world of angelic spirits who were thought to have a superior knowledge of reality because they were closer to the Godhead, the sacred source of Creation. According to the Hermetic perspective the transcendent act of achieving a state of Oneness with God entailed liberating oneself from the constrictions of temporal life and entering the realm of pure and divine Thought.³⁴

Ficino's work on the *Corpus Hermeticum* was developed by Giovanni Pico, Count of Mirandola (1463-1494). Pico combined Ficino's Hermetic

Neoplatonism with an extensive knowledge of astrology, the Kabbalah, Christianity and 'high magic' (*mageia*).³⁵ Like Ficino, Pico conceived of a universe that emanated from the Godhead. However Pico's conception was not simply that of the devotional mystic. According to Pico, not only could man come to know God but he could also become a type of god himself – an attitude to divinity also found among contemporary magical practitioners (see below and also Chapters Three and Seven):

...he who knows himself in himself knows all things, as Zoroaster first wrote. When we are finally lighted in this knowledge, we shall in bliss be addressing the true Apollo on intimate terms... And, restored to health, Gabriel 'the strength of God', shall abide in us, leading us through the miracles of Nature and showing us on every side the merit and the might of God.³⁶

According to Pico, *mageia* or high magic, could provide humanity with access to the inner workings of Nature and the cosmos. *Mageia* could be employed 'in calling forth into the light, as if from their hiding places, the powers scattered and sown in the world by the loving-kindness of God'.³⁷ The role of the sacred magician, the practitioner of *mageia*, was to raise earth (matter) to the level of heaven (spirit). In the *Asclepius*, Hermes Trismegistus similarly urges his followers to become 'god-like':

...he takes in the nature of a god as if he were himself a god...He is united to the gods because he has the divinity pertaining to gods... He takes the earth as his own, he blends himself with the elements by the speed of thought, by the sharpness of spirit he descends to the depths of the sea. Everything is accessible to him; heaven is not too high for him, for he measures it as if he were in his grasp by his ingenuity. What sight the spirit shows to him, no mist of the air can obscure; the earth is never so dense as to impede his work; the immensity of the sea's depths do not trouble his plunging view. He is at the same time everything as he is everywhere.³⁸

It was primarily the high magic or *mageia* of the Hermetic tradition that attracted the founding members of the Golden Dawn because, at its most profound level, high magic (or 'theurgy') proposed an archetypal process of mythic renewal. The magical quest, as delineated within the Hermetic and Gnostic traditions, was to be 'reborn' from the limited and restricted world of material form into the realm of Spirit. This in turn became a guiding maxim within the Western esoteric tradition up until the time of the Golden Dawn. However a polarising split subsequently occurred within this tradition with the introduction of Crowley's doctrine of *Thelema*: thereafter an influential chthonic element was introduced to 20th century magical practice which led many occult devotees away from the quest for mythical renewal and towards accentuated occult individualism and/or esoteric anarchy (see Chapter Three).

The medieval Tarot

The earliest specific references to Tarot cards date back to 1442 and the d'Este court of Ferrara,³⁹ although Tarot cards may have been invented a few years earlier, originating in northern Italy between 1410 and 1425.⁴⁰ It seems likely that the earliest Tarot cards were associated with the aristocratic courts of either Ferrara or Milan; most of the Tarot decks which survive from 15th century Italy reflect the style and fashion of the nobility from that era.⁴¹ Interest in the Tarot subsequently spread from Italy to France and Switzerland. The modern Tarot deck is descended from the Piedmontese Tarot which was widely known in northern Italy and France by the beginning of the 16th century. This pack consisted of 78 cards divided into 22 cards of the Major Arcana and 56 cards of the Minor Arcana.⁴² The Major Arcana are the so-called 'court' or mythological cards, while the Minor Arcana consists of four basic suits, swords, wands, cups and pentacles, which parallel the four suits in the modern (early 20th century) Rider-Waite Tarot deck.⁴³

The widespread occult belief that the Tarot cards conceal a hidden symbolic language based on esoteric themes has led to a plethora of fanciful explanations relating to the Tarot's actual origins and purpose. Even today, some enthusiasts continue to claim that the Tarot cards originated in ancient Egypt and are associated with an esoteric wisdom tradition dating back thousands of years.⁴⁴ Such a view was first proposed by French theologian Antoine Court de Gébelin (1725-1784), author of *Le Monde Primitif* (nine volumes), published in Paris between 1775 and 1784. His essay on the Tarot is included in volume VIII of this work, published in 1781.⁴⁵ According to Court de Gébelin the Tarot cards had been invented by ancient Egyptian priests; their seventy-eight page book, disguised as a pack of playing cards, escaped the fire that destroyed their ancient libraries.⁴⁶

One of Court de Gébelin's followers, a wig-maker named Jean-Baptiste Alliette (1738- 1791), reversed his name to Etteilla and in 1783 published a book titled *Manière de se récréer avec le Jeu de Cartes nommées*⁴⁷ in which he claimed that the Tarot, otherwise known as *The Book of Thoth* (after the ancient Egyptian god of wisdom), had been created by seventeen Magi, 171 years after the Deluge. He further claimed that one of these Magi, Athotis, was descended from Mercury and Noah.⁴⁸ Alliette associated the Tarot with the Hermetic tradition, maintaining that it had been conceived by Hermes Trismegistus and that the text of *The Book of Thoth* had been written on leaves of gold in a temple three leagues from Memphis.⁴⁹ Alliette also emphasized the role of the Tarot in fortune-

telling, creating a deck of cards and an accompanying book titled *Manière de tirer: Le Grand Etteilla où tarots Egyptiens*, specifically for the purpose of divination.⁵⁰

While Court de Gébelin and Alliette promoted the concept of an Egyptian origin for the Tarot, the French ceremonial magician Eliphas Lévi (Alphonse-Louis Constant, 1810-1875) maintained that the origins of the Tarot could be traced to an even earlier cultural epoch. Lévi, whose esoteric writings are listed in Rosaleen Norton's bibliography, possessed a copy of the *Grand Etteilla* Tarot deck⁵¹ but believed that the Tarot cards represented a secret esoteric alphabet that had links with the ancient Jewish mystical tradition. According to Lévi, the Tarot originated with

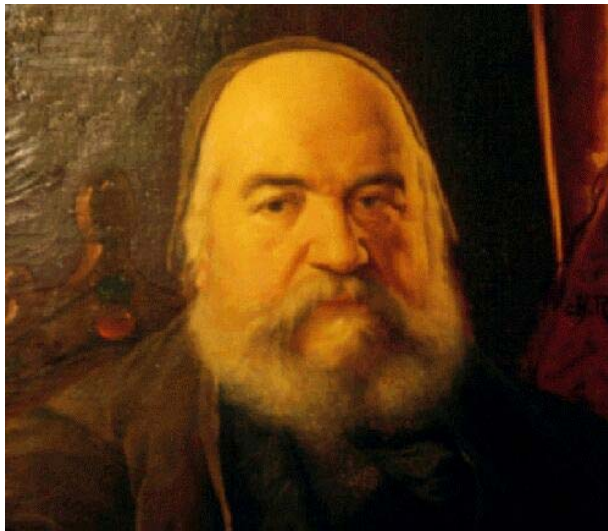


Plate 22: Eliphas Lévi, the French ceremonial magician who proposed merging the Kabbalistic Tree of Life with the Major Arcana of the Tarot. Lévi was a major influence on the Golden Dawn

Enoch, the oldest son of Cain,⁵² and provided the universal key to the Kabbalah. In one of his major works, *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie* [1856],⁵³ Lévi proclaimed that the twenty-two cards of the Major Arcana (the mythological cards of the Tarot) could be directly attributed to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and therefore linked to the Tree of Life.⁵⁴

Lévi's concept of merging the Kabbalistic Tree of Life with the Major Arcana of the Tarot was developed by the French physician Dr Gerard Encausse (1865-1916), who wrote under the name of Papus. In 1889 Papus published an influential work titled *The Tarot of the Bohemians*⁵⁵ which was illustrated with images from the Tarot of Marseilles.⁵⁶ (This work is

also listed in Norton's bibliography.) Papus provided a text-commentary on the symbolism of each letter of the Hebrew alphabet in direct association with the Tarot cards of the Major Arcana and his Tarot card images incorporated letters of the Hebrew alphabet next to their titles, thereby reinforcing the idea that the Tarot and the Jewish mystical tradition were symbolically interconnected.⁵⁷ The concept of mapping the Major of Arcana of the Tarot as a network of symbolic pathways upon the Tree of Life was subsequently adopted by the ceremonial magicians of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn⁵⁸ and the Fraternity of the Inner Light, founded by Dion Fortune. Two other Golden Dawn members, Arthur Edward Waite (*Frater Sacramentum Regis*) and Pamela Colman Smith (*Soror Quod Tibi id Aliis*), created the well-known Rider-Waite Tarot deck (first published by Rider & Co., London, in 1910), which has remained one of the most popular Tarot decks up to the present day.

Rosicrucians and Freemasons

In addition to the Kabbalah, Hermetica and medieval Tarot, the Western esoteric tradition has also been strongly influenced by two mystical fraternities, the Freemasons and Rosicrucians, both of which played a key role in the late 19th and early 20th century magical revival. Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry build on mystical themes of spiritual transformation and renewal that have become an intrinsic component of modern magical perspectives.

Modern Freemasonry has 18th century origins. The Masonic Grand Lodge of England was established in London in 1717.⁵⁹ The formation of the Grand Lodge represented the beginning of what is known as 'speculative' Freemasonry, the present-day fraternal order which does not require that its members should be working stonemasons.⁶⁰ However Freemasonry as a tradition derives originally from the practices of the highly skilled stonemasons and cathedral builders who worked on large-scale constructions in Italy, France, Spain, Germany and England during the early Middle Ages.⁶¹ As early as the 14th century these so-called Operative, or Working Masons formed lodges and recognised 'degrees' in order to maintain their professional skills and standards. An itinerant builder was required to answer veiled questions and respond to special signs and passwords in order to establish his credentials as a Master Mason. In due course an elaborate system of Masonic rituals developed, sheathed in secrecy and maintained by oaths of fidelity and fraternity. By 1723 there were approximately 30 lodges in England; the Grand Lodge of England developed rapidly into the central governing body overseeing these lodges, thereby bringing a sense of coherence and stability to British

Masonry⁶² By the end of the 18th century there were also Masonic lodges in most European countries.

Rosicrucianism, meanwhile, has 17th century origins. The Rosicrucian fraternity announced their existence in Germany with the release of four pamphlets in 1614-16. The first of these documents was the *Fama Fraternitatis, dess Löblichen Ordens des Rosenkreutzes* [The Declaration of the Worthy Order of the Rosy Cross] issued in Kassel in 1614⁶³ together with a satirical work by the Italian writer Trajano Boccalini titled *Allgemeine und General Reformation, der gantzen weiten Welt* [The Universal and General Reformation of the Whole Wide World]. In 1615 an anti-Papal document entitled the *Confessio Fraternitatis* also appeared in Kassel, published in Latin. This in turn was followed by a fourth work published in Strasbourg in the German language in 1616, titled *Die Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreutz* [The Chemical Marriage of Christian Rosencreutz, (or Rosycross)]. The last of these, an allegorical rather than a polemical work, is especially important in the context of contemporary magical thought because of its alchemical themes and spiritual rebirth symbolism, and its direct later influence on the Inner Order ritual grades of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.⁶⁴

Both the *Fama* and the *Confessio* contained brief information on the life of the mythical figure Christian Rosencreutz and the formation of his Order. The *Fama* was translated into English by the alchemist and mystic Thomas Vaughan (1622-1665) and published in 1652 under Vaughan's *nom de plume*, Eugenius Philalethes.⁶⁵ The *Fama* related that Brother C.R. has travelled extensively and received the wisdom of the East. The text also proposed that the many learned magicians, Kabbalists, physicians and philosophers in Germany should collaborate with each other because until now they have kept 'their secrets close only to themselves'.⁶⁶ The writer explains how the 'faults of the Church and the whole *Philosophia Moralis* [can] be amended'⁶⁷ and reformed through this new sacred knowledge. The writer then goes on to explain how the Rosicrucian fraternity came into existence, initially with four members and later with a much expanded following. The text also mentions that members of the Brotherhood meet annually in the House of the Holy Spirit [a building called Sancti spiritus]⁶⁸ and that a vault has been discovered where the original Brother Rosencreutz is buried.⁶⁹

Many who read the Rosicrucian pamphlets sought to contact the Fraternity without success: 'The Brothers, if they existed seemed invisible and impervious to entreaties to make themselves known.'⁷⁰ This lack of public

response intensified interest in the Rosicrucian mystery, especially since the pamphlets were anonymous⁷¹ and the identity of the Brothers unknown. Christopher McIntosh, author of a recent history of the Rosicrucians, believes that the author of *Die Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreutz* [The Chemical Marriage of Christian Rosencreutz] was ‘almost certainly’ the Tübingen-based Protestant theologian Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654), and that Andreae may possibly have authored, or co-authored, the *Fama* as well.⁷² The author of the *Confessio* remains unknown.⁷³

McIntosh believes that later developments within the Rosicrucian movement also placed considerable emphasis on the alchemical secrets of transmutation and knowledge of the Philosopher’s Stone or the Elixir of Life.⁷⁴ Michael Maier (1568-1622), a Lutheran physician with a strong interest in Hermetica, was one of the first writers to emphasize the alchemical aspects of Rosicrucianism through such publications as *Symbola Aureae Mensae* (1617) and *Themis Aurea* (1618).⁷⁵ Maier also defended the authenticity of the Rosicrucian brotherhood, even though he claimed at the time that he was not a member.⁷⁶ Lyndy Abraham describes the Philosopher’s Stone in her *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery* (1998) as ‘the most famous of all alchemical ideas. The Stone is the arcanum of all arcana, possessing the power to perfect imperfection in all things, able to transmute base metals into pure gold and transform earthly man into an illumined philosopher.’⁷⁷ The Philosopher’s Stone also had a Christian dimension that Maier would have found especially relevant. Abraham writes: ‘It [ie. the Stone] is the figure of light veiled in dark matter, that divine love essence which combines divine wisdom and creative power, often identified with Christ as creative Logos.’⁷⁸ The figure of Christian Rosencreutz himself embodies both Christian and alchemical ideas: he is, as the English Rosicrucian philosopher and scientist Robert Fludd observed, a symbol of spiritual renewal, ‘a light, as if it were the Sun, yet winged and exceeding the Sun of our heaven, arising from the tomb... a picture of the making of the perfect man’.⁷⁹

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was formally established in London on 12 February 1888 when its three founding figures, Samuel Liddell Mathers (1854-1918), Dr William Wynn Westcott (1848-1925) and Dr William Robert Woodman (1828-1891) signed a document headed ‘Order of the G.D.’ All three were members of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia (SRIA)⁸⁰ and it was through this esoteric Masonic organisation that they had met each other.⁸¹ Westcott had recently acquired a manuscript in

cipher form which had been discovered among the papers of a deceased member of the SRIA, and he claimed to have found among the leaves of the cipher manuscript the name and address of a certain Fraulein Anna Sprengel, said to be an eminent Rosicrucian adept. On her authority, and following a lengthy correspondence, Westcott announced in Masonic and Theosophical circles that he had been instructed to found an English branch of her German occult group, calling it the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.⁸² The first official document defined the purpose of the Golden Dawn as a secret society dedicated to the pursuit of 'occult science'. The text began as follows:

For the purpose of the study of Occult Science, and the further investigation of the Mysteries of Life and Death, and our Environment, permission has been granted by the Secret Chiefs of the R.C. to certain Fratres learned in the Occult Sciences, (and who are also members of the Soc.Ros.in Ang.) to work the Esoteric Order of the G.D. in the Outer; to hold meetings thereof for Study and to initiate any approved person *Male* or *Female*, who will enter into an Undertaking to maintain strict secrecy regarding all that concerns it. Belief in One God necessary. No other restrictions.⁸³

Three points in this document are of particular interest. The first is the reference to 'Secret Chiefs': from the very establishment of the Order it was claimed that these mysterious personages provided the spiritual authority for the Golden Dawn and this would prove to be a point of contention in later years. The second is that the founders of the Golden Dawn had decided to admit both male and female members, thus differentiating the new organisation from mainstream Freemasonry: this is significant because, in addition to being members of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia, Mathers, Westcott and Woodman were all Freemasons, and traditionally Freemasonry admitted only male members.⁸⁴ The third is that the new magical order required its members to believe in 'One God'. The inference here was that the Golden Dawn would be grounded philosophically in a monotheistic spiritual tradition. This was further clarified in the text of the new Golden Dawn 'pledge form' which specified that the preferred religion should be Christianity: 'Belief in a Supreme Being, or Beings, is indispensable. In addition, the Candidate, if not a Christian, should be at least prepared to take an interest in Christianity.'⁸⁵

The latter document also clarified the earlier statement that the Golden Dawn was dedicated to the 'investigation of the Mysteries of Life and Death' by confirming that it was not prepared to admit candidates to the

Order who were Mesmerists ⁸⁶ or Spiritualists ⁸⁷ ‘or who habitually allow[ed] themselves to fall into a completely passive condition of Will’. ⁸⁸ This, too, is a crucial point. Central to the development of the Golden Dawn as a magical organisation would be the development of the ‘magical will’, sometimes capitalised as Will to connote a higher spiritual purpose. As I will emphasise throughout this thesis, the development of the magical will is itself a defining characteristic of the Western esoteric tradition.

Establishment of the Golden Dawn temples

Westcott invited his colleague from the SRIA, Samuel Liddell Mathers, to expand the cipher material so that it could form the basis of a ‘complete scheme of initiation’⁸⁹ and this proposal had a positive outcome. Mathers developed the five Masonic grades into a workable system suitable for the practice of ceremonial magic and as a result the Isis-Urania Temple of the Golden Dawn was established in London on 1 March 1888 with Mathers, Westcott and Dr Woodman confirmed as leaders of the Order.⁹⁰ In a relatively short time it would be followed by other branches: the Osiris Temple in Weston-super-Mare, the Horus Temple in Bradford, the Amen-Ra Temple in Edinburgh and the Ahathoor Temple in Paris.⁹¹

In due course the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn would attract a distinguished membership including such figures as the distinguished homeopath Dr Edward Berridge; the Scottish Astronomer Royal, William Peck; Arthur Edward Waite, an authority on the Kabbalah, Rosicrucianism and the Holy Grail legends; the distinguished poet William Butler Yeats, who would later win the Nobel prize; well known physician and pioneer of tropical medicine, Dr R.W. Felkin; lawyer John W. Brodie-Innes; the well-known fantasy novelists Arthur Machen and Algernon Blackwood; and the controversial ritual magician and adventurer Aleister Crowley. The Order also included within its membership several notable women, among them Annie Horniman, later a leading patron of Irish theatre; artist Moina Bergson, sister of the influential French philosopher Henri Bergson and future wife of Samuel Mathers;⁹² Celtic revivalist Maude Gonne; actress Florence Farr; and in later years the Christian Kabbalist Violet Firth, better known as the magical novelist Dion Fortune.⁹³

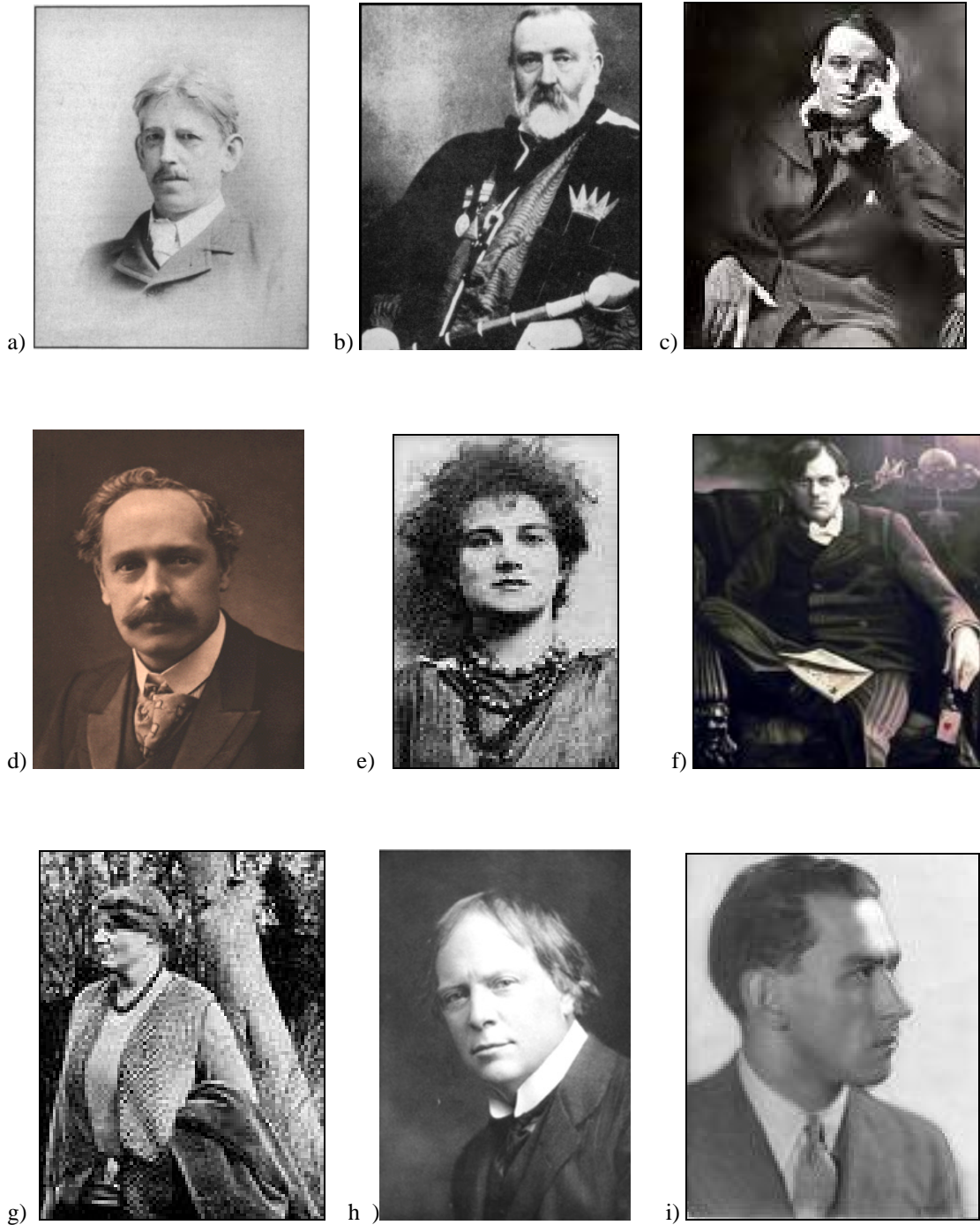


Plate 23: Notable figures associated with the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and its derivative branches: a) S.L. MacGregor Mathers b) Dr Wynn Westcott c) William Butler Yeats
d) Arthur Edward Waite e) Moina Mathers f) Aleister Crowley
g) Dion Fortune (aka Violet Firth) h) Arthur Machen i) Israel Regardie

Ritual degrees and the Tree of Life

As Freemasons, Westcott and Mathers were strongly attracted to the concept of ritual degrees, and the grades of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn were formulated in a manner that would align them

symbolically with the *sephiroth*, or levels of mystical consciousness upon the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. Four of the five ritual grades had Latin names: Zelator (corresponding to the *sephirah* Malkuth on the Tree of Life), Theoricus (corresponding to Yesod), Practicus (corresponding to

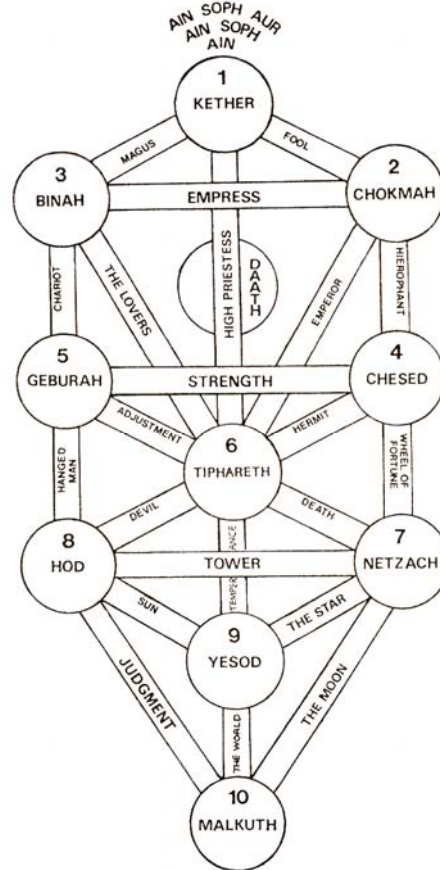


Plate 24: The Golden Dawn version of the Tree of Life, combining the ten *sephiroth* and the interconnecting paths, represented by the Major Arcana of the Tarot

Hod) and Philosophus (corresponding to Netzach).⁹⁴ There was also a 'Neophyte' grade which, in a symbolic sense, was located *below* the Kabbalistic Tree of Life because at this stage the candidate who had just entered the Golden Dawn had not yet embarked on the magical exploration of the higher spheres on the Tree. Occult historian Francis King notes that immediately after admission to the grade the Neophyte was given the first 'Knowledge Lecture', a document that contained various Hermetic teachings together with instructions on the meditations the candidate was to perform as part of his psycho-spiritual training. The Neophyte was also given the rubric of the 'Qabalistic Cross and the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram' so that he or she might copy, learn and practise it, 'thus arriving as some...comprehension of the way to come into contact with spiritual forces.'⁹⁵

When Westcott, Mathers and Dr Woodman established the Isis-Urania Temple in London in 1888, they conferred upon themselves a Second Order ⁹⁶ ritual grade which implied that they were the ‘Secret Chiefs’ incarnate: the grade 7° = 4° corresponded to the *sephirah* Chesed, the fourth emanation on the Tree of Life and the sphere symbolically associated with the Ruler of the Universe (represented cosmologically by Jehovah/Yahweh in Judaism, Zeus in ancient Greece and Jupiter in ancient Rome). As the leaders of the Isis-Urania Temple, Westcott, Mathers and Woodman interacted with incoming members by using secret magical names, for as a matter of principle Golden Dawn members could only be allowed to know the magical names of their peers and those with lower grades beneath them. Mathers was known as *Deo Duce Comite Ferro* and later ‘*S Rioghail Mo Dhream*, Westcott was *Non Omnis Moriar* and *Sapere Aude*, and Woodman *Magna est Veritas et Praevalebit* and *Vincit Omnia Veritas*. ⁹⁷

The three grades of the Second Order were Adeptus Minor (corresponding to Tiphareth on the Tree of Life), Adeptus Major (corresponding to Geburah) and Adeptus Exemptus (corresponding to Chesed). ⁹⁸ By passing through the 5°=6° ritual grade of Adeptus Minor the ceremonial magician entered what Mathers called ‘the Vault of the Adepts’. ⁹⁹ The candidate was bound symbolically on the ‘Cross of Suffering’ while also witnessing ‘the resurrection of the Chief Adept, who represented Christian Rosencreutz, from a tomb within an elaborately painted, seven-sided vault’. ¹⁰⁰

The spiritual realm of the ‘Secret Chiefs’

As indicated above, the fourth emanation on the Kabbalistic Tree (Chesed) lies just below the supernal triad of Kether, Chokmah and Binah. Between the supernal triad and the seven lower *sephiroth* upon the Tree is a symbolic divide associated with a transitional *sephirah* known as Daath (knowledge), which is often referred to by magical practitioners as the Abyss. ¹⁰¹ The Abyss symbolically distinguishes the transcendent nature of the Godhead (above) from the domain of Creation (below). In the Jewish mystical tradition symbolic forms are rarely ascribed to levels of mystical reality above the Abyss because, essentially, they lie beyond the realm of Creation. Despite the transcendental nature of the supernal triad on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, Mathers and his wife conceived of a mystical Third Order which corresponded to the exalted levels of spiritual awareness above the Abyss. They proposed the ritual grades of Magister Templi (corresponding to Binah), Magus (corresponding to Chokmah) and Ipsissimus (corresponding to Kether) and declared that the sacred domain of the Third Order was also the spiritual home of the ‘Secret Chiefs’

referred to in the founding charter of the Golden Dawn. Mathers spoke of 'the Great White Lodge of the Adepts',¹⁰² but was less than forthcoming when it came to describing how contact with the Secret Chiefs could actually be achieved. Nevertheless, he did take the credit for establishing the inspirational connection that sustained the Golden Dawn:

Prior to the establishment of the Vaults of the Adepts in Britannia (the First of the Golden Dawn in the Outer being therein actively working... it was found absolutely and imperatively necessary that there should be some eminent Member especially chosen to act as the link between the Secret Chiefs and the more external forms of the Order. It was requisite that such Member should be me, who, while having the necessary and peculiar educational basis of critical and profound occult archaeological knowledge should at the same time not only be ready and willing to devote himself in every sense to a blind and unreasoning obedience to those Secret Chiefs...¹⁰³

However, Mathers was unable to supply his followers with any detailed information about the actual identity of the mysterious Secret Chiefs who represented the source of his magical authority:

I do not even know their earthly names. I know them only by certain secret mottoes. I have *but very rarely* seen them in the physical body; and on such rare occasions *the rendezvous was made astrally by them* at the time and place which had been astrally appointed beforehand. For my part I believe them to be human and living upon this earth but possessing terrible superhuman powers.¹⁰⁴

By claiming exclusive access to the Secret Chiefs, Mathers was acting in a way that would have a substantial impact on the future development of the Golden Dawn: he was effectively claiming privileged access to a unique source of sacred power. And Mathers would soon be able to exert his total authority over the Golden Dawn in a more literal and specific way. Dr Woodman had died in 1891 and Westcott had already begun to redirect his attention away from the Golden Dawn towards the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia, which became his administrative responsibility from 1892 onwards.¹⁰⁵ Westcott finally resigned from the Golden Dawn in 1897 because rumours relating to his involvement in the Golden Dawn were affecting his professional career as Crown Coroner.¹⁰⁶ The death of Woodman and the resignation of Westcott left Mathers effectively in control of both the Inner and Outer Orders of the Golden Dawn, even though he and his wife were now based in Paris, having moved there in 1894.

Mathers' autocratic leadership and its consequences

At the time of his assumption of total control of the Golden Dawn, Mathers was engaged in literary research at the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, where much of his time was taken up translating the French manuscript of a lengthy and important 15th century grimoire titled *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*.¹⁰⁷ Mathers was now referring to himself as MacGregor Mathers, MacGregor of Glenstrae and Count of Glenstrae to feign some sense of rank and importance.¹⁰⁸ Supported financially by wealthy Golden Dawn member Annie Horniman (*Soror Fortiter et Recte*),¹⁰⁹ a tea heiress and key senior member of the London Isis-Urania Temple, Mathers was presiding over the Ahathoor Temple in Paris while simultaneously attempting to maintain dominance over the various Golden Dawn branches across the Channel. However when Annie Horniman queried various aspects of the funding of Mathers' stay in Paris, Mathers accused her of insubordination and expelled her from the Order.¹¹⁰

Mathers' autocratic style and the expulsion of Annie Horniman from the Golden Dawn caused considerable disquiet among Order members and he caused even more consternation the following year when, in a letter to senior Order member Mrs Florence Farr Emery (*Soror Sapientia Sapienti Dono Data*) dated 16 February 1897, he charged her with 'attempting to make a schism' in the Golden Dawn and expelled her from the Order as well.¹¹¹ The expulsion of Annie Horniman and Mrs Emery from the Golden Dawn would lead to three years of internal bickering and dissension among Order members.

A crucial confrontation occurred in April 1900 when another Golden Dawn member, Aleister Crowley, who was regarded as an ally of Mathers, arrived in London from Paris, where he had been initiated by Mathers into the 5°=6° degree.¹¹² On 17 April, Crowley (*Frater Perdurabo*) and a Golden Dawn colleague, Miss Elaine Simpson (*Soror Donorum Dei Dispensatis Fidelis*) broke into the Second Order members' meeting rooms in an effort to seize Order property, acting on Mathers' direct authority. Two days later Crowley was involved in a direct confrontation with Second Order members William Butler Yeats (*Frater Daemon est Deus Inversus*) and Edward A. Hunter (*Frater Hora Et Semper*) at the same meeting rooms. Hunter later provided a statement, describing Crowley's somewhat melodramatic performance: 'About 11:30 Crowley arrived in Highland dress, a black mask over his face, and a plaid thrown over his head and shoulders, an enormous gold or gilt cross on his breast, and a dagger by his side.'¹¹³ Yeats and Hunter barred Crowley from access to the Order's premises and Crowley subsequently called for a constable to intervene: the

constable in turn advised Crowley to 'place the matter in the hands of a lawyer'.¹¹⁴

As a direct consequence of this confrontation, at a meeting of twenty-two Second Order members of the Isis-Urania Temple on 21 April 1900, a resolution was passed expelling Mathers and Miss Simpson from the Order of the Golden Dawn and also refusing admission to Crowley, whose 5°=6° degree initiation in Paris had not been recognised by the London Second Order members.¹¹⁵ Mathers' exclusive hold on the Order of the Golden Dawn had effectively come to an end.

Golden Dawn splinter groups

In spite of the reaction against Mathers' autocratic rule, several members of the Golden Dawn formed splinter groups inspired by their own versions of the 'Secret Chiefs'. Mrs Florence Farr Emery headed a Golden Dawn Second Order offshoot known as the Sphere Group, that at first was said to be controlled by an Egyptian Adept and later drew on the inspirational symbolism of the Cup of the Stolistes, an image of the Holy Grail.¹¹⁶ Much of the Sphere Group's activities were devoted to inner plane work, including astral explorations, skrying,¹¹⁷ colour-meditation¹¹⁸ and spirit-communication.¹¹⁹ Meanwhile, Dr R.W.Felkin (*Frater Finem Respice*), together with several members of the London Isis-Urania Temple and the Edinburgh Amen-Ra Temple, founded the Order of the Stella Matutina (Morning Star) and continued to strive for contact with the Secret Chiefs even though they had broken their allegiance to their former leader. Felkin had named his Order the Stella Matutina because Venus (the Morning Star) was believed to be the guardian planet of the Isis-Urania Temple.¹²⁰ Prominent members of the Amoun Temple of the Stella Matutina in London included John W. Brodie-Innes (formerly a leading member of Amen-Ra Temple in Edinburgh, where he was known as *Frater Sub Spe*), Annie Horniman, Percy Bullock, Arthur Edward Waite and William Butler Yeats.¹²¹ In its later years, Israel Regardie, editor of the major four-volume source-work, *The Golden Dawn*, would also join the Stella Matutina.¹²²

Magical symbolism in the Golden Dawn

As Israel Regardie notes in relation to the Neophyte grade, for the Golden Dawn magician the ultimate mythic attainment was to come forth ritually into the Light, for this was the very essence of spiritual rebirth.¹²³ The process of ascending the Kabbalistic Tree of Life by means of visualisation and ceremonial magic involved powerful acts of creative imagination: the magician had to feel that he or she was fully engaging with each sphere of

consciousness in turn. However the monotheistic nature of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life presented the Golden Dawn occultists with a paradox, for while they acknowledged the sacred unity of the Tree of Life in all its emanations they also believed that they had to focus their creative awareness upon a sequence of specific archetypal images if they were to ‘ascend’ to the Light. Their solution was to regard the Kabbalistic Tree of Life as a matrix upon which the archetypes of the great Western mythologies could be charted and interrelated as part of a sacred unity. It then became possible to correlate the major deities from the pantheons of ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome and Celtic Europe in what was effectively a cumulative approach to the western mythological imagination. In due course other magical objects would also be charted symbolically upon the Tree, including various precious stones, perfumes, minerals and sacred plants – each being assigned to specific gods and goddesses in a ceremonial context. These charted mythological images were known to the Golden Dawn magicians as ‘magical correspondences’.

Occult historian Ithell Colquhoun notes that S.L.Mathers and Wynn Westcott began compiling the lists of magical correspondences during the 1890s but this work would subsequently be commandeered by Aleister Crowley and published under his own name:

A manuscript arranged in tabular form and known as *The Book of Correspondences*, the compilation of which Mathers and Wynn Westcott had together begun in the early days of their association, was circulated by them among their more promising students during the 1890s. Allan Bennett had a copy which he passed on to [Aleister] Crowley, or allowed him to copy again. Years later Crowley, while convalescing in Bournemouth, had the bright idea of adding a few columns to it. He then gave it the title of *Liber 777*, wrote an introduction and notes and, in 1909, published the whole as his own work, ‘privately’, under the imprint of the Walter Scott Publishing Co. Ltd., London and Felling-on-Tyne. This is the explanation of Crowley’s claim to the feat of composing the whole within a week and without reference books. Certain of the columns were repeated in his *Magick in Theory and Practice* (1929) and in Regardie’s *The Golden Dawn*. A new impression of the original was *Liber 777 Revised*, brought out in by the Neptune Press, London in 1955... the authorship of Mathers, who had done most of the initial work, went unrecognised.¹²⁴

The listings in *Liber 777* included references to ancient Egyptian and Roman deities as well as listings for western astrology, plants, precious stones and perfumes. The following are selected listings from Crowley’s version of Mathers’ and Westcott’s *Book of Correspondences* published in Table 1 in *Liber 777*:¹²⁵

Table of Correspondences

<i>Level</i>	<i>Kabbalah</i>	<i>Astrology</i>	<i>Egyptian</i>	<i>Roman</i>
1	Kether	Primum Mobile	Ptah, Hadith	Jupiter
2	Chokmah	Zodiac/Fixed Stars	Amoun, Thoth	Janus
3	Binah	Saturn	Isis, Nephthys	Juno, Cybele, Hecate
4	Chesed	Jupiter	Amoun	Jupiter
5	Geburah	Mars	Horus	Mars
6	Tiphareth	Sol (Sun)	Ra	Apollo
7	Netzach	Venus	Hathoor	Venus
8	Hod	Mercury	Anubis	Mercury
9	Yesod	Luna	Shu	Diana
10	Malkuth	The Elements	Seb	Ceres

The following perfumes, precious stones and plants were considered appropriate in rituals corresponding to the invoked god or goddess for each of the ten *sephiroth* and are also listings from Crowley's Table 1:¹²⁶

<i>Level</i>	<i>Precious Stones</i>	<i>Perfumes</i>	<i>Plants</i>
1	Diamond	Ambergris	Almond in flower
2	Star Ruby, Turquoise	Musk	Amaranth
3	Star Sapphire, Pearl	Myrrh, Civet	Cypress, Opium Poppy
4	Amethyst, Sapphire	Cedar	Olive, Shamrock
5	Ruby	Tobacco	Oak, Nux Vomica, Nettle
6	Topaz	Olibanum	Acacia, Bay, Laurel, Vine
7	Emerald	Benzoin, Rose, Sandlewood	Rose
8	Opal	Storax	Moly, <i>Anhalonium lewinii</i>
9	Quartz	Jasmine	Mandrake, Damiana
10	Rock Crystal	Dittany of Crete	Willow, Lily, Ivy

Liber 777 and its precursor *The Book of Correspondences* helped codify the modern magical imagination. The listings themselves are of historic significance because they represented an early attempt to systematise archetypal images and 'mythic' levels of consciousness at a time when psychology itself was still in its infancy. *Liber 777* and *The Book of Correspondences* predate by well over a decade Carl Jung's work with the 'primordial images' of the unconscious mind, later referred to as the 'archetypes of the collective unconscious'.¹²⁷

From a psychological perspective it is clear that the magicians of the Golden Dawn regarded the Tree of Life as a complex symbol representing the realm of sacred inner potentialities. To simulate the gods and goddesses through acts of magic was to *become like them*. The challenge was to identify oneself with the mythological and archetypal images of the psyche through a process of direct encounter: the act of engaging the gods, whether

through ritual or by some other means like visualisation, meditation or magical trance, was essentially a process of discovering one's inner potential. As Aleister Crowley observed in *Magick in Theory and Practice* (1929): '...the Gods are but names for the forces of Nature themselves',¹²⁸ and 'the true God is man. In man are all things hidden...'¹²⁹

The magicians in the Golden Dawn had therefore to imagine that they were partaking of the nature of each of the gods in turn, embodying within themselves the very essence of the deity. Their rituals were designed to control all the circumstances which might assist them in their journey through the subconscious mind and the mythic imagination. They included all the symbols and colours of the god, the utterance of magical names of power, and the burning of incense or perfume appropriate to the deity concerned. In Golden Dawn ceremonial workings, the ritual magician imagined that he or she had become the deity whose forms were imitated in ritual. The traditional concept of the gods (or God) ruling humanity was reversed so that it was now the ritual magician who controlled the gods, uttering the sacred names that sustained the universe. As Eliphas Lévi had written in his seminal text *The Key of the Mysteries*, '... all magic is in a word, and that word pronounced Kabbalistically is stronger than all the powers of Heaven, Earth and Hell. With the name of *Yod, He, Vau, He*, one commands Nature...'¹³⁰

In passing through the ritual grades from Malkuth to Netzach, the Outer Order members of the Golden Dawn focused their magical activities on the mythic levels associated with the lower *sephiroth* of the Tree of Life, specifically the spheres of Malkuth, Yesod, Hod and Netzach.¹³¹ In doing so, they developed specific techniques for the expansion of spiritual awareness. These included a rich application of magical symbols and mythic imagery in their ritual adornments, ceremonial procedures and invocations, all of which were intended to focus the imagination during the performance of a given magical ritual. In one of his most important books, *The Tree of Life*, Israel Regardie describes magical ritual as 'a deliberate exhilaration of the Will and the exaltation of the Imagination, the end being the purification of the personality and the attainment of a spiritual state of consciousness, in which the ego enters into a union with either its own Higher Self or a God'.¹³²

Dion Fortune and the Inner Light

Apart from Crowley, whose post-Golden Dawn conversion to Thelemic sex magic is described in Chapter Three, one of the other notable figures to emerge from the Golden Dawn was Dion Fortune (1890-1946). Fortune is

also of interest because, like Crowley, she appears to have influenced Rosaleen Norton through her published work. Norton lists two of Dion Fortune's books in the bibliography of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton: The Mystical Qabalah* (1935) – widely regarded among esoteric practitioners as one of the best practical sourcebooks in its field – and *The Goat-foot God* (1936), a novel dedicated to the Great God Pan.¹³³

Dion Fortune was born Violet Mary Firth on 6 December 1890 at Bryn-y-Bia, in Llandudno, Wales. Her father, Arthur Firth, was a solicitor but for her own reasons Violet liked to emphasise a close connection with the better known Firth family of Sheffield, a leading steel-producing company, and she would later take its family motto as her own.

Although details of her early professional life are scanty it is known that she worked as a therapist in a medico-psychological clinic in East London and later studied psychoanalysis in classes held at the University of London by a Professor Flugel, who was also a member of the Society for Psychical Research.¹³⁴ Strongly influenced by the theories of Freud, Adler and Jung, Firth became a lay psychoanalyst in 1918. In Jung's thought, especially, she found correlations between the 'archetypes of the collective unconscious' and a realm of enquiry which would increasingly fascinate her: the exploration of sacred mythological images invoked by occultists during their rituals and visionary encounters.

According to Fortune's biographer, Alan Richardson, her first contact with occult perspectives seems to have come through her association with an Irish Freemason, Dr Theodore Moriarty. Firth probably met Moriarty at the clinic where she worked; he in turn was involved in giving lectures on occult theories in a private house in the village of Eversley in northern Hampshire. Dr Moriarty's interests were both Theosophical and metaphysical, encompassing such subject matter as the study of psychology and religion, the so-called 'root races' of lost Atlantis,¹³⁵ mystical and Gnostic Christianity, reincarnation, and the occult relationship between mind, matter and spirit. It is not clear whether Dr Moriarty had any personal connection with the Golden Dawn magicians – many of whom were also Freemasons. But Violet Firth had a close friend, Maiya Tranchell-Hayes (later Mrs Maiya Curtis-Webb), whom she had known from childhood and who was also an occult devotee, and through her she was introduced to the Golden Dawn Temple of the Alpha and Omega in 1919.¹³⁶ Based in London, this temple was a southern offshoot of the Scottish section of the Golden Dawn headed by Dr. J.W. Brodie-Innes. Maiya Tranchell-Hayes became her teacher at the Alpha and Omega

temple,¹³⁷ and Firth found the magical ceremonies powerful and evocative. However she also felt there was a sense of gloom in this particular group. According to Firth: 'The glory had departed ... most of its original members were dead or withdrawn; it had suffered severely during the war, and was manned mainly by widows and grey-bearded ancients.'¹³⁸ A year later Firth joined a London temple headed by Mrs Moina Mathers, who was continuing the esoteric work of her husband following his untimely death from influenza in the epidemic of 1918.

In the Temple of the Alpha and Omega, Violet Firth took the magical name *Deo Non Fortuna*, 'by God and not by luck', which was also the Latin motto inscribed upon the Firth family crest. She subsequently became known in esoteric circles as Dion Fortune, a contraction of her magical name, and in 1922 formed her own meditative group. Originally established as The Christian Mystic Lodge of the Theosophical Society, it soon became known as The Fraternity of the Inner Light. For a time, following an agreement with Moina Mathers, Fortune's meditative group served as 'an Outer Court to the Golden Dawn system'¹³⁹ but when Fortune had a significant disagreement with Mrs Mathers in 1924¹⁴⁰ she then set up a temple of her own in Bayswater. Fortune's temple was loosely affiliated with the Stella Matutina, the splinter group established by Dr R.W.Felkin and other Golden Dawn members following the rift with MacGregor Mathers.

Dion Fortune's contribution to Western esoteric thought dates from the formation of the Fraternity of the Inner Light. Here she increasingly engaged herself in the mythological dimensions of magic, venturing into what she now came to regard as the collective pagan soul of humanity, tapping into the very heart of the Ancient Mysteries. Reversing the male-dominated, solar-oriented tradition which MacGregor Mathers had established in the Golden Dawn, Fortune committed herself completely to the magical potency of the archetypal Feminine, and began exploring Goddess images in the major ancient pantheons. She was also intrigued by the symbolic and sexual polarities in magic, including those of the Black Isis.¹⁴¹ Isis is best known as the great goddess of magic in ancient Egyptian mythology, as the wife of the sun-god Osiris and the mother of Horus. It was Isis who succeeded in piecing together the fragments of Osiris's body after he had been murdered by Set, and it was she who also tricked Ra into revealing his secret magical name.¹⁴² However Fortune was apparently interested in a different aspect of Isis, a dimension that the tantric magician Kenneth Grant has called the 'primordial essence of Woman (*sakti*) in her dynamic aspect'. While Isis was a lunar goddess¹⁴³ and the Moon is

traditionally considered 'passive', a receptacle or reflector of light, the Black Isis was said to destroy all that was 'inessential and obstructive to the soul's development'. This in turn led to an exploration of the magic of sexuality. According to Grant, the basis of Fortune's work at this time involved 'the bringing into manifestation of this *sakti* by the magically controlled interplay of sexual polarity embodied in the priest (the consecrated male) and the specially chosen female.' Together they enacted the immemorial Rite and this formed a vortex on the inner planes 'down which the tremendous energies of Black Isis rush(ed) into manifestation'.¹⁴⁴ If Grant is correct, and he met Fortune during the 1940s around the same time that he knew Crowley,¹⁴⁵ this was clearly a type of visionary magic that ventured into new realms, encompassing the use of transcendent sexual energies and the fusion, in ritual, of male and female polarities. It seems to have involved some form of Western magical *Tantra*, and was a clear departure from the Golden Dawn, which tended to downplay the sexual dimensions of magic.¹⁴⁶ (The nature and historical origins of sex magic, as practised in Crowley's Ordo Templi Orientis, are discussed in Chapter Three.)

While the sexual aspects of the most secret Inner Light rituals remain a matter of speculation, it is clear that Fortune's main emphasis was not so much on physical magical activities as on astral encounters with the mythic archetypes of the mind. The Fraternity of the Inner Light continued the experimental work with magical visualisation that had first been undertaken in the Golden Dawn during the 1890s, and the Inner Light magicians developed a practical approach to magical 'path-workings', visualisations involving guided imagery,¹⁴⁷ as a direct means of exploring the subconscious mind. An important essay titled *The Old Religion*, written by a senior member of Fortune's group, Charles R.F. Seymour,¹⁴⁸ confirms that the Inner Light members believed that inner-plane ventures of this kind could arouse 'ancient cult memories' from previous incarnations. Fortune believed that the key to understanding human life and achievement lay in understanding the nature of reincarnation,¹⁴⁹ and the archetype of the Great Mother, in particular, could be thought of as a symbolic embodiment of the World Memory, a concept which has a parallel in the Theosophical concept of the Akashic Records.¹⁵⁰ According to Fortune it was possible to access details of earlier incarnations through contact with the Great Mother, and in this way the nature of one's sacred purpose could be determined. In *The Old Religion* Seymour explains that it was this shared belief in the spiritual authenticity of 'ancient cult memories' that united the members of their esoteric group:

Most of the members of these groups have, in the past, served at the altars of Pagan Religions and have met, face to face, the Shining Ones of the forests and the mountains, of the lakes and seas... In the course of these experiments it was discovered that if anyone of the members of a group had in the past a strong contact with a particular cult at a certain period, that individual could communicate these memories to others, and could link them with cult memories that still lie within the Earth memories of Isis as the Lady of Nature.¹⁵¹



Plate 25: Homage to the Great Goddess

The Rise of Wicca and Goddess worship

Modern witchcraft is often referred to as Wicca, from the Old English words *wicca* (masculine) and *wicce* (feminine) meaning ‘a practitioner of witchcraft’. The word *wiccan*, meaning ‘witches’ occurs in the Laws of King Alfred (circa 890 CE)¹⁵² and the verb *wiccian*, ‘to bewitch’,¹⁵³ was also used in this context. Some witches believe the words connote a wise person; Wicca is often referred to by practitioners as the ‘Craft of the Wise’.¹⁵⁴

Modern witchcraft, whose 20th century origins are discussed below, is a Nature-based religion with the Great Goddess as its principal deity. In Wicca the Great Goddess can take many different forms, associated with a range of mythological pantheons: these include Artemis, Astarte, Athene, Dione, Melusine, Aphrodite, Cerridwen, Dana, Arianrhod and Isis,¹⁵⁵ among many others. Alternatively reference may be made in general terms to the Great Mother or Mother Nature. The high priestess, who is the ritual leader of an individual group of witchcraft practitioners, or coven, incarnates the spirit of the Goddess in a ceremonial context when her senior male partner, the high priest, ‘draws down the Moon’ into her body. In modern witchcraft, the high priestess is regarded as the receptacle of wisdom and intuition and is symbolised by the sacred ritual cup, whereas her consort is represented symbolically by a short ritual sword or dagger known as an ‘*athame*’. Witchcraft rituals associated with the so-called Third Initiation (see below) feature the act of uniting dagger and cup in a symbol of sexual union, and there is also a comparable relationship in Celtic mythology between the sacred oak tree and Mother Earth.

Accordingly the high priest, or consort, is sometimes known as the Oak King, a reference to the sacred Oak of the Celts, and at other times as Cernunnos, 'The Horned One'.¹⁵⁶

Wiccan covens vary in size although traditionally the membership number is thirteen, consisting of six men, six women and the high priestess.¹⁵⁷

When the group exceeds this number, some members leave to form a new coven. Following their initiation into a coven, Wiccans are given magical names which are used in a ritual context and among coven members.

Wiccan ceremonies are held at specific times of the year. The coven meetings held through the year at full moon are called *esbats*: there are usually thirteen of these meetings in a calendar year. The major gatherings in the witches' calendar, the so-called Greater Sabbats, are related to the cycle of the seasons and the traditional times for sowing and harvesting crops. In the Northern Hemisphere the four Greater Sabbats are held on the following dates each year:

Candlemas, known by the Celts as *Imbolc*: 2 February

May Eve, or *Beltane*: 30 April

Lammas, or *Lughnassadh*: 1 August

Halloween, or *Samhain*: 31 October¹⁵⁸

In addition, there are four minor Sabbats: the two solstices at midsummer and midwinter, and the two equinoxes in spring and autumn.¹⁵⁹

In pre-Christian times, *Imbolc* was traditionally identified with the first signs of spring; *Beltane* was a fertility celebration when the sacred oak was burned, mistletoe cut, and sacrifices made to the gods, and *Lughnassadh* was related to autumn and the harvesting of crops and celebrated both the gathering in of produce and the continuing fertility of the earth. *Samhain* represented the transition from autumn to winter and was associated with bonfires to keep away the winter winds. *Samhain* was also a time when the spirits of the dead could return to earth once again to contact loved ones. Among contemporary witches, Sabbats are a time for fellowship, ceremonial and initiation, and ritual performances are followed by feasting, drinking and merriment (further details are provided below).¹⁶⁰

Wiccan ceremonies take place in a magic circle which can either be inscribed upon the floor of a special room set aside in a suburban house and designated as the 'temple', or marked on the earth in a suitable meeting place: for example, in a grove of trees or on the top of a sacred hill. The earth is swept with a ritual broomstick for purification and the four

elements are ascribed to the four directions: Earth in the north, Air in the East, Fire in the south and Water in the west. The ritual altar is traditionally placed in the north. Beings known as the 'Lords of the Watchtowers' ¹⁶¹ are believed to govern the four quarters and are invoked in rituals for blessings and protection.

Within the circle and present on the altar are a bowl of water, a dish of salt, candles, a symbolic scourge (representing will and determination), a cord to bind candidates in initiation, and consecrated symbols of the elements: a pentacle or disc (Earth / feminine); a cup (Water / feminine); a censer (Fire / masculine) and a wand (Air / masculine). The high priestess has her personal *athame*, or ritual dagger, and the sword of the high priest rests on the ground before the altar.

Contemporary Wicca recognises three initiations. The first confers witch-status upon the neophyte, the second promotes a first-degree witch to the position of high priestess or high priest, and the third celebrates the bonding of the high priestess and high priest in the Great Rite, which involves either real or symbolic sexual union and is perceived as a 'mystical marriage'. There is also usual practice in Wicca that a man must be initiated by a woman and a woman by a man, although a parent may initiate a child of the same sex. ¹⁶² Most covens do not admit anyone under the age of twenty-one. ¹⁶³

Wiccans recognise the three-fold aspect of the Great Goddess in her role as Maid (youth, enchantment), Mother (maturity, fulfilment), and Crone (old age, wisdom). This symbolic personification of the three phases of womanhood is represented, for example, by the Celtic triad Brigid - Dana - Morrigan, the Greek goddess in her three aspects Persephone - Demeter - Hecate, or by the three Furies, Alecto (goddess of beginnings) - Tisiphone (goddess of continuation) - Megaera (goddess of death and rebirth). The universal presence and three-fold nature of the Great Goddess is particularly emphasised by feminist Wicca groups in their development of 'women's mysteries'. As American neopagan Zsuzsanna Budapest writes in her *Holy Book of Women's Mysteries*: 'Images abound of the Mother Goddess, Female Principle of the Universe and source of all life... the Goddess of Ten Thousand Names.' ¹⁶⁴

In Wicca, magic is usually classified as 'black' or 'white', a distinction related to personal intent. Black magic is pursued in order to cause harm to another person through injury, illness or misfortune and may also be practised in order to enhance personal power as a consequence. By

definition, white magic is practised with a positive intent, seeks a beneficial outcome, and is often associated with rites of healing, with eliminating evil or disease, or with the expansion of spiritual awareness. (This is somewhat different from the distinction often made between the left-hand and right-hand paths in magic – sometimes identified as ‘black’ and ‘white’ respectively – see Chapter Three.)

The so-called Wiccan Rede, or code of ethics, specifically prohibits Wiccans from causing harm. The Rede is a statement of principle that all Wiccans are asked to adhere to: *Eight words the Wiccan Rede fulfil: An it harm none, do what ye will.*¹⁶⁵ The Pagan Federation in London has expanded upon the Wiccan Rede, issuing a statement that all neopagans are asked to accept as a basic philosophy of life:

***Love for and Kinship with Nature:** rather than the more customary attitude of aggression and domination over Nature; reverence for the life force and the ever-renewing cycles of life and death.*

***The Pagan Ethic:** ‘Do what thou wilt, but harm none.’ This is a positive morality, not a list of thou-shalt-nots. Each individual is responsible for discovering his or her own true nature and developing it fully, in harmony with the outer world.*

***The Concept of Goddess and God** as expressions of the Divine reality; an active participation in the cosmic dance of Goddess and God, female and male, rather than the suppression of either the female or the male principle.¹⁶⁶*

Gerald Gardner and the 20th century British witchcraft revival

Although the roots of modern witchcraft date from the 1930s (see below), the British Witchcraft Act [1604], which prohibited the practice of witchcraft, was not finally repealed in the United Kingdom until 1951. Prior to this date, books advocating the practice of witchcraft were legally restricted from publication in that country. One of the principal figures associated with the revival of British witchcraft, Gerald Brosseau Gardner (1884-1964), published a semi-autobiographical title, *High Magic’s Aid*, in 1949 under the nom de plume *Scire*¹⁶⁷ but was legally required to portray it as a work of fiction. Gardner’s first non-fiction title on Wicca, *Witchcraft Today*, was published in London in 1954, followed by *The Meaning of Witchcraft* in 1959.¹⁶⁸

Gardner was born at Blundellsands, a few miles north of Liverpool. Gardner was of Scottish descent and came from a wealthy family: his father was a partner in the family firm Joseph Gardner and Sons, founded in 1748, one of the largest hardwood importers in the world.¹⁶⁹ Gardner

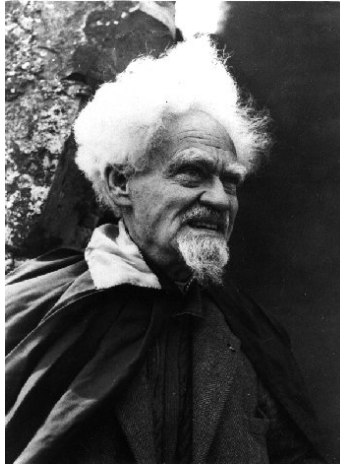


Plate 26: Gerald Brosseau Gardner

received his share of the family inheritance when his father died in 1935 and was financially independent from this time onwards.

For many years Gardner lived in the East, in such countries as Ceylon, Borneo and Malaya.¹⁷⁰ In 1936 he returned to England with his wife Donna and began planning his retirement. Interested in exotic folk-traditions, Gardner joined the Folk-Lore Society in March 1939 and became interested in witchcraft around this time.¹⁷¹ When returning to England Gardner had brought with him a large and valuable collection of swords and daggers.¹⁷² Fearing that this collection could easily be destroyed during war evacuation plans then current in London, Gardner and his wife decided to move to the country, purchasing a large brick house in Highcliffe, near the New Forest in Hampshire. Shortly after moving to Highcliffe, Gardner made contact with a group of local occultists that included Mrs Mabel Besant-Scott, daughter of the well known Theosophist Dr Annie Besant.¹⁷³ Known as the Rosicrucian Order Crotona Fellowship (founded in 1920 by George Sullivan, otherwise known as Brother Aureolis),¹⁷⁴ its members held theatrical performances at the Rosicrucian Theatre in nearby Christchurch. Some members of the Crotona Fellowship, specifically various members of the Mason family,¹⁷⁵ claimed to be members of an existing hereditary witchcraft coven and it was through contact with this fringe group within the Crotona Fellowship that Gardner was subsequently introduced to witchcraft.

Gardner's initiation

According to Jack Bracelin's biography of Gardner, *Gerald Gardner: Witch*,¹⁷⁶ a few days after the outbreak of World War Two in September 1939¹⁷⁷ Gardner was taken to a 'big house' owned by a wealthy lady known as 'Old Dorothy' and was initiated there.¹⁷⁸ Bracelin's account of the initiation reads as follows:

Gardner felt delighted that he was to be let into their secret. Thus it was that, a few days after the war had started, he was taken to a big house in the neighbourhood. This belonged to 'Old Dorothy' – a lady of note in the district, 'county' and very well-to-do. She invariably wore a pearl necklace, worth some £5000 at the time. It was in this house that he was initiated into witchcraft...he was stripped naked and brought into a place 'properly prepared' to undergo his initiation... It was halfway through when the word Wica [sic] was first mentioned...¹⁷⁹

Additional details are also provided in Gardner's book *Witchcraft Today* (1954):

I soon found myself in the circle and took the usual oaths of secrecy which bound me not to reveal any secrets of the cult.¹⁸⁰ ...I was half-initiated before the word 'Wica' which they used hit me like a thunderbolt, and I knew where I was, and that the Old Religion still existed. And so I found myself in the Circle, and there took the usual oath of secrecy, which bound me not to reveal certain things.¹⁸¹

Bracelin's biography records how Gardner felt after the ceremony was over. Gardner is reported to have said: 'It was, I think, the most wonderful night of my life. In true witch fashion we had a dance afterwards and kept it up until dawn.'¹⁸²

Gardner accepted the view of his initiators that the hereditary witches of the New Forest region were a surviving remnant of an organised pagan religion that had existed and operated in England until the seventeenth century, a view expressed by Dr Margaret Murray (1862-1963) in her controversial book *The Witch-cult in Western Europe* (1921)¹⁸³ – a work listed in Rosaleen Norton's bibliography.¹⁸⁴ Murray was a distinguished academic who specialized in near-Eastern archaeology and who had undertaken excavations in Egypt, Petra and southern Palestine. Murray believed that, as a broad-based fertility religion, the roots of pagan medieval witchcraft could be dated back to Paleolithic times. In a later book, *The God of the Witches* (1933),¹⁸⁵ Murray focused specifically on the figure of the Horned God whom she believed to be the oldest male deity known to humanity. Murray maintained that the origins of the Horned God could be traced back to the Old Stone Age and that his pagan worship had extended across Europe to the Near East up until the seventeenth century.¹⁸⁶ According to Murray, the Horned God provided a prototype for the Christian Devil; his principal form in north-western Europe was the Gallic deity Cernunnos.¹⁸⁷ Gardner would have been familiar with Dr Murray's writings through his membership of the London Folk-Lore Society and probably met her there in person.¹⁸⁸ She later provided an introduction for Gardner's *Witchcraft Today* (1954).

Gardner moved back to London in late 1944 or early 1945 and spent the following ten years consolidating his views on witchcraft and how it should be practised. According to Philip Heselton, author of a recent history of Wicca, the years from 1944 to 1954 ‘were an important period in Gardner’s life, in the development of his ideas and in the development of what is now known as “Wicca” or “Gardnerian Witchcraft”’.¹⁸⁹ One of Gardner’s formative influences was the ceremonial magician Aleister Crowley, who was now well-known as an advocate of *Thelemic* sex magic (see Chapter Three).¹⁹⁰ Crowley had retired to a boarding-house named Netherwood on the Ridge in Hastings.¹⁹¹

Gardner first visited Crowley in Hastings with his friend and fellow witch, Arnold Crowther, in 1946.¹⁹² Crowther (1909-1974) had met Crowley during his wartime travels and it was he who arranged for the two occultists to meet. The encounter is significant because it has been suggested that Crowley may have composed a set of witchcraft rites for Gardner known as the *Book of Shadows*.¹⁹³ Gardner maintained that the rituals in his *Book of Shadows* had been passed to him by members his coven but it is clear that Gardner also borrowed heavily from Crowley’s writings, especially *Magick in Theory and Practice* (1929).¹⁹⁴ The respected Wicca historian Aidan Kelly maintains that Gardner ‘borrowed wholesale from Crowley’.¹⁹⁵

Doreen Valiente, who was initiated into Gardner’s coven in 1953 and later became his high priestess, felt that some of the Crowleyian material which Gardner had incorporated into Wiccan practice was either too ‘modern’, or inappropriate. Much of this material would be written out of the ceremonial procedures between 1954 and 1957, as Gardner and Valiente worked together developing the rituals which would form the basis of the so-called ‘Gardnerian tradition’ in contemporary witchcraft.¹⁹⁶ Making specific



Plate 27: Doreen Valiente, co-founder with Gardner of modern Wicca

reference to the contributions by Crowley, Valiente confirmed in 1989 that she had to rewrite Gardner's *Book of Shadows*, 'cutting out the Crowleyanity as much as I could'.¹⁹⁷ Nevertheless Gardner and Crowley apparently had several meetings during the intervening months before Crowley died in December 1947. As a result of these meetings, during which the two men discussed their respective magical paths, Gardner became a member of Crowley's sex-magic order, the Ordo Templi Orientis (see Chapter Three); Crowley is known to have charged Gardner £300 for dues and fees.¹⁹⁸ This theoretically authorised Gardner to establish a charter of the O.T.O. although he never did so.¹⁹⁹ Gardner's magical name in the O.T.O. was *Scire* (meaning 'to know').²⁰⁰

It is likely that in addition to the ritual input from Crowley and subsequent modifications by Valiente, several aspects of what is now referred to as 'Gardnerian witchcraft' were probably Gardner's own invention. Aidan Kelly believes that Gardner may have introduced the 'duotheistic' idea of the God and Goddess into modern witchcraft and that he initially proposed that the Horned God and the Goddess should be considered equals in Wiccan rituals, even though the Goddess has since become dominant.²⁰¹ Another innovation that may have originated with Gardner himself was the modern tendency for witches to work naked, or 'sky-clad', in their rituals.²⁰² Gardner was an enthusiastic naturist and, as Valiente has noted, he had 'a deep-rooted belief in the value of going naked when circumstances favoured it'. For him, according to Valiente, 'communal nakedness, sunshine and fresh air were natural and beneficial, both physically and psychologically'.²⁰³ However, it is also possible that Gardner may have derived the concept of ritual nudity from the book *Aradia: Gospel of the Witches*, written by American folklorist Charles G. Leland and published in 1889. Leland first learned about Aradia from a hereditary Etruscan witch called Maddalena, while he was visiting Italy. Aradia was the daughter of the Roman Moon goddess Diana and Leland's text includes details of Diana's role as Queen of the Witches. *Aradia: Gospel of the Witches* mentions that devotees of Diana were instructed to be naked in their rituals as a sign of personal freedom.²⁰⁴

While Gardner's approach to ritual nudity appears well-intentioned, according to occult historian Francis King other, less appealing, sexual tendencies also found their way into Gardner's witchcraft practices. According to King, 'Gardner was a sado-masochist with both a taste for flagellation and marked voyeuristic tendencies. Heavy scourging was therefore incorporated into most of his rituals²⁰⁵ and what Gardner called the "Great Rite" was sexual intercourse between the High Priest and the High Priestess while surrounded by the rest of the coven.'²⁰⁶

In 1951 Gardner moved to Castletown on the Isle of Man, where a Museum of Magic and Witchcraft had already been established in a 400-year-old farmhouse by an occult enthusiast, Cecil Williamson.²⁰⁷ Gardner bought the museum from Williamson, became the 'resident witch', and added his own collection of ritual tools and artefacts. Gardner's Museum of Magic and Witchcraft attracted considerable media attention, as did the publication of Gardner's later books.²⁰⁸ The release of *Witchcraft Today* in 1954 placed Gardner in the media spotlight and the ensuing publicity led to the rise of new covens across England. In Australia, Gardner received publicity in the tabloid press and was dubbed 'the boss of Britain's witches'.²⁰⁹ It was during this period that Rosaleen Norton made contact with him, sending him a copy of her book *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (see Chapter Five).

In 1964 Gardner met Raymond Buckland (1934 -), a London-born Englishman of gypsy descent²¹⁰ who had moved to America two years earlier. Prior to meeting each other Buckland had developed a 'mail and telephone relationship' with Gardner while he was living on the Isle of Man and Buckland subsequently became Gardner's spokesperson in the United States, responding to American correspondents on Gardner's behalf. In 1964, Gardner's high priestess, Monique Wilson (Lady Olwen) initiated Buckland into the Craft in Perth, Scotland. It was Buckland who subsequently introduced Gardnerian witchcraft to the United States.²¹¹

Gardnerian witchcraft is now the dominant form of international Wicca with covens operating in a range of English-speaking countries, including Britain, the United States, Australia and New Zealand. In 1992, Aidan Kelly estimated that there were between 2000-4000 active Wiccan covens in the United States²¹² while data from 1994 suggests that at that time Australian covens would number in the low hundreds.²¹³ Gardner himself did not live long enough to experience the international impact of the witchcraft movement he had helped create and, based on his own published opinions regarding the future of witchcraft, would probably have been surprised by the ongoing contemporary interest in Wicca.²¹⁴ Gardner died at sea on 12 February 1964, returning to England from a trip to Lebanon, and was buried the following day in Tunis.²¹⁵ Considered within a historical context, Gardner's major contribution to the 20th century magical revival was in working with Doreen Valiente to create a series of magical practices that would help define the nature of contemporary Wicca, both in Britain and internationally.

Esbats and Sabbats

In their ceremonies Wiccans honour both the lunar and the solar cycles of Nature. Esbats are monthly meetings of the coven held at the time of full moon. Because there are thirteen months in the lunar calendar, there are usually thirteen esbats each year. The solar cycle in Wicca is marked by the eight sabbats mentioned earlier (referred to collectively as the Wheel of the Year; these are the solstices, equinoxes and the four points between).²¹⁶

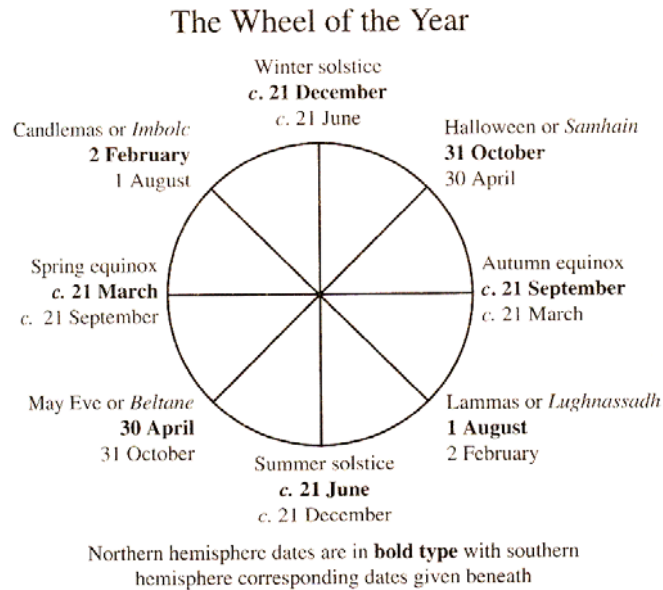
Wiccan high priestess Margot Adler believes that these Wiccan festivals 'renew a sense of living communion with natural cycles, with the changes of the season and the land'.²¹⁷

Each of the esbats has its own name which in turn is linked symbolically to the time of the year in which it occurs.²¹⁸ Wiccans believe that esbats are marked by a sense of heightened psychic awareness resulting from the lunar energy of full moon; according to the leading British witch Alex Sanders (1916-88) it is during the esbat that 'the Goddess has her greatest power'.²¹⁹ For this reason Wiccans often perform specific magical workings at this time, followed by feasting and drinking. The word 'esbat' itself is thought to derive from the Old French word *s'esbattre*, meaning 'to frolic and amuse oneself'.²²⁰

Esbats are sometimes referred to as 'lesser' Wiccan celebrations. As Doreen Valiente has noted, 'the esbat is a smaller and less solemn occasion than the sabbat'.²²¹ The Sabbats, on the other hand, are celebrations which link contemporary Wicca directly with festivals honoured by the Celts and Druids, although as occult historian James W. Baker has observed, some aspects of the 'Wheel of the Year' are not Celtic in origin and are part of an 'invented tradition'.²²²

As noted above, the four so-called Greater Sabbats are those of Candlemas (2 February), May Eve (30 April), Lammas (1 August) and Halloween (31 October): the traditional Druidic names for these celebrations are Imbolc (or Oimelec), Beltane (or Beltain), Lughnassadh and Samhain respectively.²²³ The Lesser Sabbats are those marked by the midsummer and midwinter solstices and the equinoxes in spring and autumn.

Considered as a whole, the Wheel of the Year represents not only the cycle of the seasons but more specifically the cycle of Nature's fertility. This is also reflected in the major Wiccan initiations, which culminate in the sacred marriage of the God and Goddess, whose union, according to Wiccan belief, brings forth new life.



The symbolic associations of the Greater Sabbats are as follows, commencing with Halloween, or Samhain, the traditional beginning of the pagan year:

Halloween / Samhain: This is a celebration to honour the dead.²²⁴ As the dying sun passes into the nether world, Samhain is said to be the time of the year when the thin veil between the everyday world and the afterlife is most transparent, allowing Wiccans to communicate more readily with the spirits of the departed. In mythic terms, Samhain is the season during which the dying God sleeps in the underworld awaiting rebirth. At the same time the seed of new life gestates within the womb of the Great Mother, who in this cycle is regarded as the Queen of Darkness. The Farrars write that Samhain ‘was on the one hand a time of propitiation, divination and communion with the dead, and on the other, an uninhibited feast of eating, drinking and the defiant affirmation of life and fertility in the very face of the closing dark’.²²⁵

Candlemas / Imbolc : Imbolc has been described as ‘the quickening of the year, the first stirrings of Spring within the womb of Mother Earth’.²²⁶ The Irish name *Imbolc* means ‘lactation’ and this Sabbat is related to the beginning of the lambing season which commences at this time.²²⁷ Imbolc is very much a fertility celebration. The focus is on light and new life, ‘the strengthening spark of light beginning to pierce the gloom of Winter’.²²⁸ For this reason Imbolc is sometimes referred to by Wiccans as the Feast of Lights.²²⁹ In mythic terms Imbolc is associated with the youthful Goddess,²³⁰ or Virgin.

May Eve / Beltane (Beltain): Beltane marks the beginning of Summer and is also a fertility celebration. The name of this Sabbat may derive from the Celtic deity Bel or Balor, god of light and fire: in ancient times ‘bel-fires’ were lit on the hilltops to celebrate the return of life and fertility to the world.²³¹ Wiccans often celebrate Beltane by dancing the Maypole, offering garlands of May blossom to their partners, and celebrating the love and passion between men and women.²³² Beltane is also a popular time for ‘handfastings’, or Wiccan weddings. In mythic terms, Beltane honours the mating of the Sun God with the fertile Earth Goddess.

Lammas / Lughnassadh : The Old English word *hlaf-maesse*, from which the Anglo-Saxon celebration of Lammas derives its name, means ‘loaf feast’.²³³ Lammas is the time of year when the first corn is harvested. Known to the Druids as *Lughnassadh*, this Sabbat marks the season of Autumn and was traditionally a celebration to Lugh, the Celtic sun god. *Lughnassadh* is associated with the waning power of the sun but is also regarded by Wiccans as a suitable time to reflect upon the fruits of the earth. Wiccans gather at Lammas to celebrate the gifts of abundance that have come forth from the womb of the Goddess. *Lughnassadh* represents fulfilment: the act of reaping ‘all that has been sown’.²³⁴

While Wicca is primarily regarded as a religion of the Goddess, the mythic cycle of the Greater Sabbats provides clear evidence that the role of the Sun God is also significant. The Celts acknowledged that just as the Goddess waxed and waned through her lunar cycles as Maiden, Mother and Crone, so too did the Sun God pass through cycles of death and rebirth. In Wicca the God of fertility has two personas, representing the God of the Waxing Year and the God of the Waning Year.²³⁵ The Oak King represents the initial phase of expansion and growth and is associated with the time of year when the days grow longer. The Holly King represents withdrawal and rest, and is associated with the time when the days grow shorter.²³⁶ Janet and Stuart Farrar note that the Oak King and Holly King ‘are the light and dark twins, each the other’s “other self”...They compete eternally for the for the favour of the Great Mother; and each, at the peak of his half-yearly reign, is sacrificially mated with her, dies in her embrace and is resurrected to complete his reign.’²³⁷

The three initiations of Wicca

Esbats and Sabbats are collective celebrations which involve the entire Wiccan coven. However, the three Wiccan initiations, or degrees, relate primarily to the spiritual development of the individual. Wiccan initiations

are essentially rites of passage intended to bring about a transformation of consciousness in the person involved. Anthropologist Lynne Hume writes that, with regard to Wicca: 'The intention of initiation is to allow the candidate to enter a new dimension of reality; to die to as her previous self and be reborn as her witch self. It is not so much an acquisition of knowledge but rather the experience of the process that is crucial.²³⁸ ... The process of initiation relies primarily upon the will of the person to make the journey towards the Mystery.'²³⁹

The First Initiation: Covens often request that candidates for this initiation should fast for several days before the ceremony. Candidates may also be advised to spend time meditating on Nature. Immediately before the first initiation takes place, the candidate is asked to bathe and is then brought naked ('sky-clad') and blindfolded to the sacred circle: usually the candidate's hands are bound with ritual cords.²⁴⁰ The state of nakedness represents a casting aside of the old persona.

While the new initiate-to-be waits outside the circle, the Great Goddess and Horned God are invoked into the high priestess and high priest for the duration of the rite. At the outer rim of the circle the candidate is challenged at the point of a sword, an act intended to heighten the candidate's sense of vulnerability and exposure. However once the new candidate has been accepted within the circle, he or she is welcomed by the initiator, who kneels and bestows kisses upon the new candidate:

*Blessed Be thy feet that have brought thee in these ways
Blessed Be thy knees that shall kneel at the sacred altar
Blessed Be thy phallus/womb without which we would not be
Blessed Be thy breasts formed in beauty and in strength
Blessed Be thy lips that shall utter the sacred names.*²⁴¹

Wiccan high priestess Vivianne Crowley notes that in this ritual process 'the body is honoured and revered': the essential message of the First Initiation is one of acceptance.²⁴²

First degree witches are introduced during the ritual to the practical tools of witchcraft. They are also shown how to cast a magical circle and how to call the watchtowers of the four elements from North, East, South and West. Following their initiation, they will also be expected to develop an increasing familiarity with the principles and philosophy of witchcraft.²⁴³

Initiates usually take a new magical name and will be known by this name among other coven members.

The Second Initiation: In passing through the Second Initiation, Wiccans attain the rank of high priestess or high priest. Some Wiccan covens require three years of ritual work before they grant the second degree to one of their members.²⁴⁴ In the second degree a stronger connection is made between the initiator and the initiated, and candidates will need to find an opposite sex partner with whom they can work compatibly in partnership.²⁴⁵ Contemporary high priestess Vivianne Crowley has described the Second Initiation in Wicca as a journey into the depths of the unconscious mind.²⁴⁶

An important feature of the second degree rite includes a mystery play called the *Legend of the Goddess*, in which the initiate and other coven members enact the descent of the Goddess into the Underworld. In the *Legend* the Goddess goes forth into the underworld to seek an answer to the question: *Why dost thou causeth all things that I love and take delight in to fade and die?*²⁴⁷ Here the Goddess encounters the God in his role as the Dark Lord of Death.²⁴⁸ Within the coven, male and female participants are expected to respond differently to the *Legend of the Goddess* because issues related to the 'polar opposites' of the psyche²⁴⁹ are likely to arise. According to Crowley, for a man to find his true self he must encounter the divine feminine.²⁵⁰ For a woman the process involves overcoming passivity: 'She is challenged to go forth and to seek experience.'²⁵¹

According to Vivienne Crowley, whereas the First Initiation involved confronting vulnerability and exposure,²⁵² the aim of the Second Initiation is 'the transformation of the inner world'.²⁵³ At the end of the *Legend of the Goddess*, writes Crowley, 'the seeker is given a new message: that from the dark world of the unconscious and the Land of Death may come rebirth'.²⁵⁴ Janet and Stewart Farrar have transcribed this section of the ritual text as follows:

...there are three great events in the life of man: Love, Death and Resurrection in the new body; and Magic controls them all. For to fulfil love you must return again at the same time and place as the loved one, and you must remember and love them again. But to be reborn you must die and be ready for a new body; and to die you must be born; and without love you may not be born...²⁵⁵

The *Legend* closes with the God and Goddess instructing each other in these mysteries: 'She teaches him the mystery of the sacred cup which is the cauldron of rebirth, and in return he gives her the necklace which is the

circle of rebirth.’²⁵⁶ The rite concludes with the initiator announcing to the four quarters that the initiate has been consecrated as a high priest or high priestess.²⁵⁷

The Third Initiation: The third degree in Wicca is referred to as the Great Rite and is bestowed upon two individuals who are already a couple, that is to say, ‘husband and wife or established lovers’.²⁵⁸ The Great Rite is perceived by Wiccans as a sacred marriage: the ritual union of the Goddess and the God. From a mystical perspective the ritual itself also points towards transcendence for, in the sacred marriage between Goddess and God, the duality of sexual polarity referred to in the Second Initiation ceases altogether: ‘The Goddess and the God are united as One.’²⁵⁹

During the first part of the ritual the Goddess and the God are invoked into the high priestess and high priest by their initiators.²⁶⁰ However in the second part of the ritual they interact as incarnate deities themselves:

... they themselves have the Divine forces invoked into them so that the Sacred Marriage may be performed between the Goddess and the God.²⁶¹

Wiccans undertaking the Third Initiation do not necessarily consummate their ritual union physically. When the union is enacted symbolically – for example, by ritually plunging the athame into the chalice – it is said to be performed *in token*.²⁶² However, when two partners taking the role of God and Goddess wish to physically enact their sacred sexual union, the high priest offers the third degree to his partner *in token*, and the high priestess returns it to him *in true*.²⁶³ The final part of the Great Rite, involving either the real or symbolic act of sexual union, is performed in private after other coven members have left the circle.²⁶⁴

The Great Sabbats and the three initiations of Wicca focus on concepts of fertility, the cycles of the seasons and the sacred union of the Goddess and the God. Through their celebrations Wiccan practitioners emphasize a process of renewal which in turn is reflected psychologically and spiritually within their own inner being. As Lynne Hume observes:

In spite of its seemingly theatrical mode, its tools and paraphernalia, ritual is only a means to an end. Ritual is the *outer form* whose purpose is to act as catalyst to the *inner process*... Neither ritual nor magic are intended to convert the sceptical or astound the novice, but are used as tools to transform the individual.²⁶⁵

Feminism and Goddess spirituality

In the United States the late-1960s psychedelic counterculture, associated especially with the Bay Area around San Francisco²⁶⁶ fuelled a fascination with diverse wisdom traditions and various forms of ‘alternative spirituality’ and esoteric teachings from around the world.²⁶⁷ The psychedelic revolution itself was short-lived²⁶⁸ but in its aftermath, during the early 1970s, the eclectic fusion of Eastern mysticism, Western esoterica, indigenous spirituality, metaphysics and popular self-help psychology, gave rise in turn to what is now known as the New Age movement.²⁶⁹ This was a socio-religious movement with identifiable characteristics,²⁷⁰ and its international influence is still felt today.

Within the context of this burgeoning ‘alternative spirituality’, variations on imported Gardnerian witchcraft began to emerge in the United States during the 1970s. In particular, the blending of feminism and modern witchcraft gave rise to a more broad-based spiritual movement known as Goddess worship or Goddess spirituality.²⁷¹ As theologian Mary Farrell Bednarowski has noted, this was a movement that rejected traditional Christianity and Judaism, seeking ‘truth in the depths of the female psyche and [finding] its energy in the worship of the “the goddess”.’²⁷² According to Bednarowski the primary task of feminist spirituality involved ‘the resacralization of the cosmos and the reimagining of the sacred.’ Resacralization in turn required the ‘reinfusion of the sacred into the universe’ and for this to occur there had to be a ‘redefining of the very nature of the sacred’.... It could not be ‘contained solely within the transcendent being of the God of the Bible.’²⁷³

In her book *Changing of the Gods: Feminism and the End of Traditional Religions*, released in 1979, Naomi Goldenberg proposed that feminist witchcraft could create a ‘powerful new religion’ focused on the worship of the Goddess and that this new religion would encourage feminist witches to reject ‘a civilization in which males in high places imitate a male god in heaven’.²⁷⁴ Influential thinker Mary Daly similarly claimed that the new feminist witchcraft was an appropriate alternative to a model of the universe in which a male God ruled the cosmos and thereby controlled social institutions to the detriment of women:

The symbol of the Father God, spawned in the human imagination and sustained as plausible by patriarchy, has in turn rendered service to this type of society by making its mechanisms for the oppression of women appear right and fitting.²⁷⁵

Jewish writer Judith Plaskow, co-editor of the influential feminist anthology *Womanspirit Rising* (1979), was equally emphatic, raising issues of male-dominance articulated by many women involved with the rise of Goddess spirituality at the time:

The Bible was written by men. The myths from which the Bible borrowed and which it used and transformed were written by men. The liturgy was written by men. Jewish philosophy is the work of men. Modern Jewish theology is the work of men... The problems we as women face in relation to our tradition are deep and complex, involving almost every aspect of tradition. Where then are we going to find the new words, our words, which need to be spoken? ²⁷⁶

In the United States, Goddess worship expanded the structure of Gardnerian coven-based witchcraft, adopting rituals that were broader in scope, more diverse, and less bound by the traditional Wiccan concept of a three-fold initiation. Although some Goddess-worshippers continued to refer to themselves as witches, others abandoned the term altogether, preferring to regard their neopagan practice as a universal feminist religion, drawing on mythologies from many different ancient cultures. ²⁷⁷

As the Goddess spirituality movement developed in the United States during the 1970s it would come to include such influential figures as Merlin Stone, Carol P. Christ, Margot Adler, Marija Gimbutas, Judith Plaskow, Naomi Goldenberg, Mary Daly and the Christian feminist theologians Rosemary Radford Ruether and Carter Heyward. ²⁷⁸ However the pioneering figures in the rise of Goddess spirituality and 'feminist witchcraft' were unquestionably Zsuzsanna Budapest and Starhawk who, between them, would redefine the very nature of feminist neopaganism in the United States.



Plate 28: Key figures in the American Goddess Spirituality movement.
From left to right: Margot Adler, Starhawk and Zsuzsanna Budapest

Zsuzsanna Budapest (otherwise known as Z., or 'Zee', Budapest) was born in Hungary in 1940, the daughter of a psychic medium. Budapest's mother, Masika Szilagyi, who claimed shamanic ancestry, composed poems and invocations while in trance and was also a sculptress of note, often featuring pagan and goddess themes in her motifs.²⁷⁹ At the age of nineteen, Z. Budapest left Vienna, where she had been studying languages, and travelled to Illinois in order to study German literature at the University of Chicago. Later she worked in theatre in New York, exploring techniques of improvisation, before moving to Los Angeles in 1970. Soon after arriving in Los Angeles, Budapest opened an occult shop, the Feminist Wicca, on Lincoln Boulevard in Santa Monica. The store served as a 'matriarchal spiritual centre', dispensing candles, oil, incense, herbs, jewellery, Tarot cards and other occult paraphernalia. It also developed as a meeting place for women wishing to perform rituals together. Soon there were groups of neopagan women meeting for ceremonies on the equinoxes and solstices and, in Budapest's words, 'feminist spirituality had been born again'.²⁸⁰

In a lengthy interview with journalist Cheri Lesh, published in 1975, Budapest expressed her belief that Wicca was not an inverted form of Christianity but represented the remnants of a much older, matriarchal system of worship that recognised the feminine as the creative force in Nature.²⁸¹ Budapest spoke of the bloody transition from a matriarchal society to a patriarchal form, in which roaming bands of warriors ravaged the great Queendoms of Anatolia, Sumer and Thrace and fragmented the 'Great Goddess' into a number of minor deities. This led to a much diminished status for the goddesses, who then had confined and restricted roles as a consequence. In Greek mythology, Aphrodite became simply a goddess of love and sexuality, while Artemis represented hunting, and Athena wisdom. Hera, Amphitrite and Persephone, meanwhile, became adjuncts to Zeus, Poseidon and Hades. According to Budapest, this transition was a major cultural disaster:

Mythology is the mother of religions, and grandmother of history. Mythology is human-made, by the artists, storytellers and entertainers of the times. In short, culture-makers are the soldiers of history, more effective than guns and bombers. Revolutions are really won on the cultural battlefields... Women understand this very well, since we became aware of how women's culture had been ripped off by the ruling class. This resulted in a stunted self-image of women which resulted in insecurities, internalizing the cultural expectations of us created by male culture-makers. Most of the women in the world still suffer from this spiritual poverty.²⁸²

In order to eliminate any male influence, Budapest's practice of Dianic witchcraft has excluded men altogether. According to Budapest, women's mysteries must be kept pure and strong, and men have no place in them:

We have *women's* circles. You don't put men in women's circles – they wouldn't be women's circles any more. Our Goddess is Life, and women should be free to worship from their ovaries.²⁸³

Budapest's most influential publication, *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries* [1989] includes a 'Self-Blessing Ritual' which she describes as a way of 'exorcising that patriarchal "policeman", cleansing the deep mind, and filling it with positive images of the strength and beauty of women. This is what the Goddess symbolizes – the Divine within women and all that is Female in the universe.'²⁸⁴ Budapest favours an equal mix of lesbian and heterosexual women in her circles to 'balance the polarities' in her rituals.²⁸⁵ Her emphasis on women's mysteries allows the different phases of womanhood to be honoured in their own right and group ceremonies are performed for each of these phases of life.²⁸⁶

It was through the Feminist Wicca²⁸⁷ that Budapest first made contact with Miriam Simos, best known as the acclaimed neopagan author Starhawk, a Jewish woman who had rejected Judaism, Buddhism and other 'male-dominated' religious traditions.²⁸⁸ Budapest became one of Starhawk's teachers although Starhawk claims that her spiritual knowledge also derives from dream and trance experiences.²⁸⁹ Starhawk formed her first coven, Compost, from a group of men and women who attended a class in Witchcraft that she taught in the Bay Area Center for Alternative Education, and she was later confirmed as high priestess of this coven.²⁹⁰ Starhawk became a founding member of Reclaiming, a feminist network of women and men working in the Goddess tradition to unify spirituality and politics through progressive activism,²⁹¹ and during the mid-1980s she also served on the teaching faculty of theologian Matthew Fox's postgraduate Institute at Holy Names College in Oakland, exploring the common ground between neopaganism and Fox's renegade Roman Catholic-based Creation-centred spirituality.²⁹²

Since the late 1970s Starhawk has published several highly influential books, including *The Spiral Dance*, *Dreaming the Dark* and *The Pagan Book of Living and Dying*, all widely regarded as key works in the revival of Goddess worship and neopaganism. During an interview with Toronto-based writer Alexander Blair-Ewart in the mid-1990s, Starhawk explained that her Goddess perspective involved a process of re-sacralizing the world:

What's important about witchcraft and about the pagan movement is, essentially, that it's not so much a way of seeing reality, as it's a different way of valuing the reality around us. We say that what is sacred, in the sense of what we are most committed to, what determines all our other values, is this living Earth, this world, the life systems of the earth, the cycles of birth and growth and death and regeneration; the air, the fire, the water, the land...²⁹³

In her writings Starhawk also refers specifically to the nurturing and revitalising power of the Goddess-energy:

The symbolism of the Goddess has taken on an electrifying power for modern women. The rediscovery of the ancient matrifocal civilizations has given us a deep sense of pride in woman's ability to create and sustain culture. It has exposed the falsehoods of patriarchal history, and given us models of female strength and authority. The Goddess – ancient and primeval; the first of deities; patroness of the Stone Age hunt and of the first sowers of seeds; under whose guidance the herds were tamed, the healing herbs first discovered; in whose image the first works of art were created; for whom the standing stones were raised; who was the inspiration of song and poetry – is recognized once again in today's world. She is the bridge, on which we can cross the chasms within ourselves, which were created by our social conditioning, and reconnect with our lost potentials. She is the ship, on which we sail the waters of the deep self, exploring the uncharted seas within. She is the door, through which we pass to the future. She is the cauldron, in which we who have been wrenched apart simmer until we again become whole. She is the vaginal passage, through which we are reborn...²⁹⁴

Starhawk's seminal work *The Spiral Dance* and Z.Budapest's *Holy Book of Women's Mysteries* have influenced the rise of American Goddess spirituality in the same way that Gerald Gardner and Doreen Valiente's writings helped to establish the foundations of British Wicca. According to Starhawk, the sacred presence of the Goddess remains at the very heart of all forms of feminist witchcraft: 'The Goddess is around us and within us. She is immanent and transcendent ... the Goddess represents the divine embodied in Nature, in human beings, in the flesh.'²⁹⁵ Starhawk also maintains that the encounter with the Goddess should be based on personal experience, and not on religious doctrine or belief:

In the Craft, we do not *believe* in the Goddess – we connect with Her; through the moon, the stars, the ocean, the earth, through trees, animals, through other human beings, through ourselves. She is here. She is within us all. She is the full circle: earth, air, fire, water and essence – body, mind, spirit, emotions, change.²⁹⁶

Starhawk's concept of deity is essentially monotheistic for she regards the Goddess as the source of all life, the ground of all being:

The Goddess is first of all earth, the dark, nurturing mother who brings forth all life. She is the power of fertility and generation; the womb, and also the receptive tomb, the power of death. All proceeds from Her, all returns to Her.²⁹⁷

Feminist writer Carol P. Christ offers a similarly all-encompassing view of the Goddess:

The earth is the body of the Goddess. All beings are interdependent in the web of life. Nature is intelligent, alive and aware. As part of nature, human beings are relational, embodied, and interdependent...The symbols and rituals of Goddess religion bring these values to consciousness and help us build communities in which we can create a more just, peaceful, and harmonious world.²⁹⁸

However, as Margot Adler has noted in *Drawing Down the Moon* (1981), many neopagans regard themselves as polytheists or pantheists, rather than monotheists, and there is no general agreement on the nature of sacred reality.²⁹⁹ Adler also notes that some Wiccans distinguish between the Goddess of the moon, earth and sea, and the God of the woods, hunt and animal realm, in what amounts to a type of 'duotheism'.³⁰⁰ British Wiccan writer Vivianne Crowley seeks to resolve this issue in a different way when she says: 'All Gods are different aspects of the one God and all Goddesses are different aspects of the one Goddess... ultimately these two are reconciled in the one divine essence.'³⁰¹

Summary of main points

- a) This chapter has argued that Rosaleen Norton's magical-historic context extends well beyond post-World War Two Australia to the Western esoteric tradition itself.
- b) The Western esoteric tradition includes Jewish Kabbalah, alchemy, the Hermetic tradition, the medieval Tarot, Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry.
- c) The principal elements of the Western esoteric tradition provided the basis for the establishment in England in 1888 of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn which – more than any comparable organisation – facilitated the 20th century magical revival in Britain (and later internationally).

- d) The Golden Dawn adopted a Masonic grade structure based on the symbolism of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. Its central activities included the practice of ceremonial and visionary magic and its principal focus was the mystical experience of spiritual rebirth, associated with the sphere of *Tiphareth* located symbolically in the centre of the Tree of Life. The Golden Dawn began to fragment around 1900. Its principal rituals were subsequently published in the United States by Israel Regardie (four volumes: 1937-1940).
- e) Influential members of the Golden Dawn who would later establish their own magical organisations included Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) – who formulated the sex-magick doctrines of *Thelema* (from 1904 onwards), incorporating them into the Argenteum Astrum and the Ordo Templi Orientis (see Chapter Three) – and Dion Fortune (1890-1946), who established the Fraternity of Inner Light in 1922. (Norton was influenced by both Crowley and Fortune and lists major works by these authors in her concise bibliography in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, 1952.)
- f) Modern witchcraft, frequently known as Wicca, is a more recent development in the Western esoteric tradition and originated in England in the late 1930s with the initiation of Gerald Brosseau Gardner (1884-1964) in the New Forest region of Hampshire. Gardner formulated the principles of modern Wicca with Doreen Valiente (1922-1999), thereby establishing what is sometimes referred to as an ‘invented tradition’. Gardner was influenced by the sex-magick of Aleister Crowley although this component was substantially modified by Valiente. Nevertheless, some *Thelemic* elements remain in modern Wicca.
- g) Wicca focuses on the worship of the Great Goddess who in turn has three aspects – Maid, Mother and Crone – associated symbolically with youth, maturity and old age respectively. Wicca has a coven structure (maximum membership of thirteen) and recognises four major Sabbats during the year, each associated with the cycle of the seasons and the traditional times for sowing and harvesting crops. The four major Sabbats are Candlemas (also known as Imbolc) celebrated in the North Hemisphere on 2 February; May Eve/Beltane (30 April); Lammas/Lughnassadh (1 August) and Halloween/Samhain (31 October). Essentially a fertility religion, modern Wicca recognises three major initiations culminating in the

Great Rite, which involves symbolic or actual sexual union of the High Priestess and High Priest within a consecrated ritual setting.

- h) 'Gardnerian' witchcraft was exported from Britain to the United States by Raymond Buckland in 1964 and during the 1970s fused with modern feminism, giving rise to an eclectic expression of feminist spirituality known as Goddess Worship. Influential members of the Goddess movement in the United States include Z.Budapest (1940-) and Starhawk (aka Miriam Simos, 1948 -), both of whom continue to retain a leadership role in the movement. Goddess spirituality recognises 'the Divine within women and all that is Female in the universe'.

¹ R. Norton, artist's statement contained in the exhibition catalogue *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Rowden White Library, University of Melbourne, 1-23 August 1949.

² Ibid.

³ R. Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Walter Glover, Sydney 1952:79.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The Kabbalistic Tree of Life is referred to in the Jewish mystical tradition by its Hebrew name *Otz Chiim* and represents a process of sacred emanation from the Godhead. The Tree is a composite symbol consisting of ten spheres, or *sephiroth*, through which the creation of the world – indeed, all aspects of creation – have come about. The ten *sephiroth* are aligned in three columns headed by the first three emanations, Kether (The Crown), Chokhmah (The Great Father / Wisdom) and Binah (The Great Mother/Understanding). Collectively the ten *sephiroth* on the Tree of Life symbolise the process by which the Infinite Light and Formlessness of the Godhead (*Ain Soph Aur*) becomes manifest in the universe. The seven emanations beneath the supernal triad of Kether, Chokhmah and Binah (ie. the remaining *sephiroth* Chesed, Geburah, Tiphareth, Netzach, Hod, Yesod and Netzach) represent the 'seven days of Creation'.

⁶ See G.G. Scholem. *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism and Talmudic Tradition*, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York 1960: 1-3. Gnosticism focuses on the quest for *gnosis* [ancient Greek: 'spiritual knowledge']. The origins of Gnosticism remain a matter of debate, but there is broad consensus that Gnosticism as a historical movement parallels the rise of early Christianity. Some scholars, like Hans Jonas (author of *The Gnostic Religion*, Boston 1958) have seen in Gnosticism residues of pre-Christian Iranian dualism while others believe that it developed in response to the failure of Jewish apocalyptic expectations and have dated its origins to around 70 CE, coinciding with the fall of the Jerusalem Temple. Others regard Gnosticism as a response to the failure of Christian messianic expectations – where some early Christian devotees, feeling that the Messiah had not returned as soon as had been hoped, turned away from religious faith towards spiritual inner knowledge. Gnostic thought was certainly well established by the second century of the Christian era. The unearthing of a major Gnostic library near the town of Nag Hammadi in upper Egypt in 1945 provided a rich body of source material on the Gnostic philosophies. Until this time much of the existing Gnostic scholarship had been based on other surviving Gnostic commentaries written by Church Fathers like Irenaeus, Clement and Hippolytus, who were hostile to Gnostic tenets. The Nag Hammadi codices, a collection of texts written in Coptic, revealed the syncretistic nature of Gnosticism, demonstrating that as a movement Gnosticism incorporated elements from Christianity, Judaism, Neoplatonism and the Greek mystery religions as well

as material from Egypt and Persia. Essentially Gnosticism was a call for transcendence, a movement seeking a return to the Spirit and a movement away from the constrictions of the material world which was regarded as a source of pervasive evil. James M. Robinson, editor of the English translation of the Nag Hammadi Library, has explained the Gnostic philosophy in the following terms: 'In principle, though not in practice, the world is good. The evil that pervades history is a blight, ultimately alien to the world as such. But increasingly for some the outlook on life darkened; the very origin of the world was attributed to a terrible fault, and evil was given status as the ultimate ruler of the world, not just a usurpation of authority. Hence the only hope seemed to reside in escape...And for some a mystical inwardness undistracted by external factors came to be the only way to attain the repose, the overview, the merger into the All which is the destiny of one's spark of the divine.' (See J.M. Robinson, Introduction to *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, Harper & Row, San Francisco 1977:4). In the Gnostic conception there is a clear divide between the spiritual world which is good, and the physical world which is evil, that is to say, a clear demarcation between the cosmic and the divine on the one hand, and the physical, or material, on the other. The Gnostic texts portray humanity as being increasingly separated from the sustaining realm of divinity and spirit, and this in turn provides a rationale for spiritual transcendence, for in the Gnostic conception there is a vital need to liberate the 'divine spark' entombed in the physical world.

⁷ Admittedly, not all scholars agree on this point. The late Ioan P. Couliano believed that Scholem overstated the connection between Kabbalah and Gnosticism (see Couliano's *The Tree of Gnosis*, HarperCollins, San Francisco 1992: 42 et seq.). However Scholem states quite emphatically that the Kabbalistic text *Bahir* – which pre-dates the *Zohar* – makes it clear that the 'thirteenth century Kabbalists became the heirs of Gnostical symbolism'. See *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, Schocken, New York 1961:214.

⁸ G.G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, Schocken, loc cit:14.

⁹ D.C. Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah*, HarperCollins, New York 1995:1.

¹⁰ In addition to Scholem see also M. Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1988: 119 for parallels between Gnosticism and the Kabbalah.

¹¹ G.G. Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey 1990: 363-364; 389-90

¹² D.C. Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah*, loc cit: 3.

¹³ See G.G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, loc cit.:12.

¹⁴ See D.C. Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah*, loc cit: 40.

¹⁵ See G.G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, loc cit.: 209.

¹⁶ See M. Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1988: 119, and also G.G. Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, Schocken, New York 1991: 43.

¹⁷ G.G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, loc cit.:215-16.

¹⁸ Ibid: 218-19.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ C. Ginsburg, *The Kabbalah: Its Doctrines, Development and Literature*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1956:102.

²¹ See D.C. Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah*, loc cit: 7.

²² Ibid:41.

²³ A.E. Waite, *The Holy Kabbalah*, University Books, New York 1960:201.

²⁴ See V. Crowley, *A Woman's Kabbalah*, Thorsons, London 2000:189 and R. Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, third edition, Wayne State University Press, Detroit 1990:116.

²⁵ J. Bonner, *Qabalah*, Skoob Publishing, London 1995: 23.

²⁶ S.A. Fisdell, *The Practice of Kabbalah: Meditation in Judaism*, Jason Aronson Inc., Northvale, New Jersey 1996:100.

²⁷ J. Bonner, *Qabalah*, loc cit. 1995:25.

²⁸ See V. Crowley, *A Woman's Kabbalah*, Thorsons, London 2000:189 and R. Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, loc cit:32.

²⁹ J. Ferguson, *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Mysticism and the Mystery Religions*, Thames & Hudson, London 1976:99.

³⁰ Hermetic scholar Dan Merkur has emphasized in a recent article that Gnosticism and Hermeticism are frequently, and wrongly, confused with each other – they present completely different concepts of God. Merkur writes: 'Like the God of Stoicism, the Hermetic God was omnipresent and omniscient through the material cosmos. In Gnosticism, by contrast, God was transcendent, and the physical universe was an evil place created by an evil Demiurge. Hermetic ethics celebrated the divine within the world; Gnostic ethics

were abstemious, ascetic efforts to escape from the world.' See D. Merkur, 'Stages of Ascension in Hermetic Rebirth', *Esoterica* 1 (1999): 81.

³¹ Ficino's texts are now held in the Medici Library in Florence.

³² See W. Barnstone (ed.) *The Other Bible*, Harper & Row, San Francisco 1984:567 and the entry on Hermetic books in *The New Columbia Encyclopedia*, Columbia University Press, New York 1975: 1232.

³³ In Greek mythology, Hermes was the messenger of the gods, the protector of sacrificial animals and also god of the wind. He conducted the souls of the dead on their passage to the Underworld. In ancient Egyptian mythology, Thoth is a scribe and moon god and is best known as god of wisdom and magic. He also invented numbers and writing, and measured time. Thoth presided with his consort, Maat, in the Judgement Hall, where the hearts of the deceased were weighed against the feather of truth. Thoth recorded all judgements made in relation to the dead. The ancient Greeks identified Thoth with Hermes. See J.E. Zimmerman, *Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, Harper & Row, New York 1964 and P. Turner & C.R. Coulter, *Dictionary of Ancient Deities*, Oxford University Press, 2000.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Pico also distinguished between 'bad' magic, which had to do with demons and devils, and 'natural' magic, which was essentially 'good' and compatible with God's freedom of will. See D.P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella*, Sutton Publishing, Stroud, UK 2000:54-55.

³⁶ Quoted in T. Churton, *The Gnostics*, loc. cit.:113.

³⁷ Ibid: 114.

³⁸ Ibid: 112.

³⁹ R. Decker, T. Depaulis and M. Dummett, *A Wicked Pack of Cards: the Origins of the Occult Tarot*, St Martin's Press, New York 1996: 27.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Tarot decks which reflect this cultural tendency include the Tarocchi of Mantegna deck, the Tarocchi of Venice deck, the Tarocchino of Bologna decks and the Michiate of Florence decks. See S.R. Kaplan, *Tarot Classic*, Laffont/Grosset & Dunlap, New York 1972: 18-22.

⁴² One of the earliest known Tarot decks is the 15th century Visconti-Sforza deck associated with the fourth Duke of Milan, Francesco Sforza. This deck consisted of 78 cards and featured the four suits of *spade* [spades], *bastoni* [diamonds], *coppe* [hearts] and *denari* [clubs]. It also featured 22 Major Arcana cards, including *Il Matto*, The Fool. See S.R. Kaplan, *Tarot Classic*, loc.cit: 24.

⁴³ The Rider-Waite deck was created by Arthur Edward Waite (1857-1942) and Pamela Colman Smith (1878-1951), both of whom were members of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. For Waite's biography see R.A. Gilbert, *A.E. Waite: Magician of Many Parts*, Crucible, Wellingborough UK, 1987; for Colman Smith's biography see M.K. Greer, *Women of the Golden Dawn*, Park Street Press, Rochester, Vermont 1985: 406-409.

⁴⁴ See, for example, *Ishbel's Temple of Isis Egyptian Tarot*, Llewellyn Publications, St Paul, Minnesota 1989.

⁴⁵ See R. Decker, T. Depaulis and M. Dummett, *A Wicked Pack of Cards: the Origins of the Occult Tarot*, loc.cit.: 57.

⁴⁶ Ibid: 59-60.

⁴⁷ This translates as *A Way to Entertain Oneself with the Pack of Cards called Tarots*. It was published in Amsterdam and Paris in 1783.

⁴⁸ S.R. Kaplan, *Tarot Classic*, loc.cit:42.

⁴⁹ C. McIntosh, *Eliphas Lévi and the French Occult Revival*, Rider, London 1972:51.

⁵⁰ S.R. Kaplan, *Tarot Classic*, loc.cit:45.

⁵¹ Lévi's personal set of cards was catalogued for sale in 1940 through Dorbon's, a well-known Parisian antique book dealer. See R. Decker, T. Depaulis and M. Dummett, *A Wicked Pack of Cards: the Origins of the Occult Tarot*, loc.cit.: 91. The deck had been heavily adorned with Hebrew letters, drawings and personal comments.

⁵² S.R. Kaplan, *Tarot Classic*, loc.cit: 45.

⁵³ First published in one volume in Paris by Germer Baillière, 1856.

⁵⁴ S.R. Kaplan, *Tarot Classic*, loc.cit: 46.

⁵⁵ Translated into English by A.P. Morton and published in London, 1892. A revised edition, edited by A.E. Waite, was published in 1910.

⁵⁶ The Tarot of Marseilles is a 18th century French adaptation of earlier Italian Tarot decks. According to occult historian Fred Gettings this deck was first printed by Nicholas Conver in Paris in 1761 but appears to be based on earlier versions produced by such printers as Arnoud (1748) and Dodal, whose designs

were executed in the first decade of the eighteenth century. See F. Gettings, *The Book of Tarot*, Triune, London 1973:140.

⁵⁷ All twenty-two cards of the Major Arcana are reproduced as line drawings in *The Tarot of the Bohemians*. See second revised edition with preface by A.E. Waite, Rider & Son, London 1919.

⁵⁸ Volume 1 of *The Golden Dawn* (ed. I.Regardie, Aries Press, Chicago 1937) contains Frater S.R.M.D's (ie MacGregor Mathers') 'Notes on the Tarot'. Here Mathers writes quite explicitly: 'In the Tree of Life in the Tarot, each path forms the connecting link between two of the Sephiroth' (see 1937:141) Mathers then lists all 22 cards in the Major Arcana, together with a brief summation of their symbolism. (1937:141-143)

⁵⁹ C. McIntosh, *The Rosicrucians: The History, Mythology and Rituals of an Esoteric Order*, Weiser, York Beach, Maine 1997: 64.

⁶⁰ W.H. Harris and J.S. Levey, (ed.) 'Freemasonry' in *The New Columbia Encyclopedia*, Columbia University Press, New York 1975: 1007.

⁶¹ J.F. Newton, *The Builders: The Story and Study of Masonry*, Allen & Unwin, London 1918: 72-73.

⁶² C. McIntosh, *The Rosicrucians: The History, Mythology and Rituals of an Esoteric Order*, loc.cit: 64.

⁶³ The *Fama* had been circulating in manuscript form for some time, possibly as early as 1610. See C. McIntosh, *The Rosicrucians: The History, Mythology and Rituals of an Esoteric Order*, loc.cit: xviii.

⁶⁴ See sections of the present chapter which describe the key influences on the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

⁶⁵ See *The Fame and Confession of the Fraternity of R: C.; Commonly, of the Rosie Cross* [1652] by Eugenius Philalethes in P.Allen (ed.) *A Christian Rosenkreutz Anthology*, Rudolf Steiner Publications, Blauvelt, New York 1968:163-190.

⁶⁶ Ibid: 166.

⁶⁷ Ibid: 167.

⁶⁸ Ibid: 169.

⁶⁹ Ibid: 173.

⁷⁰ Ibid: 49.

⁷¹ Except for Trajano Boccalini who had authored *Allgemeine und General Reformation, der gantzen weiten Welt*.

⁷² C. McIntosh, *The Rosicrucians: The History, Mythology and Rituals of an Esoteric Order*, loc.cit: xix.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid: 51.

⁷⁵ Both works were published by Luca Jennis in Frankfurt and stressed that the R.C.Brotherhood really existed. In *Symbola Aureae Mensae* in particular Maier referred to the 'all-wisdom of Hermes' and the sacredness of the 'Virgin', or 'Queen Chemia', concluding with a Hermetic hymn of regeneration. See F.A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1972: 84-85.

⁷⁶ Ibid: 85.

⁷⁷ L. Abraham, *A Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998:145.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Text quoted in F. King, *Ritual Magic in England*, Spearman, London 1970: 15-16.

⁸⁰ The Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia (SRIA) had been founded in England on 1 June 1867 by Robert Wentworth Little and W.J. Hughan, drawing on a system of grades employed by an Edinburgh-based group known as the Rosicrucian Society in Scotia. (See R.A. Gilbert, *A.E.Waite: Magician of Many Parts*, Crucible, Wellingborough UK 1987: 105). Other members of the SRIA included Frederick Hockley, Kenneth Mackenzie and Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

⁸¹ R.A. Gilbert, *Revelations of the Golden Dawn: The Rise and Fall of a Magical Order*, Quantum/Foulsham, Slough UK 1997: 93.

⁸² A thoroughly researched history of the establishment of the Order is provided by Ellic.Howe in *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1972.

⁸³ R.A. Gilbert, *Revelations of the Golden Dawn: The Rise and Fall of a Magical Order*, loc cit: 21.

⁸⁴ Traditionally women have not been admitted to the Order of Freemasons. However there have been some exceptions to this rule. Count Alessandro di Cagliostro (1743-1795) admitted women to his so-called Egyptian rite, the Duchess of Bourbon presided as grand mistress in the Grand Orient of France lodge (1775) and the Rite of Mizraim established Masonic lodges for both men and women as early as 1819. In so-called Co-Masonic orders, the rites follow orthodox Freemasonry and men and women hold corresponding ranks.

⁸⁵ Ibid: 23. Nevertheless the form of Christianity which was adopted in the Golden Dawn, namely the spiritual rebirth symbolism of Christian Rosenkreutz, was far from the mainstream, and few orthodox Christians would have embraced the concept of assigning Christ to Tiphareth in the centre of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life alongside the many other 'god-forms' and archetypal mythic images associated by the Golden Dawn members with the different spheres on the Tree of Life.

⁸⁶ Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815) was born in Germany and studied medicine at the University of Vienna. Here he embraced the then-current scientific view that a magnetic fluid permeated all aspects of life. Mesmer then came to the view that when this natural source of energy was blocked in the body, disease and ill-health would result. After graduating from the University of Vienna, Mesmer worked as a healer, first in Vienna and later in Paris, using magnets to 'correct' imbalances in the human organism. He transmitted 'healing energy' to his patients by making passes over his patients with his hands, or by using iron rods or wands that he had magnetized. Mesmer is now regarded as one of the pioneers of psychosomatic medicine and hypnotherapy. During the late-Victorian era of the Golden Dawn, the term 'Mesmerist' was used to connote a hypnotist.

⁸⁷ Spiritualism is the belief that the spirits of the dead can communicate with the living through a psychic medium. Seances are conducted to summon a particular deceased spirit and the medium then enters a state of trance. The deceased spirit subsequently 'possesses' the trance medium and either addresses the gathering directly or communicates through 'automatic' writing, painting or drawing. Spiritualism was a popular practice in late-Victorian Britain and was widely believed to provide proof of life after death.

⁸⁸ R.A. Gilbert, *Revelations of the Golden Dawn: The Rise and Fall of a Magical Order*, loc.cit: 23.

⁸⁹ Quoted in E. Howe, *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1972:12.

⁹⁰ See F. King (ed.) *Astral Projection, Ritual Magic and Alchemy*, Neville Spearman, London 1971:21.

⁹¹ See F. King, *Ritual Magic in England*, loc cit: 43 and R.A. Gilbert, *Revelations of the Golden Dawn: The Rise and Fall of a Magical Order*, loc cit: 44.

⁹² Samuel Mathers and Moina Bergson married in 1890.

⁹³ Details of the Golden Dawn membership are included in E. Howe, *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1972; I. Colquhoun, *Sword of Wisdom: MacGregor Mathers and the Golden Dawn*, Neville Spearman, London 1975; R.A. Gilbert, *Revelations of the Golden Dawn: The Rise and Fall of a Magical Order*, loc cit, and M.K. Greer, *Women of the Golden Dawn*, Park Street Press, Rochester, Vermont 1995. According to Ellic Howe (*The Magicians of the Golden Dawn* loc cit: 49), 170 people had been initiated into the Golden Dawn by 2 September 1893 and 315 by 1896. These figures include the membership of four Golden Dawn temples at that time: Isis-Urania in London; Osiris in Weston-super-Mare; Horus in Bradford and Amen-Ra in Edinburgh, and after 1894, Mathers' Ahathoor temple in Paris.

⁹⁴ F. King, *Ritual Magic in England*, loc.cit:57-58.

⁹⁵ Ibid: 57.

⁹⁶ According to Golden Dawn historian R.A. Gilbert, the Second Order, the *Rosae Rubrae et Aureae Crucis* had existed since the earliest days of the Golden Dawn, but had worked no actual rituals.

'Members who advanced to become adepts of the Second Order did so by means of passing examinations.' See R.A. Gilbert, *A.E. Waite: Magician of Many Parts*, loc.cit: 107.

⁹⁷ The magical names of the leading Golden Dawn members are provided in G.M. Harper, *Yeats's Golden Dawn*, Macmillan, London 1974:314-316.

⁹⁸ F. King, *Ritual Magic in England*, loc.cit:56.

⁹⁹ Quoted in F. King, *Ritual Magic in England*, loc.cit: 44. The 'Vault of the Adepts' was a ritual crypt representing the burial tomb of Christian Rosenkreutz.

¹⁰⁰ R.A. Gilbert, *A.E. Waite: Magician of Many Parts*, loc.cit: 112.

¹⁰¹ J. Bonner, *Qabalah*, Skoob Publishing, London 1995:98-99.

¹⁰² F. King, *Ritual Magic in England*, loc.cit: 65.

¹⁰³ Quoted in E. Howe, *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn*, loc.cit:127.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ R.A. Gilbert, *Revelations of the Golden Dawn: The Rise and Fall of a Magical Order*, loc cit:79.

¹⁰⁶ See R. Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1999: 76 and R.A. Gilbert, *Revelations of the Golden Dawn: The Rise and Fall of a Magical Order*, loc cit:48.

¹⁰⁷ Publication of this text would later be financed by Frederick Leigh Gardner, a collector of esoterica, the grimoire being issued by John M. Watkins, London, in 1898, but it was not a commercial success in Britain. The Chicago-based De Laurence Company issued a pirated edition in the United States in 1932 and this was more successful. It reprinted in 1939 and 1948.

¹⁰⁸ Although only a clerk and infantryman by profession – he had been a private in the Hampshire Infantry Volunteers – Mathers believed that the Jacobite title of Count of Glen Strae had been bestowed on one of his ancestors by King James II.

¹⁰⁹ Annie Horniman was providing Mathers with an allowance of £420 per annum. See G.M. Harper, *Yeats's Golden Dawn*, Macmillan, London 1974:163, fn.10.

¹¹⁰ Quoted in G.M. Harper, *Yeats's Golden Dawn*, loc cit:15.

¹¹¹ Ibid: 22.

¹¹² Crowley had been initiated into this degree by Mathers on 16 January 1900. See F. King, *Ritual Magic in England*, loc.cit: 67.

¹¹³ G.M. Harper, *Yeats's Golden Dawn*, loc.cit:23. See also E. Howe, *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn*, loc.cit:225.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Five members of Isis-Urania's Second Order remained loyal to Mathers. They were: Dr Edward Berridge (*Frater Resurgam*); George C. Jones (*Frater Volo Noscere*); Mrs Alice Simpson (*Soror Perseverantia et Cura Quies*); Miss Elaine Simpson (*Soror Fidelis*) and Col. Webber (*Frater Non Sine Numine*). See F. King, *Ritual Magic in England*, loc.cit: 69.

¹¹⁶ M.K. Greer, *Women of the Golden Dawn*, loc cit: 257. Greer explains how the Cup Of Stolistes had been created as a sacred image based on the specific *sephiroth* from the Kabbalistic Tree of Life: 'There were twelve people in the "Sphere Working", evenly divided into six women and six men.. Every Sunday from noon to 1pm. in their own separate homes but working simultaneously, they began by creating an image of the Cup of Stolistes (Holy Grail) containing a burning heart that represented Tiphareth. The *sephiroth* of the "middle pillar" (Kether, Daath, Tiphareth, Yesod and Malkuth) were aligned in a central column, with Kether envisaged as a flame arising from the top of the Cup and Malkuth forming its base. The remaining six *sephiroth* were doubled (to form twelve) and arched toward the four directions, creating a sphere around Tiphareth. Each person took one of the twelve sphere positions, envisioning themselves not only as the corresponding *sephira* but as an entire Tree of Life within that *sephira*. They saw themselves clothed in the colour of the planet, bathed in an aura the colour of the *sephira*, and they consciously projected appropriately coloured rays of light to the nearest *sephiroth* on the central column and to the *sephiroth* above and below them.' The visualisations focused the energy initially on the Second Order meeting rooms and were then expanded in range to cover the whole of London, the entire planet and then the Universe itself. The purpose of these visualisations says Greer was to 'transmute evil into good through the actions of the greater forces on the lesser' (Ibid: 257).

¹¹⁷ Skrying, or scrying, is a form of divination in which the practitioner gazes at a shiny or polished surface to induce a trance-state in which images appear as part of a 'psychic' communication. Crystal balls, mirrors, polished metal and cups of clear liquid have all been used for the purpose of skrying. An essay titled 'Of Skrying and Travelling in the Spirit-Vision', written by Soror V.N.R. (Moina Mathers) was included in Israel Regardie's monumental work, *The Golden Dawn*, vol.4, Aries Press, Chicago 1940: 29-42.

¹¹⁸ Colour meditation is a practise whereby a practitioner visualises various colours because of their perceived healing properties. Red, orange and yellow are stimulants, whereas green, blue, indigo and violet are relaxants and each of these colours are believed to have specific healing effects. In the Golden Dawn each of the different *sephiroth* on the Tree of Life was ascribed a colour, for the purpose of visualisation and meditation. In his work on Kabbalistic meditation, *The Middle Pillar*, Israel Regardie (who was a member of the Stella Matutina) provides the following correlations between specific colours and the *sephiroth* on the Tree: Kether:white; Chokmah:grey; Binah:black; Daas [Daath]:lavender-blue; Chesed:blue; Gevurah [Geburah]: red; Tiphareth [Tiphareth]: gold; Netzach:green; Hod: orange; Yesod: puce; Malkuth [Malkuth]: 'mixed colours' (these are usually interpreted in the Golden Dawn system as citrine,olive, russet and black). See I. Regardie, *The Middle Pillar*, Aries Press, Chicago 1945:140. For the 'mixed colours of Malkuth' see W.E. Butler, *The Magician: His Training and Work*, Aquarian Press, London 1959:81.

¹¹⁹ M.K. Greer, *Women of the Golden Dawn*, loc cit: 260.

¹²⁰ G.M. Harper, *Yeats's Golden Dawn*, loc.cit:28.

¹²¹ See I. Colquhoun, *Sword of Wisdom: MacGregor Mathers and the Golden Dawn*, loc cit. 191-192.

¹²² Israel Regardie (1907-1985), a one-time secretary to Aleister Crowley, joined the Stella Matutina in 1933, attained a ritual grade of Theoricus Adeptus Minor and then left in December 1934. Between 1937 and 1940 he published a four-volume treatise *The Golden Dawn* (Aries Press, Chicago), which included the bulk of the Golden Dawn's rituals and teachings, thereby providing an invaluable source of esoteric material that might otherwise have faded into obscurity. See www.hermeticgoldendawn.org/regardie.htm

¹²³ Within the Golden Dawn system of ritual grades this would not actually be achieved until the candidate had attained the Second Order 5°=6°degree associated with Tiphareth, the sphere of 'spiritual rebirth'.

¹²⁴ I. Colquhoun, *Sword of Wisdom: MacGregor Mathers and the Golden Dawn*, loc cit. 104-105.

¹²⁵ See A. Crowley, *Liber 777*, in *The Qabalah of Aleister Crowley*, Weiser, New York 1973: 1-10.

¹²⁶ Crowley's *Liber 777* listings included several psychoactive plants: opium poppy, nux vomica, mandrake, peyote (*Anhalonium lewinii*) and damiana, a sure sign that these were his additions and not part of the original Mathers/ Westcott listings. Moly is a mythical plant: it was given by Hermes to Odysseus to protect him from the magic of Circe. See C. Ratsch, *The Dictionary of Sacred and Magical Plants*, Prism Press, Dorset, 1992:127.

¹²⁷ According to Jung's colleague, Dr Jolande Jacobi, Jung at first referred to 'primordial images' and later to the 'dominants of the collective unconscious'. It was 'only later that he called them archetypes'. Jacobi notes that Jung took the term 'archetype' from the *Corpus Hermeticum* and from *De Divinis nominibus* by Dionysius the pseudo-Areopagite. See J. Jacobi, *The Psychology of C.G.Jung*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1942:39.

¹²⁸ A. Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice* (1929), Castle Books, New York, n.d.:120.

¹²⁹ Ibid: 152-153.

¹³⁰ E. Levi, *The Key of the Mysteries*, Rider, London 1959:174.

¹³¹ The Kabbalistic sphere of Malkuth, for example, was associated with the earth, crops, the immediate environment and living things. Yesod was linked symbolically to the Moon and was regarded as the sphere of 'astral imagery', the dream-world and the element Water. Yesod was also the seat of the sexual instincts and corresponded to the genital area when 'mapped' upon the figure of Adam Kadmon, the archetypal human being. Hod was associated with the planet Mercury, representing intellect and rational thinking, and symbolised the orderly or structured aspects of the manifested universe. Netzach was linked to the planet Venus, and was said to complement the intellectual and orderly functions of Hod. While Hod could be considered clinical and rational, Netzach represented the arts, creativity, subjectivity and the emotions. See also the mythological listings in *Liber 777* referred to above.

¹³² See I. Regardie, *The Tree of Life : A Study in Magic*, Rider, London 1932:106.

¹³³ R. Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Walter Glover, Sydney 1952: 79.

¹³⁴ A. Richardson, *Priestess:The Life and Magic of Dion Fortune*, Aquarian Press, Wellingborough UK 1987:52.

¹³⁵ The concept of 'root races' is a 19th century Theosophical teaching which states that humanity has evolved through different phases of spiritual growth and intellectual development, each of these being known as a 'root race'. The present state of humanity is said to be the fifth root race. It was preceded by the Atlantean (fourth) and Lemurian (third), both of which were engulfed in cataclysms. According to Madame H.P. Blavatsky the first root race consisted of 'Celestial Men' (see *The Secret Doctrine*,[1888] Vol.1:214) whereas the second root race were of a-sexual origin and were known as 'The Fathers of the "sweat-born"' (*The Secret Doctrine* [1897] Vol.3 :125), Theosophical Publishing House, Madras, fifth edition, 1962.

¹³⁶ A. Richardson, *Priestess:The Life and Magic of Dion Fortune* , loc.cit:111.

¹³⁷ According to Kenneth Grant, Fortune based the character of Vivian le Fay Morgan in her two novels *The Sea-Priestess* (1938) and *Moon Magic* (1956) on Maiya Tranchell-Hayes. See K. Grant, *The Magical Revival*, loc cit:177. Tranchell-Hayes was a pupil of J.W. Brodie-Innes, a leading member of the Amen-Ra Temple in Edinburgh.

¹³⁸ Quoted in A. Richardson, *Priestess:The Life and Magic of Dion Fortune*, loc.cit:112.

¹³⁹ Ibid:117.

¹⁴⁰ The dispute arose over the publication of Fortune's book *The Esoteric Philosophy of Love and Marriage*, which put forward the view that a sexual relationship between two people could be considered as an energy exchange on many levels of being, not just the physical level. While this now seems reasonably innocuous, and perhaps even obvious, Moina Mathers charged Dion Fortune with 'betraying the inner teaching of the Order'. Fortune protested that she hadn't actually received the relevant degree from Mrs Mathers' temple and she was then 'pardoned'. Nevertheless, the dispute with Moina Mathers continued. Soon afterwards, according to an account by Dion Fortune published in *The Occult Review*, Mrs Mathers suspended Dion Fortune for writing her book *Sane Occultism* and ceased all magical co-operation, turning her out 'because certain symbols had not appeared in my aura - a perfectly unanswerable charge.' See R.A. Gilbert, *Revelations of the Golden Dawn*, loc cit: 124.

¹⁴¹ K. Grant, *The Magical Revival*, Muller, London 1972: 176.

¹⁴² See P. Turner & C.R. Coulter, 'Isis' in *Dictionary of Ancient Deities*, Oxford University Press 2000:243 and R.A. Armour, 'The Adventures of Osiris and Isis' in *Gods and Myths of Ancient Egypt*, American University in Cairo Press, Cairo 1986:72-88, among many other accounts of this classic ancient Egyptian myth.

¹⁴³ Isis was identified as a lunar goddess by Plutarch. See P. Turner & C.R. Coulter, 'Isis' in *Dictionary of Ancient Deities*, Oxford University Press 2000:243.

¹⁴⁴ K. Grant, *The Magical Revival*, Muller, London 1972:177.

¹⁴⁵ According to his wife Steffi, Kenneth Grant met Crowley in 1945. See Introduction in K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, London 1998:16. Dion Fortune died in 1946, Crowley in 1947.

¹⁴⁶ It has been suggested in an article in *Gnosis* magazine (No.43, Spring 1997) that there may have been a secret sexual dimension to the rituals of the Golden Dawn, but the arguments put forward by the authors, John Michael Greer and Carl Hood, are less than convincing. It is pertinent to mention in this context that MacGregor Mathers, arguably the most influential figure in the formation of the Golden Dawn, apparently valued celibacy and virginity and never consummated his marriage to Moina Bergson (see I. Colquhoun, *Sword of Wisdom: MacGregor Mathers and the Golden Dawn*, loc cit.:54). Sexual magic was more the domain of occultists like Austin Osman Spare, who was never a member of the Golden Dawn, and Aleister Crowley, who developed his interest in Thelemic sex magic after leaving the Golden Dawn in 1903.

¹⁴⁷ Magical 'pathworkings' were developed in the Fraternity of the Inner Light and by its more recent offshoot, Servants of the Light (SOL), and employ a guided imagery technique in which one person reads from a written text so that a subject (or subjects) may be led along 'inner meditative pathways' in order to experience archetypal visions. Pathworkings often utilise the symbolism of the Major Arcana, drawing on descriptions of the Tarot images associated with the ten *sephiroth* on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life (a symbolic connection first proposed by the 19th century occultist Eliphas Levi). Pathworkings are intended to trigger personal meditative experiences of the gods and goddesses of the various mythological pantheons.

¹⁴⁸ The chapter 'The Old Religion' in Basil Wilby (ed.), *The New Dimensions Red Book*, Helios, Cheltenham 1968 identified the author only as 'F.P.D'. It is now known that 'F.P.D' was Colonel Charles R.F. Seymour (1880-1943). See A. Richardson, *Dancers to the Gods: The Magical Records of Charles Seymour and Christine Hartley 1937-1939*, Aquarian Press, Wellingborough, UK 1985:90.

¹⁴⁹ D. Fortune, *Applied Magic*, loc cit.:4.

¹⁵⁰ The concept of the Akashic Records derives from the teachings of Madame Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891) and the Theosophical Society (founded in New York in 1875). According to the Theosophists, the Akashic Records are an astral memory of all events, thoughts and emotions since the world began. Psychics are said to be able to receive 'impressions' from this astral realm and some Theosophical descriptions of the legendary lost continent of Atlantis are based on this psychic approach. *Akasha* is a Sanskrit word meaning 'luminous' and Akasha is one of the five Hindu elements, or Tattvas, whose symbol is the 'black egg' of Spirit.

¹⁵¹ See 'F.P.D', 'The Old Religion', in B. Wilby, *The New Dimensions Red Book*, loc cit.:47.

¹⁵² D. Valiente, *An ABC of Witchcraft, Past and Present*, revised edition, Robert Hale, London 1984: 343.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ P. Crowther, *Lid off the Cauldron: A Handbook for Witches*, Muller, London 1981: 1.

¹⁵⁵ The goddesses named here are all included in the so-called Witches' Charge a key element in Wiccan ritual.

¹⁵⁶ In modern witchcraft the Horned God personifies fertility, the Celtic counterpart of the Great God Pan, the goat-footed god, who in ancient Greece personified the untamed forces of Nature and the universal life-force. There is no connection between the Horned God of witchcraft and the Christian horned Devil although, since the time of the witchcraft persecutions of the Middle Ages this has been a common error.

¹⁵⁷ D. Valiente, *An ABC of Witchcraft, Past and Present*, loc.cit: 69.

¹⁵⁸ The equivalent dates for the Southern Hemisphere are as follows: *Candlemas/Imbolc*: 1 August; *Beltane*:31 October; *Lammas/Lughnassadh*: 2 February; *Halloween/Samhain*: 30 April.

¹⁵⁹ In the Southern Hemisphere, midsummer solstice occurs on 21 December and midwinter solstice on 21 June. Spring equinox is on 21 September and Autumn equinox on 21 March.

¹⁶⁰ See J. and S. Farrar, *Eight Sabbats for Witches*, Hale, London 1981.

¹⁶¹ The Lords of the Watchtowers are the Wiccan equivalent of the four archangels, Raphael, Michael, Gabriel and Uriel who are invoked as protectors in the Golden Dawn banishing ritual of the Lesser Pentagram.

¹⁶² During his own initiation, in the New Forest in September 1939, Gerald Gardner, one of the principal figures in the modern witchcraft revival, was told by his initiators 'The law has always been that power must be passed from man to woman or from woman to man, the only exception being when a mother initiates her daughter or a father his son, because they are part of themselves.' See G. Gardner, *Witchcraft Today* Rider, London 1954:78.

¹⁶³ See Doreen Valiente, *An ABC of Witchcraft, Past and Present* [1973], Robert Hale, London, revised edition 1984:203.

¹⁶⁴ Z. Budapest, *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries*, Wingbow Press, Los Angeles, California 1989: 277-278.

¹⁶⁵ This is the version given by Patricia Crowther, high priestess of the Sheffield Coven, in *Lid off the Cauldron*, loc.cit: 6. The *Wiccan Rede* is regarded by some as a reformulation of Aleister Crowley's magical dictum: 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.' (see Chapter Three). Crowley influenced Gardner in developing modern witchcraft practices and Crowley's dictum may have contributed, directly or indirectly, to the *Wiccan Rede*. However the crucial element of 'harm none' was missing from Crowley's statement of magical purpose. Graham Harvey notes that in the *Wiccan Rede* the word 'will' means 'your true self'. He also mentions that although the word *an* is Anglo-Saxon for 'if', some Wiccans interpret it as a shortened form of 'and'. See G. Harvey, *Listening People, Speaking Earth: Contemporary Paganism*, Hurst, London 1997:38.

¹⁶⁶ Quoted from *The Pagan Federation Information Pack*, second edition, London 1992:14.

¹⁶⁷ *Scire* ('to know') was Gerald Gardner's magical name in the Ordo Templi Orientis. Gardner joined the O.T.O. after meeting Aleister Crowley in Hastings in 1946.

¹⁶⁸ These three titles were published by Michael Houghton (London: 1949), Rider & Co (London:1954) and Aquarian Press (London:1959) respectively.

¹⁶⁹ P. Heselton, *Wiccan Roots: Gerald Gardner and the Modern Witchcraft Revival*, Capall Bann Publishing, Milverton, Somerset UK 2000: 12.

¹⁷⁰ Gardner was interested in the history of Malayan civilisation and had written a book titled *Keris and Other Malay Weapons*, a pioneering study of the history and folklore of local armaments, published in Singapore in 1936.

¹⁷¹ P. Heselton, *Wiccan Roots: Gerald Gardner and the Modern Witchcraft Revival*, loc.cit: 26.

¹⁷² Patricia Crowther writes in *Lid off the Cauldron* (loc cit:28) that Gardner's collection of daggers and swords came 'from all parts of the world'.

¹⁷³ Dr Annie Besant (1847-1933) became president of the Theosophical Society in 1891. She was involved in a number of social movements, including the Fabian Society, the Indian Home Rule League and the Boy Scouts. Together with Charles Leadbeater, she also sponsored the spiritual cause of Jiddu Krishnamurti, establishing the Order of the Star in the East to promote him as a 'world teacher', a role he later rejected. Dr Besant was a leader in the Co-Masonry movement and also founded the Order of the Temple of the Rose Cross in 1912. The rituals of this Order may have influenced those of the Crotona Fellowship.

¹⁷⁴ P. Heselton, *Wiccan Roots: Gerald Gardner and the Modern Witchcraft Revival*, loc.cit: 56, 58.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*: 114.

¹⁷⁶ The text *Gerald Gardner: Witch* by J.L. Bracelin, published by Octagon Press, London 1960, is now believed to have been written by the well known scholar of Sufi mysticism, Idries Shah (1924-1996), who met Gardner in the mid-1950s and got to know him well (See R. Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft*, Oxford University Press, 199: 205, 445 fn.1, and P. Heselton, *Wiccan Roots*, loc. cit.:8-9.). Shah apparently did not want to put his name to the Gardner biography so Jack Bracelin, another friend of Gardner's, agreed that his name could be substituted instead. It is of interest that Octagon Press is an imprint best known for its Sufi publications.

¹⁷⁷ The Sheffield-based witch, Patricia Crowther, a friend of Gardner's, has suggested that if Gardner was initiated on a night of the new moon (the first after the beginning of World War Two on 3 September 1939) he would have been initiated on 13 September 1939. See P. Heselton, *Wiccan Roots: Gerald Gardner and the Modern Witchcraft Revival*, loc.cit:178.

¹⁷⁸ J.L. Bracelin, *Gerald Gardner: Witch*, loc cit: 165.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁸⁰ G. Gardner, *Witchcraft Today*, Rider, London 1954: 19

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*.

¹⁸² J.L. Bracelin, *Gerald Gardner: Witch*, loc cit: 166.

¹⁸³ M.A. Murray, *The Witch-cult in Western Europe*, Oxford University Press, 1921.

¹⁸⁴ Norton mistakenly lists it as *Witchcraft in Western Europe*, but it is clearly this particular work by Margaret Murray that Norton is referring to.

¹⁸⁵ M.A. Murray, *The God of the Witches*, Sampson Low, London 1931; second edition Oxford University Press, 1970.

¹⁸⁶ See R. Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, loc cit.: 196.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Dr Murray was also a member of the Folk-Lore Society. Philip Heselton believes that Gardner may have met her in late 1938 or early 1939 and discussed her theories of the origins of pagan witchcraft. See P. Heselton, *Wiccan Roots: Gerald Gardner and the Modern Witchcraft Revival* loc cit: 27.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid: 273.

¹⁹⁰ See Chapter Three for an overview of Crowley's sex-magic practices.

¹⁹¹ Crowley had lived in Hastings since January 1945. See J. Symonds, *The Great Beast: The Life and Magick of Aleister Crowley*, Macdonald, London 1971, Mayflower reprint 1973: 450.

¹⁹² Arnold Crowther's widow, Patricia Crowther, gives this date in her book *Lid off the Cauldron* (Muller, London 1981:26) although Lawrence Sutin maintains that it was May 1947 'according to Crowley's diary'. See L. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley*, St Martin's Press, New York 2000: 409.

¹⁹³ L. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley*, loc.cit:409.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid: 410.

¹⁹⁵ A. Kelly, *Crafting the Art of Magic (vol.1): A History of Modern Witchcraft 1939-1964*, Llewellyn, St Paul, Minnesota 1991:174.

¹⁹⁶ J. and S. Farrar, *The Witches' Way: Principles, Rituals and Beliefs of Modern Witchcraft*, Robert Hale, London 1984:3.

¹⁹⁷ D. Valiente, *The Rebirth of Magic*, loc cit: 61.

¹⁹⁸ L. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley*, loc.cit:409.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ I. Colquhoun, *Sword of Wisdom: MacGregor Mathers and the Golden Dawn*, loc cit: 207.

²⁰¹ See A. Kelly, *Crafting the Art of Magic*, loc cit: 179-84 and L. Hume, *Witchcraft and Paganism in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne 1997: 28.

²⁰² Noted contemporary exponents of witchcraft Janet and (the late) Stewart Farrar write in *The Witches' Way* [1984]: 'Ritual nudity is a general practice in Gardnerian and Alexandrian witchcraft and is to be found among other Wiccan paths as well.' See J. and S. Farrar, *The Witches' Way: Principles, Rituals and Beliefs of Modern Witchcraft*, Robert Hale, London 1984: 193.

²⁰³ D. Valiente, *An ABC of Witchcraft*, loc cit.:156.

²⁰⁴ The pertinent text from *Aradia* reads:

*Sarete liberi dalla schiavitù!
E così diventerete tutti liberi!
Però uomini e donne
Sarete tutti nudi, per fino.*

(Ye shall be free from slavery!
And thus shall ye all become free!
Therefore, men and women,
Ye too shall be naked.)

Quoted in J. and S. Farrar, *The Witches' Way: Principles, Rituals and Beliefs of Modern Witchcraft*, loc cit: 194.

²⁰⁵ Francis King probably overemphasised this particular point. Doreen Valiente is reported as having advised Janet and Stewart Farrar that when the scourge is used in ritual practice, 'no pain should be either inflicted or expected; it is always used gently.' Quoted in J. and S. Farrar, *The Witches' Way: Principles, Rituals and Beliefs of Modern Witchcraft*, loc cit:194.

²⁰⁶ F. King, *Ritual Magic in England*, Neville Spearman, London 1970:180.

²⁰⁷ See R.E. Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft*, Facts on File, New York and Oxford, 1989: 134.

²⁰⁸ Gardner's quest for publicity angered members of his former coven. According to Michael Howard '...It has... been said that Gardner's decision to "go public", even in fictional form, upset the Elders of his

parent coven and he left them.' See M. Howard 'Gerald Gardner: the Man, the Myth & the Magick' Part 2, *The Cauldron*, Beltane/Midsummer 1997:19.

²⁰⁹ This is how Gardner is described in lengthy magazine feature article published in Sydney in 1958. An earlier article (Sydney 1955) had dubbed Gardner the 'Witchmaster'. See P. Lucas, 'Witches in the Nude', *People*, Sydney, 5 March 1958:54, and (anon.) 'Witchmaster! : The Devil is on our Doorstep', *Australasian Post*, Sydney 14 July 1955:11.

²¹⁰ See R.E. Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft*, Facts on File, New York and Oxford, 1989: 40.

²¹¹ See R.E. Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft*, loc.cit:134. Occult historian Aidan Kelly notes that Buckland, with his wife Rosemary acting as High Priestess, subsequently founded a coven of Gardnerian witchcraft in Bayside, Long Island. 'Almost all the "official" Gardnerians in America,' writes Kelly, 'are descendants of that coven.' See Aidan A. Kelly, 'An Update on Neopagan Witchcraft in America' in J.R. Lewis and J.G. Melton (ed.) *Perspectives on the New Age*, State University of New York Press, Albany, New York 1992:137. More recently it has been suggested by Mike Howard, editor of *The Cauldron* in the United Kingdom, that Gardnerian Wicca may have been introduced to the United States via two separate and independent routes: via Buckland and his wife on the East Coast and via a Gardnerian practitioner named Queen Morrigán on the West Coast. Morrigán allegedly settled in Stockton, California in 1960-62 and established what is now known as Central Valley Wicca. See M. Howard, 'Gerald Gardner: The Man, the Myth and the Magick', parts 1-4, *The Cauldron*, 1997.

²¹² Aidan A. Kelly, 'An Update on Neopagan Witchcraft in America' in J.R. Lewis and J.G. Melton (ed.) *Perspectives on the New Age*, loc. cit:141.

²¹³ The Pan Pacific Pagan Alliance, which has regional councils in every state of Australia had a subscription membership of 150 in January 1994, each subscription covering several people. If a single membership extended to an individual coven, the national total would have been between 100-200 covens in 1994. See L. Hume, *Witchcraft and Paganism in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne 1997: 244-45.

²¹⁴ Gardner was doubtful whether Wicca would survive in the long term. In *Witchcraft Today* [1954] he wrote: 'I think we must say goodbye to the witch. The cult is doomed, I am afraid, partly because of modern conditions, housing shortage, the smallness of modern families, and chiefly by education. The modern child is not interested... and so the coven dies out or consists of old and dying people.' Cited in R. Graves, *The Virginia Quarterly Review* :559 and quoted in S. Farrar, *What Witches Do*, revised edition, Phoenix Publishing, Custer, Washington 1983:7.

²¹⁵ In his will, Gardner bequeathed the Isle of Man museum to his High Priestess, Monique Wilson, and she in turn ran it with her husband for a short time, before selling it to the Ripley organisation.

²¹⁶ See Diagram of the Wheel of the Year, with accompanying dates for both Northern and Southern hemispheres.

²¹⁷ Quoted in J.R. Lewis (ed.), *Magical Religion and Modern Witchcraft*, State University of New York Press, Albany, New York 1996: 61-62.

²¹⁸ The first esbat occurs in October just before the festival of Samhain (All Hallows' Eve, or Halloween) and is known as *Blood Moon*. It is traditionally associated with the slaughter of animals for food prior to the onset of winter and is therefore represented by the colour red. *Snow Moon* rises in November and is associated with the first falls of snow. *Oak Moon* is the full moon in December. It is linked to the colour black and also to the oak, sacred symbol of the Dark Lord aspect of Cernunnos, since it is his wood which is burnt at Yule. *Ice Moon*, represented by the colour purple, rises in January, followed by *Storm Moon* in February, a time when the ice and sleet may turn to rain. This full moon is linked to the element Water, and to the colour blue. March brings the *Chaste Moon*, the return of Spring from the depths of winter, and is represented by the colour white. In April, *Seed Moon* is a time when the seeds in the earth bring forth new life, and this esbat is represented by the colour green. *Hare Moon* rises in May and is dedicated both to the Goddess and to fertility. Its colour is pink, symbolic of love. June brings the *Dyad Moon* and, as Gwydion O'Hare notes, this name alludes to 'the visible presence of the God and Goddess reflected in the bright sun and green fields'. The associated colour is orange, 'the colour of the summer sun'. The *Mead Moon* rises in July and is a time for dancing and revelry. Traditionally this is the time when honey mead was made for the ensuing harvest celebrations and accordingly its symbolic colour is yellow. August brings the *Wort Moon*, a reference to the dark green abundance of harvest time. September is the month of the *Barley Moon*. This is the season when grain is harvested: brown is the symbolic colour for this esbat. Finally, *Wine Moon* is the esbat which arises as a consequence of the difference between the solar and lunar calendars. Unlike the twelve-month cycle of the solar calendar there are usually thirteen full moons in any given year, and this esbat is the thirteenth in the cycle. It honours the sacrament of wine and

its symbolic colour is burgundy red. *Wine Moon* precedes *Blood Moon*, and so the lunar cycle continues. See G. O'Hara, *Pagan Ways*, loc.cit: 64-67.

²¹⁹ A. Sanders, *The Alex Sanders Lectures*, Magickal Childe Publishing, New York 1984: 57.

²²⁰ See D. Valiente, *An ABC of Witchcraft*, loc.cit:108.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² James W. Baker, in his essay 'White Witches: Historic Fact and Romantic Fantasy' points out that the Wiccan 'Wheel of the Year' is by no means purely Celtic. The major Sabbats, Samhain, Imbolc, Beltane and Lughnassadh were Celtic festivals, but Yule was an Anglo-Saxon celebration. Midsummer did not feature in Celtic celebrations and the vernal equinox was not considered important either. For this reason Baker refers to the eight-fold cycle of the Wheel of the Year as a modern invention, an 'invented tradition'. See J.R. Lewis (ed.), *Magical Religion and Modern Witchcraft*, loc. cit: 178,187.

²²³ See G. Harvey, *Listening People, Speaking Earth*, loc.cit: 3-12.

²²⁴ Ibid:6.

²²⁵ J.and S. Farrar, *Eight Sabbats for Witches*, loc.cit: 122.

²²⁶ Ibid: .61

²²⁷ G. Harvey, *Listening People, Speaking Earth*, loc.cit: 8.

²²⁸ J.and S. Farrar, *Eight Sabbats for Witches*, loc.cit: 61.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ G. Harvey, *Listening People, Speaking Earth*, loc.cit: 8.

²³¹ J.and S. Farrar, *Eight Sabbats for Witches*, loc.cit: 82.

²³² G. Harvey, *Listening People, Speaking Earth*, loc.cit: 10.

²³³ Ibid: 12.

²³⁴ L. Hume, *Witchcraft and Paganism in Australia*, loc cit.:123.

²³⁵ J.and S. Farrar, *Eight Sabbats for Witches*, loc.cit: 24.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ L. Hume, *Witchcraft and Paganism in Australia*, loc cit.:131.

²³⁹ Ibid: 134.

²⁴⁰ According to the Farrars, the binding is done with three red cords – one nine feet long, the other pair four-and-half feet long: 'The wrists are tied together behind the back with the middle of the long cord, and the two ends are brought forward over the shoulders and tied in front of the neck, the ends left hanging to form a cable-tow by which the Postulant can be led. One short cord is tied round the right ankle, the other above the left knee – each with the the ends tucked in so that they will not trip [the Postulant] up.' See J.and S. Farrar, *The Witches' Way: Principles, Rituals and Beliefs of Modern Witchcraft*, loc cit: 16.

²⁴¹ Quoted in V. Crowley, 'Wicca as Modern-Day Mystery Religion' in G.Harvey and C.Hardman (ed.), *Pagan Pathways*, Thorsons, London 2000: 88.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ L. Hume, *Witchcraft and Paganism in Australia*, loc cit.:132.

²⁴⁴ Ibid: 133.

²⁴⁵ Single-gender Wiccan groups develop their own rules and responses in relation to this issue.

²⁴⁶ V.Crowley, 'Wicca as Modern-Day Mystery Religion' in G. Harvey and C. Hardman (ed.), *Pagan Pathways*, Thorsons, London 2000: 89.

²⁴⁷ Ibid: 90.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Vivienne Crowley describes the impact of the *Legend of the Goddess* on male and female initiates as 'a meeting with their contra-sexual side. For a woman, this is a meeting with her Animus and for a man a meeting with his Anima.' See V. Crowley, *Wicca: the Old Religion in the New Millennium*, Thorsons, London 1996: 205.

²⁵⁰ Ibid. For a man this the archetypal feminine dimension of the male unconscious mind, epitomised as an aspect of the Goddess. See V. Crowley, *Wicca: the Old Religion in the New Millennium*, Thorsons, London 1996: 205.

²⁵¹ Ibid: 89.

²⁵² V. Crowley, *Wicca: the Old Religion in the New Millennium*, loc.cit:108.

²⁵³ Ibid: 200.

²⁵⁴ V. Crowley, 'Wicca as Modern-Day Mystery Religion' in G. Harvey and C. Hardman (ed.), *Pagan Pathways*, loc.cit: 91.

²⁵⁵ J.and S. Farrar, *The Witches' Way*, loc.cit:30.

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- ²⁵⁶ V. Crowley, 'Wicca as Modern-Day Mystery Religion' in G. Harvey and C. Hardman (ed.), *Pagan Pathways*, loc.cit: 91.
- ²⁵⁷ V. Crowley, *Wicca: the Old Religion in the New Millennium*, loc.cit: 205.
- ²⁵⁸ J. and S. Farrar, *The Witches' Way*, loc.cit: 32.
- ²⁵⁹ V. Crowley, *Wicca: the Old Religion in the New Millennium*, loc.cit: 235.
- ²⁶⁰ Those conducting the first part of the Third Initiation as initiators must themselves be Third Degree witches. See J. and S. Farrar, *The Witches' Way*, loc.cit: 31.
- ²⁶¹ V. Crowley, *Wicca: the Old Religion in the New Millennium*, loc.cit: 227-228.
- ²⁶² J. and S. Farrar, *The Witches' Way*, loc.cit: 32.
- ²⁶³ That is to say, the sexual act takes place physically, not symbolically. See V. Crowley, *Wicca: the Old Religion in the New Millennium*, loc.cit: 227.
- ²⁶⁴ J. and S. Farrar, *The Witches' Way*, loc.cit.:37.
- ²⁶⁵ L. Hume, *Witchcraft and Paganism in Australia*, loc.cit.:143.
- ²⁶⁶ The Californian psychedelic counterculture was at its peak between November 1965 and January 1967. For coverage of this colourful period see G. Anthony, *The Summer of Love*, Celestial Arts, Millbrae, California 1980; J. Stevens, *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream*, Atlantic Monthly Press, New York 1987, and T. Leary, *Flashbacks: An Autobiography*, Tarcher, Los Angeles 1983.
- ²⁶⁷ This period saw strong popular interest in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, which first appeared in the W.Y. Evans-Wentz edition (Oxford University Press, New York 1960) and then provided the basis for a psychedelic experiential manual (T. Leary, R. Metzner and R. Alpert, *The Psychedelic Experience*, University Books, New York 1964) which became a bestseller in counterculture circles, enjoying seven reprints between 1964 and 1971. The American counterculture also embraced a wide range of other Eastern wisdom traditions including Zen Buddhism, Taoism, Tai Chi and Tantric yoga. However it was also a period of renewed interest in magic, the Tarot and the Kabbalah, and many occult classics by such authors as A.E. Waite, Lewis Spence, Eliphas Lévi, E.A. Wallis Budge and Aleister Crowley were reprinted at this time as well. Following the release of Mircea Eliade's classic work, *Shamanism* (Princeton University Press, 1964), interest in this subject area was further heightened by the release in 1968 of the first of Carlos Castaneda's many books: *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge* (University of California Press, Berkeley) and this in turn stimulated a developing interest in Native American culture and indigenous spirituality generally. For an overview of the spiritual and metaphysical undercurrents operating in the American counterculture see T. Roszak, *Unfinished Animal: The Aquarian Frontier and the Evolution of Consciousness*, Harper & Row, New York 1975.
- ²⁶⁸ Much of the psychedelic counterculture in San Francisco had begun to disperse by 1968. See G. Anthony, *The Summer of Love*, loc.cit: 175, and N. Drury, *The New Age: The History of a Movement*, Thames & Hudson, New York 2004: 95.
- ²⁶⁹ The history of American counterculture spirituality and the rise of the New Age movement are described in such publications as R.S. Ellwood, *The Sixties Spiritual Awakening*, Rutgers University Press, New Jersey 1994; W.J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture*, State University of New York Press, Albany, New York 1998, P. Heelas, *The New Age Movement*, Blackwell, Oxford 1996 and N. Drury, *The New Age: The History of a Movement*, loc.cit.
- ²⁷⁰ Robert S. Ellwood, a scholar specialising in alternative and minority religions, believes that four different explanatory models can be advanced to account for the rise of new spiritual movements in the United States during the 1960s. In the first of these models 'the dominant paradigm moves from mainline to nonconformist religion in various forms', the civil rights and anti-war movements being followed by the 'occult/mystical counterculture'. A second model focuses on what Ellwood calls 'the quest for relevance', while a third explanatory framework contrasts the rediscovery of natural religion with the 'revealed' nature of established religions like Christianity: 'Natural religion believes that [the divine] presence may be tapped by a normal quickening of spiritual sensitivity, which can be aided by various techniques or insights but does not require extraordinary grace. Faith in nature and nature's God may affirm hidden ("occult") natural forces that go beyond reason as ordinarily understood, including trust in psychic energies and powers of mind that seem almost magical.' Ellwood's fourth model focuses on the quest for freedom: many symbols of religious hierarchy were abandoned by members of the 1960s counterculture. All of these models contribute to an understanding of the rise of feminist witchcraft as a post-counterculture phenomenon in the 1970s. See R.S. Ellwood, *The Sixties Spiritual Awakening*, loc.cit: 331-334.
- ²⁷¹ American feminist Goddess worshippers quickly focused on 'sisterhood', on close bonds between women, and for some devotees this has involved taking the Goddess tradition beyond the male domain altogether. As Judy Davis and Juanita Weaver expressed it in the mid-1970s: 'Feminist spirituality has

taken form in Sisterhood – in our solidarity based on a vision of personal freedom, self-definition, and in our struggle together for social and political change. The contemporary women's movement has created space for women to begin to perceive reality with a clarity that seeks to encompass many complexities. This perception has been trivialized by male dominated cultures that present the world in primarily rational terms... [Feminist spirituality involves] the rejoining of woman to woman.' See Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow (ed.), *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion*, Harper and Row, San Francisco 1979:272.

²⁷² M.F. Bednarowski, 'Women in Occult America' in H. Kerr and C.L. Crow (ed.), *The Occult in America: New Historical Perspectives*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago 1983: 188.

²⁷³ See M.F. Bednarowski, 'The New Age Movement and Feminist Spirituality: Overlapping Conversations at the End of the Century' in J.R. Lewis and J.G. Melton (ed.) *Perspectives on the New Age*, State University of New York Press, Albany, New York 1992:169. Feminist writer Carol P. Christ goes even further, arguing that the resacralization of the earth is part of the process of individual transformation: 'When the earth is the body of the Goddess, the radical implications of the image are more fully realized. The female body and the earth, which have been devalued and dominated together, are resacralized. Our understanding of divine power is transformed as it is clearly recognized as present within the finite and changing world. The image of earth as the body of the Goddess can inspire us to repair the damage that has been done to the earth, to women, and to other beings in dominator cultures.' See C.P. Christ, *Rebirth of the Goddess: Finding Meaning in Feminist Spirituality*, Routledge, New York 1997: 91.

²⁷⁴ N. Goldberg, *Changing of the Gods: Feminism and the end of Traditional Religions*, Beacon Press, Boston 1979:90.

²⁷⁵ M. Daly, *Beyond God the Father*, Beacon Press, Boston 1973:13.

²⁷⁶ See J. Plaskow, 'Women's Liberation and the Liberation of God' in R.S. Gottlieb (ed.) *A New Creation: America's Contemporary Spiritual Voices*, Crossroad, New York 1990:230-232.

²⁷⁷ In her influential book *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries*, Z. Budapest refers to the Mother Goddess as the 'Female Principle of the Universe and source of all life'. She is the 'Goddess of the Ten Thousand Names'. (loc.cit:1989: 277-278.)

²⁷⁸ These American advocates of broad-based Goddess spirituality also had notable counterparts in the UK and Ireland, among them Caitlin Matthews, Olivia Durdin-Robertson, Vivienne Crowley, Asphodel P. Long, and Elizabeth Brooke.

²⁷⁹ See Z. Budapest, *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries*, loc.cit: 308.

²⁸⁰ Personal communication to the author, Berkeley, California, December 1984, during filming of the television documentary *The Occult Experience* (Cinetel Productions for Channel Ten, Sydney).

²⁸¹ C. Lesh, 'Goddess Worship: the Subversive Religion', *Twelve Together*, Los Angeles, May 1975.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Personal communication to the author, Berkeley, California, December 1984, during filming of the television documentary *The Occult Experience*, loc cit.

²⁸⁴ Z. Budapest, *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries*, loc.cit: 112.

²⁸⁵ Personal communication to the author, Berkeley, California, December 1984, during filming of the television documentary *The Occult Experience*, loc cit.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ According to Z. Budapest, Simos was driving past the Feminist Wicca on Lincoln Boulevard and came in to look. Budapest was staffing on that particular day and invited Simos to attend a forthcoming Spring Equinox Festival. Their friendship and mutual advocacy of Goddess spirituality developed from this point onwards. See Z. Budapest, *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries*, loc.cit: xiv.

²⁸⁸ Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance*, revised edition, HarperCollins, San Francisco 1999: 33, 51. Starhawk's response to male-dominated traditions would appear to be characteristic of the rise of feminist witchcraft in the United States since the late 1970s. Theologian Mary Farrell Bednarowski believes the rise of feminist spirituality was a response to the 'alienation from the cosmos' associated with male-dominated religions: 'According to New Age thinkers and feminists, Judaism and Christianity espouse a deity who is male, transcendent and "other". This is a static deity, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, static, unchanging in his perfection. This God has created the world but does not inhabit it, for the creation, along with humankind, is fallen. At the centre of creation, at the centre of human existence, there is brokenness rather than wholeness, sin and estrangement rather than creativity. To be saved means salvation from the world, from the body... The result is alienation from the rest of the cosmos as well as estrangement from the divine.' See M.F. Bednarowski, 'The New Age Movement and Feminist

Spirituality: Overlapping Conversations at the End of the Century' in J.R. Lewis and J.G. Melton (ed.) *Perspectives on the New Age*, State University of New York Press, Albany, New York 1992: 168-169.

²⁸⁹ R.E. Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft*, loc.cit:327.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Starhawk remains strongly committed to political activism. Her recent publication, *Webs of Power: Notes from the Global Uprising*, New Society Publishers, Victoria, Canada 2002, explores the relationship between magical ritual and progressive activism.

²⁹² Following his association with Starhawk, Matthew Fox came to believe that there was a connection between the Nature-spirituality in Wicca and the sense of wholeness-in-Christ expressed in his own Creation Spirituality. However he was heavily criticised by the Roman Catholic authorities for this perception, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict II) referring to Fox's book *Original Blessing* as 'dangerous and deviant'. See T. Peters, *The Cosmic Self*, HarperCollins, San Francisco 1991:126-127.

²⁹³ See A. Blair-Ewart, *Mindfire: Dialogues in the Other Future*, Somerville House, Toronto 1995:128.

²⁹⁴ Starhawk, 'The Goddess' in Roger S. Gottlieb (ed.) *A New Creation : America's Contemporary Spiritual Voices*, Crossroad, New York 1990 :213.

²⁹⁵ Starhawk, *Dreaming the Dark*, Beacon Press, Boston 1982:8-9.

²⁹⁶ Starhawk, 'The Goddess', loc.cit: 213-214.

²⁹⁷ Ibid: 214.

²⁹⁸ C.P. Christ, *Rebirth of the Goddess: Finding Meaning in Feminist Spirituality*, Routledge, New York 1997: xv.

²⁹⁹ M. Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, loc.cit: 24-25.

³⁰⁰ Ibid:35.

³⁰¹ Quoted in D.D. Carpenter, 'Emergent Nature Spirituality' in J.R. Lewis (ed.), *Magical Religion and Modern Witchcraft*, State University of New York Press, Albany, New York 1996:57.

Chapter Three

ALEISTER CROWLEY AND THE MAGIC OF THE LEFT-HAND PATH

Following the fragmentation of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn during the period between 1900 and the end of World War One,¹ the practice of ceremonial magic in the West became increasingly dominated by Aleister Crowley's doctrine of *Thelema* (Greek: 'will'), especially as the teachings of *Thelema* were introduced initially into his own magical order, Argenteum Astrum (The Silver Star, established 1907) and later into the Ordo Templi Orientis which Crowley headed from 1922 onwards (see below). Wicca would not emerge as a major esoteric movement until the 1950s and '60s, following the repeal in 1951 of the British Witchcraft Act forbidding the practice of witchcraft.²

Since the 1960s Western magical practice in Britain and the United States has polarised, producing two major streams of occult thought led on the one hand by Crowleyian *Thelema* and its various derivative offshoots and affiliated movements,³ and by Wicca and Goddess spirituality on the other – the latter exported to the United States by the Gardnerian initiate Raymond Buckland in 1964 (later to merge with various forms of Goddess spirituality through the activities of influential American feminists like Starhawk, Z.Budapest and Margot Adler). Other branches of magic like the Dion Fortune-inspired Fraternity of the Inner Light and its more recent derivative, Servants of the Light (currently headed by Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki), and revivalist movements like Druidry, Odinism and Celtic neo-shamanism, remain very much minority practices within the contemporary occult spectrum.⁴ Modern Western magic continues to be dominated by the legacy of Aleister Crowley who has become an iconic personality in popular culture, featuring on the cover of the Beatles' famous *Sergeant Pepper's* rock-album (1967) and inspiring a number of novels and plays by other writers as well as influencing leading rock stars like David Bowie and Led Zeppelin's Jimmy Page.⁵

I will argue in this thesis that even though Rosaleen Norton maintained and even actively encouraged her popular persona as a witch – a persona that was in turn fed by the popular media in Sydney during the 1950s – she nevertheless belongs very much within the Crowleyian category as an

occult practitioner. Her rebellious libertine personality and her practice of sex magic, inspired by Crowley and his teachings, align her as much with *Thelema* as with modern Wicca. The most significant deities in her personal pantheon were the chthonic figures of Pan and Hecate, rather than the universal triple-Goddess who figures so prominently in the Wiccan literature and in the neopagan practices and writings of leading figures like Starhawk, Z.Budapest and the Farrars. It is the chthonic nature of Crowleyian *Thelema* and its various derivative movements – especially the magic of the Ordo Templi Orientis (from 1922 onwards) and the Typhonian sex-magick of Kenneth Grant and his associates – that helps define this particular branch of modern magic (see below).



Plate 29: Aleister Crowley – founder of the doctrine of *Thelema*

Crowley has been branded by many as a ‘black’ magician: he was widely known in the mainstream British media as the Great Beast 666 – that is, as the Antichrist – and was described by London's *John Bull* magazine as ‘the wickedest man in the world’.⁶ However within the context of modern esotericism the familiar – perhaps even clichéd – notion of magic as either ‘black’ or ‘white’ is clearly in need of revision. As I will argue in Chapter Seven, there are distinct shades of grey along the black/white magical spectrum when it comes to classifying the various forms of contemporary magic currently practised in the West. So the question immediately arises: how should the various forms of modern Western magical practice be classified?

When one considers the spectrum of modern magical practices established in the West during the 20th century and still current today, it would seem appropriate, at least in part, to employ the terminology used by many of the actual magical practitioners themselves to distinguish between the various forms of occult practice dating from the post-Crowley period. (From an anthropological approach, this would mean taking a substantially *emic* approach to contemporary magical belief systems and practices – see Chapter Seven.) Increasingly, many of these contemporary magical practitioners identify themselves as belonging either to the Left-Hand or Right-Hand Path in Western magic (rather than identifying themselves, or allowing themselves to be labelled, as ‘black’ or ‘white’ magicians respectively). Making the distinction between Left-Hand Path and Right-Hand Path magic instead of categorising magic rigidly as black or white lessens the automatic stereotyping tendency of ‘black=evil’ and ‘white=good’ that has existed since ancient times.

Left-Hand Path / Right-Hand Path

Some writers maintain that the demarcation between the so-called Left-Hand or Right-Hand Path in Western magic has an exclusively Eastern origin. The anthropologist Richard Sutcliffe, who has studied contemporary Left-Hand Path magic in Britain, states quite specifically in a recently published article that ‘the notion of the Left-Hand Path is derived from the Tantric term *vama-marga* (‘left path’) ie. the Left-Hand Path in Tantrism’. Sutcliffe identifies the core practices of this occult path as the so-called ‘five m’s’: *madya*, *mamsa*, *matsya*, *mudra* and *maithuna*, ie. wine, flesh, fish, parched grain and intercourse’, and notes that these ‘involve the ritual transgression of certain taboos and incorporate ritual sexual intercourse’.⁷ He also notes that contemporary occultism has incorporated many ideas and techniques from both Tantrism and Yoga.⁸ Sutcliffe is undoubtedly correct in stating that Eastern mystical terms and concepts have been introduced to the Western esoteric tradition – a case in point is Crowley’s visit to Ceylon in 1901, where he was introduced to Tantric practices by his former Golden Dawn associate Allan Bennett⁹ – and it is also true that the Theosophist Madame H.P. Blavatsky referred to practitioners of the Left-Hand path when introducing Hindu and Buddhist spiritual concepts to the West in the late 19th century.¹⁰ However the symbolic distinction between ‘right’ and ‘left’ as ‘good’ and ‘evil’ respectively also has ancient Western origins that are quite distinct from the *vama-marga*.

The Latin term for ‘left’, *sinister*, was traditionally associated with evil and this connotation has persisted into modern times, supported by Christian cosmology. The Gospel of Matthew locates God’s followers (the sheep) on

the right and non-followers (the goats) on the left-hand side,¹¹ and in pictures of the Last Judgement the Christian God shows his disciples their heavenly abode with his right hand and points with his left hand to Hell. The Left-Hand Path is therefore considered demonic – ‘the diabolical and the Earthly path to Hell’.¹²

In a comparable manner, a quotation from the Classical period in ancient Greece referring to the hero Asclepius (later considered the founder and God of medicine and healing), employs a similar left/right distinction:

... after he (Asclepius) had become a surgeon, bringing that art to great perfection, he not only saved men from death, but even raised them up from the dead. He received from Athena blood from the veins of the Gorgon. He used blood from the left side for plagues of mankind, and he used that from the right side for healing and to raise up men from the dead.¹³

Occult historian and leading member of the Golden Dawn, Arthur Edward Waite (1857-1942) was one of the first writers to refer to the ‘Brothers of the Left-Hand Path’ and the ‘Brothers of the Right-Hand Path’ in modern occult literature. Waite, who was both a devout Roman Catholic and also a practitioner of Kabbalistic ritual theurgy, refers in his *Book of Black Magic and Pacts* (1898) to ‘the sovereign horror of the Brothers of the Left-Hand Path’.¹⁴ He later makes the observation in his *Book of Ceremonial Magic* (1911) that ‘occult life has been entered by two classes of adepts, who have sometimes been fantastically distinguished as the Brothers of the Right and the Brothers of the Left, transcendental good and transcendental evil being specified as their respective ends’.¹⁵ Whether Waite himself believed in the validity of this viewpoint is uncertain. However, the inference is that the Left-Hand Path in magic has been regarded by many with ‘horror’ and is best avoided.

Despite the lingering association of the Left-Hand Path with ‘evil’, many practitioners aligned with this branch of modern Western magic – namely Thelemites, Satanists and also practitioners of contemporary Chaos Magick¹⁶ – nevertheless seem willing to apply this terminology to themselves. The contemporary British-born, German-based Satanist Vexen Crabtree maintains that ‘the term “Left-Hand Path” has become an umbrella term of self-designation used by certain contemporary ritual magicians and is usually taken to incorporate practitioners of Thelemic magick (beginning with Aleister Crowley), Tantrik magick and Chaos Magick (inspired by both Crowley and the magickal techniques devised by the occult artist Austin O.Spare, 1886-1956.)’¹⁷ Elsewhere Crabtree adds: ‘I think all forms of Satanism are [also] considered Left Hand Path’ and he

quotes contemporary American Satanist Anton LaVey (1930-1997):
'Satanism is not a white light religion; it is a religion of the flesh, the mundane, the carnal – all of which are ruled by Satan, the personification of the Left Hand Path'.¹⁸

It has to be acknowledged that there are certain points in common between Crowley's advocacy of libertine individualism and Thelemic sex magick on the one hand, and LaVey's doctrine of carnality on the other (see below). Nevertheless, I will argue in this thesis that contemporary Satanism and the other branches of the Left-Hand Path are by no means identical to each other and certain distinctions need to be made. It is significant that Crabtree himself does not identify carnality *per se* as a key characteristic of Left-Hand Path magic:

The Left Hand Path is solitary, individualistic, personal, based on *self* development, *self* analysis, *self* empowerment [italics in the text]...Frequently called 'evil' and 'dark' by non-Satanic religions, the followers of the Left Hand Path often have to remain in the darkness or face severe persecution from the religions that ironically call themselves 'good'.¹⁹

The magical aspects identified by Crabtree as characteristic of the Left-Hand path include an emphasis on free thought (as distinct from dogma), a focus on individualism, the rejection of absolutes and moralism (sic) and an emphasis on the personal rather than the universal.²⁰

The contemporary Nordic order, Dragon Rouge (founded in 1989), which aligns itself with the so-called Draconian path in magick and shares many points in common with Kenneth Grant's Typhonian branch of the Ordo Templi Orientis in England (see below), similarly identifies itself as belonging to the Left-Hand Path. Dragon Rouge refers to the Left-Hand Path as 'the dark side of magic':

The darkness is a mirror of the depths of the soul. All that is hidden inside us, our desires and our fears, is projected on the darkness...We are exploring the night side tradition on many different levels...Dragon Rouge is a practical magical order in which the individual experience is pivotal. We are focusing on an empirical occultism and a knowledge about the unknown based on experience.²¹

The members of Dragon Rouge also make a clear distinction between the magical paths of Right and Left:

The philosophy of the dark side is represented by the Left-Hand Path and its ideology. The Left-Hand Path is founded around a philosophy which defines two main spiritual paths. One is the Right-Hand Path. It is evident in most forms of

religion and mass movements. Its method is the magic of the light and its goal [is] that *the individual melts together with God* [my emphasis in italics]. The other path is the Left-Hand Path. It emphasizes the unique, the deviant and the exclusive. Its method is dark magic and antinomianism (going against the grain). The goal is to become a god...The goal of the... magic of Dragon Rouge is self-deification...To become a god means that one has transformed life from being predetermined and predestined by outer conditions, to the stage where one reaches a truly free will. Man becomes a god when he ceases to be a creation and instead becomes a creator.²²

Dr Stephen Flowers, a leading member of the Temple of Set in the United States – an offshoot of the Church of Satan – similarly emphasizes self-deification and antinomianism as key characteristics of the Left-Hand Path. Flowers defines self-deification as the ‘attainment of enlightened (or awakened), independently existing intellect and its relative immortality’. This in turn depends on a heightened sense of individualism and ‘the strength...necessary for the desired state of evolution of self...attained by means of stages created by the will of the magician, not because he or she was “divine” to begin with’.²³ According to Flowers, antinomianism is also an important characteristic of the Left-Hand Path because magicians following this path have to have ‘the spiritual courage to identify [themselves] with the cultural norms of “evil”. There will be an embracing of the symbols of...whatever quality the conventional culture fears and loathes.’²⁴

As noted earlier, it was the controversial magician and former Golden Dawn member, Aleister Crowley, who first brought these controversial matters to a head through his proclamation of the doctrine of *Thelema*. Crowley’s teachings would polarize the Western esoteric tradition from this time onwards, seeking to shift the pursuit of ceremonial magic away from the quest for mystical transcendence (or, as the members of the Dragon Rouge express it, ‘melting into God’), towards the affirmation of the individual human will through acts of sacred sex magic. It was indeed a radical departure although, as I will seek to demonstrate below, some aspects of his doctrine reflect cosmological concepts dating back to the time of the 4th century Gnostics.

Aleister Crowley and the Magick of the New Aeon

Born at Leamington Spa, Warwickshire on 12 October 1875, Edward Alexander Crowley²⁵ was raised in a fundamentalist Plymouth Brethren home and soon developed an antipathy towards Christian belief and morality that would remain with him for his entire life. His father was a prosperous brewer who had retired to Leamington to study the Christian

scriptures. Crowley came to despise the Plymouth Brethren primarily on the basis of his unfortunate experiences at the special sect school in Cambridge which he was obliged to attend, and which was run by an especially cruel headmaster. Much of his school education was unhappy – marked by poor health and a vulnerability to bullying attacks – but after he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge in 1895 he was able to spend much of his time reading poetry and classical literature as well as confirming his well-earned reputation as a champion chess player. Crowley had an adventurous spirit and would later become an enthusiastic mountaineer, joining an expedition in 1902 to scale the mountain known as Chogo Ri (Mount Godwin-Austin, also referred to as K2) – at the time the highest peak in the world open to European climbers.

Crowley's direct association with the Western esoteric tradition began in London in 1898 with his introduction to George Cecil Jones, a member of the Golden Dawn (see Chapter Two). By the following year Crowley had also become a close friend of magical initiate Allan Bennett, who for a time rivalled MacGregor Mathers as a dominant figure among the English occultists of the period. Within the Golden Dawn, Bennett had taken the magical name *Frater Iehi Aour* (Hebrew: 'Let there be Light') and he became a mentor to Crowley. For a time Bennett and Crowley shared the latter's Chancery Lane flat in London²⁶ and it was here that Bennett tutored Crowley on applied Kabbalah and the techniques of magical invocation and evocation, as well as showing him how to create magical talismans.

Crowley quickly grasped the fundamentals of magic – or *magick*, as he would later spell it in his own writings on the subject. In one of his most influential books – *Magick in Theory and Practice*, first published in 1929 and frequently reprinted since – Crowley outlined the basic philosophy of magic as he had come to see it, which in essence involved the process of making man god-like, both in vision and in power. Crowley's magical dictums are instructive because they reveal the particular appeal that magic had for him:

*A man who is doing his True Will has the inertia of the Universe to assist him.*²⁷

*Man is ignorant of the nature of his own being and powers. Even his idea of his limitations is based on an experience of the past and every step in his progress extends his empire. There is therefore no reason to assign theoretical limits to what he may be or what he may do.*²⁸

Man is capable of being and using anything which he perceives, for everything that

he perceives is in a certain sense a part of his being. He may thus subjugate the whole Universe of which he is conscious to his individual will. ²⁹

The Microcosm is an exact image of the Macrocosm; the Great Work is the raising of the whole man in perfect balance to the power of Infinity. ³⁰

There is a single main definition of the object of all magical Ritual. It is the uniting of the Microcosm with the Macrocosm. The Supreme and Complete Ritual is therefore the Invocation of the Holy Guardian Angel, or, in the language of Mysticism, Union with God. ³¹

Crowley was initiated as a Neophyte in the Golden Dawn on 18 November 1898. He soon came to appreciate that those with the loftiest ritual grades in the Order (especially Mathers and Westcott – see Chapter Two) were able to wield profound spiritual influence over their followers by claiming rapport with the so-called ‘Secret Chiefs’ ³² whose authority was said to emanate from higher planes of spiritual reality. Keen to ascend to as high a rank as possible, Crowley took the grade of Zelator and then Theoricus and Practicus in the following two months. Initiation into the grade of Philosophus followed in May 1899. Greatly enthused by his magical research under the tutelage of Allan Bennett, Crowley also began making preparations for a substantial magical working based on the fifteenth century rituals of *Abramelin the Mage*, described in a grimoire that had been translated from French into English by MacGregor Mathers and which George Cecil Jones had introduced him to a year earlier. ³³ Apart from allegedly providing the magician with the services of 316 spirit-advisers, the *Abramelin* system of magic was also said to grant the practitioner communion with the Holy Guardian Angel, an embodiment in visionary form of one's higher spiritual self. However, Crowley believed there was another potential benefit: such an experience would enable him to claim spiritual parity with Mathers in the Golden Dawn hierarchy.

Crowley delayed the actual performance of his *Abramelin* operation but, after attaining the grade of Philosophus within the Golden Dawn, contacted Mathers in Paris and requested ritual entry into the Second Order – the Red Rose and the Cross of Gold. In January 1900, under Mathers' direct supervision, Crowley was admitted ‘to the Glory of Tiphareth’ – the 5° = 6° Adeptus Minor ritual grade associated with the experience of spiritual rebirth. He then returned to England where he challenged the authority of William Butler Yeats, who at the time was the leader of the Golden Dawn in England (see Chapter Two). As mentioned earlier, Yeats was unimpressed by this effrontery and Crowley was unsuccessful in his bid for ritual supremacy. The dispute, however, caused a rift in loyalties among the Golden Dawn membership since Crowley had apparently been sent by

Mathers – and Mathers, in a letter to influential Golden Dawn member Annie Horniman, had earlier claimed spiritual autocracy and infallibility over the Order as his right (see Chapter Two).

Having failed to dislodge Yeats as the head of the Golden Dawn, Crowley now suddenly switched course. Unpredictably and apparently acting on pure impulse, he withdrew from the dispute altogether and in June 1900 embarked upon a series of travels through Mexico, the United States, France, Ceylon and India before finally arriving in Cairo with his wife Rose on 9 February 1904.³⁴ Crowley's entire conception of the magical universe was about to be dramatically transformed.

Crowley's Thelemic revelation

The Thelemic practice of sex magick, referred to earlier in this chapter, derives specifically from a transformative spiritual event that occurred during Crowley's visit to Cairo in 1904. Crowley would come to believe that the revelatory communication itself emanated from the ancient Egyptian gods, via an entity named Aiwass (or Aiwaz)³⁵ whom Crowley believed to be a messenger from Horus. Paradoxically Crowley's personal revelation would also come to acquire a quasi-biblical orientation for it led him to regard himself henceforth as the Beast 666 referred to in the Book of Revelation.³⁶ Crowley's life and career as a ceremonial magician would subsequently focus on the ongoing personal quest to find the ideal Whore of Babalon [Crowley's variant spelling]³⁷ or Scarlet Woman, with whom to enact the philosophy of *Thelema*, or magical will. According to the doctrine of Thelema, Crowley's sex-magick encounters with his Scarlet Women (there would be many more than one!) were sacramental acts confirming Crowley's role as Lord of the New Aeon.

On 17 March 1904, Crowley performed a magical ceremony in his apartment in Cairo, invoking the Egyptian deity Thoth, god of wisdom.³⁸ Crowley's wife Rose appeared to be in a dazed, mediumistic state of mind and, the following day, while in a similar state of drowsiness, she announced that Horus was waiting for her husband. Crowley was not expecting such a statement from his wife but according to his diary she subsequently led him to the nearby Boulak Museum which he had not previously visited.³⁹ Rose pointed to a statue of Horus, or Ra-Hoor-Khuit, and Crowley was intrigued to discover that the exhibit was numbered 666, the number of the Great Beast in the Book of Revelation. Crowley regarded this as an omen. He returned to his hotel and invoked Horus:

*Strike, strike the master chord !
Draw, draw the Flaming Sword !
Crowning Child and Conquering Lord,
Horus, avenger!* ⁴⁰

On 20 March 1904 Crowley received a mediumistic communication through Rose stating that ‘the Equinox of the Gods had come’⁴¹ and he arranged for an assistant curator at the Boulak Museum to make notes on the inscriptions from Stele 666. Rose continued to fall into a passive, introspective state of mind and advised her husband that precisely at noon on April 8, 9 and 10 he should enter the room where the transcriptions had been made and for exactly an hour on each of these three days he should write down any impressions received. The resulting communications, allegedly dictated by a semi-invisible Egyptian entity named Aiwass – said to be a messenger of Horus – resulted in a document that Crowley later titled *Liber Al vel Legis* (*The Book of the Law*).⁴²

The pronouncements contained in *Liber Al vel Legis* became a turning point in Crowley’s magical career. Crowley was specifically commanded by Aiwass to put aside the Kabbalistic ceremonial magic he had learnt in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and was instructed to pursue the magic of sexual partnership instead:

Now ye shall know that the chosen priest and apostle of infinite space is the prince-priest The Beast, and in his woman called The Scarlet Woman is all power given. They shall gather my children into their fold: they shall bring the glory of the stars into the hearts of men. For he is ever a sun and she a moon...⁴³



Plate 30: Aleister Crowley as Magus, with his ceremonial equipment

Crowley would soon come to believe that his magical destiny was inextricably connected to the Horus figure Ra-Hoor-Khuit whose statue he had seen in the Boulak Museum. In Egyptian mythology the deities Nuit (female-the circle-passive) and Hadit (male-the point-active) were said to have produced a divine child, Ra-Hoor-Khuit, through their sacred union. According to Crowley this combination of the principles of love and will brought into incarnation the 'magical equation known as the Law of Thelema'.⁴⁴ *Thelema* is the Greek word for 'will' and the principal magical dictum contained in *Liber Al vel Legis* is 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.' The concluding instruction in *Liber Al vel Legis* reads as follows: 'There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt. Love is the law, love under will.'⁴⁵

Crowley's notion of the will, or Will – he usually capitalized it to denote its special significance – is central to his magical philosophy. Crowley understood that one should live according to the dictates of one's true Will because 'A man who is doing his True Will has ...the Universe to assist him.'⁴⁶ An individual's True Will is that person's authentic spiritual purpose and it also confers a sense of identity. 'The first principle of success in evolution,' wrote Crowley in *Magick in Theory and Practice*, 'is that the individual should be true to his own nature...'⁴⁷

Crowley believed that in terms of his own individual spiritual purpose, his unique personal destiny had been made manifestly clear by the communications received from Aiwass in *Liber Al vel Legis*. As Crowley's magical disciple Kenneth Grant has written, from a Thelemic perspective the revelations in Cairo in 1904 represented nothing less than the birth of a new Aeon in the history of humanity's spiritual evolution:

According to Crowley the true magical revival occurred in 1904, when an occult current of cosmic magnitude was initiated on the inner planes. Its focus was Aiwaz and it was transmitted through Crowley to the human plane... The initiation of this occult current created a vortex, the birth-pangs of a New Aeon, technically called an Equinox of the Gods. Such an event recurs at intervals of approximately 2000 years. Each such revival of magical power establishes a further link in the chain of humanity's evolution, which is but one phase only of the evolution of Consciousness.⁴⁸

In cosmological terms, Crowley believed he had now been recognised by the transcendent powers of the ancient Egyptian pantheon as the 'divine child' brought into being through the sacred union of Nuit and Hadit. There could be no doubting the importance of this event and its dramatic outcome. In *Liber Al vel Legis* we read 'Ra-Hoor-Khuit hath taken his seat

in the East at the Equinox of the Gods.’⁴⁹ Previously, according to Crowley, there had been two other Aeons: one associated with the Moon and the other with the Sun. The first of these, the Aeon of Isis, was a matriarchal age characterised by the worship of lunar deities, the second epoch, the Aeon of Osiris, a patriarchal age associated with incarnating demi-gods or divine kings. John Symonds, Crowley’s biographer and literary executor, describes this historical process in his introduction to Crowley’s *Confessions*:

The cosmology of *The Book of the Law* is explained by Crowley thus: there have been, as far as we know, two aeons in the history of the world. The first, that of Isis, is the aeon of the woman; hence matriarchy, the worship of the Great Mother and so on. About 500 B.C. this aeon was succeeded by the aeon of Osiris, that is the aeon of the man, the father, hence the paternal religions of suffering and death – Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity and Mohammedanism. This aeon came to an end in 1904 when Aleister Crowley received *The Book of the Law*, and the new aeon, that of Horus, the child, was born. In this aeon the emphasis is on the true self or will, not on anything external such as gods or priests...⁵⁰

There can be no doubting the position of *Liber Al vel Legis* with regard to the religious traditions that preceded the 1904 revelation. ‘With my Hawk’s head,’ proclaims Ra-Hoor-Khuit (ie. Horus) in stanzas III: 51-54:

I peck at the eyes of Jesus as he hangs upon the Cross. I flap my wings in the face of Mohammed and blind him. With my claws I tear out the flesh of the Indian and the Buddhist, Mongol and Din. Bahlasti! Ompedha! I spit on your crapulous creeds.⁵¹

Quite apart from the iconoclastic tone adopted by *Liber Al vel Legis* in dismissing earlier religious traditions like Christianity, Buddhism and Islam, the sexual implications of the revelation were also made clear. The received doctrine of the Aeon of Horus would now supersede Christianity and all the other outmoded religions that had constructed barriers to spiritual freedom, and the way this would be achieved was through the power of sexuality. *Liber Al vel Legis* summons the Scarlet Woman to ‘raise herself in pride!’ and calls for uninhibited sexual freedom:

Let her work the work of wickedness! Let her kill her heart! Let her be loud and adulterous; let her be covered with jewels, and rich garments, and let her be shameless before all men. Then will I lift her to the pinnacles of power: then will I breed from her a child mightier than all the kings of the earth. I will fill her with joy...⁵²

As Kenneth Grant has explained, with reference to *Liber Al vel Legis* and its call for sexual freedom, Crowley came to believe that the so-called

Great Work – sacred union, or the attainment of Absolute Consciousness – would be achieved through the sexual union of the Great Beast with the Whore of Babalon: ‘The Beast, as the embodiment of the Logos (which is Thelema, Will) symbolically and actually incarnates his Word each time a sacramental act of sexual congress occurs, ie. each time love is made under Will.’⁵³ A review of Crowley’s subsequent career shows that he would spend much of his life from this time onwards seeking lovers and concubines who could act as his Divine Whore. While he would be frustrated in his numerous attempts to find a suitable and enduring partner, there were many who filled the role temporarily.⁵⁴

In relation to the practice of sex magic, quite apart from defining Crowley’s spiritual destiny as the High Priest of Thelema, *Liber Al vel Legis* also contained instructions relating to ceremonial offerings associated with sacramental sex magic, specifically the preparation of what later came to be known as ‘cakes of light’. Preparation of this ritual offering as specified by Ra-Hoor-Khuit, is outlined in III: 23-25 of *Liber Al vel Legis*:

For perfume mix meal and honey and thick leavings of red wine: then oil of Abramelin and olive oil, and afterward soften and smooth down with rich fresh blood. The best blood is of the moon, monthly: then the fresh blood of a child, or dropping from the host of heaven: then of enemies; then of the priest or of the worshippers; last of some beast, no matter what. This burn: of this make cakes and eat unto me.⁵⁵

As one of Crowley’s most recent biographers, Lawrence Sutin, has noted:

There is no evidence that Crowley ever used the fresh blood of a child or an enemy in preparing the cakes. Indeed, in his comment on this verse, written during the period, Crowley was careful to specify that the ‘child’ was ‘Babalon and the Beast conjoined’ – that is, the elixir of sexual magic.⁵⁶

The magical elixir itself consisted of the ‘ingredients’ of sexual congress itself: semen from the male, gluten from the woman’s vagina, and preferably fresh menstrual blood, as specified in stanza 24 of Book III of *Liber Al vel Legis*. These ingredients were included in the preparation of the ‘cakes of light’ which were then consumed by participants as a ritual offering to Ra-Hoor-Khuit.

It is clear that Crowley placed great emphasis on the magical elixir because it is later referred to as ‘the germ of life’⁵⁷ in *The Book of the Unveiling of Sangraal* which was part of the ‘Secret Instruction of the Ninth Degree’ in the Ordo Templi Orientis – a European sex magic organisation which

Crowley was able to gradually transform into a Thelemite order after joining it in 1910 (see below).⁵⁸ In the Ninth degree of the Ordo Templi Orientis, which employs veiled sexual references, the candidate is instructed as follows:

Now then, entering the privy chapel [the vagina], do thou bestow at least one hour in adoration at the altar, exalting thyself in love toward God, and extolling Him in strophe and antistrophe [sexual lovemaking]. Then do thou perform the Sacrifice of the Mass [ejaculation of semen]. The Elixir [a mixture of semen and female sexual secretions] being then prepared solemnly and in silence, do thou consume it utterly.⁵⁹

The ritual consumption of a sexual magical elixir was not part of the magical teachings of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, which tended to downplay any references to sexual symbolism in its rituals,⁶⁰ and since Crowley had established his own unique connection with Aiwass and Ra-Hoor Khuit in 1904 he had little need for an ongoing relationship with the Golden Dawn after his revelation in Cairo. In deciding to enact the magical procedures dictated by *Liber Al vel Legis* Crowley had, in any case, already laid the foundation for a quite different sort of magical practice based not on advancing through the *sephiroth* of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life (see Chapter Two) but instead on utilising the magical energies of sexuality.

The Argenteum Astrum and Victor Neuburg

In 1907 Crowley established his own magical order, the Argenteum Astrum, or Silver Star.⁶¹ Two years later he commenced production of a semi-annual periodical titled *The Equinox*, as its official publishing arm. Some of the early issues of *The Equinox* contained Crowley's first writings on sex magic rituals.⁶² In these writings Crowley identified three types of sexual activity – autoerotic, heterosexual and homosexual – as a way of raising magical energy and he also formulated the notion that sex magic rituals could be dedicated to achieving specific results like financial gain, attaining personal creative success etc. His central idea was that sex magic could enable the practitioner to focus on a specific goal or outcome. The magician would dedicate the sexual activity to the goal of the magical ritual and would hold the image of that goal in his mind at the moment of sexual climax: at that very moment the energy raised during the ritual would be directed to the goal by the magical will. In this way the sex magic practitioner would be able to 'wed the image and the magical power'.⁶³

Initially the Argenteum Astrum drew primarily on borrowed sources from the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Crowley had begun rewriting

MacGregor Mathers' Kabbalistic rituals, employing an amended form of the Golden Dawn grades as well as including some yogic and oriental material of his own. He also published the secret rituals of Mathers' Second Order, the Red Rose and Cross of Gold, in *The Equinox*.⁶⁴ Interestingly, although Crowley had made a commitment to the sex magic proclaimed in *Liber Al vel Legis*, he did not initially include it within the grades of his new magical order.⁶⁵ Nevertheless the Argenteum Astrum would gradually develop as a vehicle for Crowley's increasingly explicit bisexuality, thereby complicating the apparently clear sex-role distinction between the Beast and the Scarlet Woman delineated in *Liber Al vel Legis*.⁶⁶

One of the early members of the Argenteum Astrum was Victor Neuburg (1883-1940), a young poet who, like Crowley, had studied at Trinity College, Cambridge. Crowley heard about Neuburg from another A.A. member, Captain J.F.C. Fuller, and invited him to his magical retreat in Boleskine, Scotland. Crowley quickly recognised in Neuburg a kindred spirit, and they would soon enter into a homosexual magic liaison tinged with sado-masochistic tendencies, which would last until 1914.⁶⁷

Following a painful divorce from his wife Rose in 1909, Crowley went with Neuburg to Algeria where they intended exploring the Enochian magic of the sixteenth century Elizabethan occultists Dr John Dee and Edward Kelley.⁶⁸ This process involved the magical evocation of thirty so-called 'Aethyrs' or 'Aires' – a group of metaphysical spirit-entities that included Choronzon, the demon of Chaos. Deep in the Algerian desert – at such locations as Aumale, Ain El Hajel, Bou-Saada, Benshrur, Tolga and Biskra – Crowley summoned the different Aethyrs in turn. Crowley was carrying with him a large golden topaz set in a wooden rose-cross decorated with ritual symbols. Choosing a place of solitude, Crowley would recite the required Enochian conjuration and then use his topaz as a focusing glass to concentrate his attention on the visionary landscape as it unfolded before his gaze. As a result of his Enochian 'calls' Crowley had a number of visionary experiences which were then transcribed by Neuburg as they took place.⁶⁹

While in the Algerian desert, Crowley and Neuburg also engaged in an act of ritual sex magic. Crowley writes in his *Confessions* that on one occasion they climbed a mountain named Da'leh Addin and felt an intuitive command to perform a magical ceremony on the summit:

We accordingly took loose rocks and built a great circle, inscribed with the words of power; and in the midst we erected an altar and there I sacrificed myself [submitted to anal sex]. The fire of the all-seeing sun [Neuburg's penis] smote down upon the

altar, consuming every particle of my personality. I am obliged to write in hieroglyph of this matter, because it concerns things of which it is unlawful to speak openly under penalty of the most dreadful punishment.⁷⁰

After Crowley returned to England the Argenteum Astrum began to grow modestly, building on its core membership which included Captain J.F.C. Fuller and Crowley's Golden Dawn teacher George Cecil Jones. The Argenteum Astrum would in due course initiate around a hundred of Crowley's followers, among them Neuburg's friend and fellow poet Pamela Hansford Johnson, Australian violinist Leila Waddell, mathematics lecturer Norman Mudd from Bloemfontein, and the visionary English artist Austin Osman Spare.⁷¹

Events took a strange turn in London in May 1912 when Crowley was contacted one evening at his Fulham flat by a man named Theodor Reuss. Reuss identified himself as Brother Merlin, head of the German branch of the Ordo Templi Orientis. Crowley would already have been familiar with the O.T.O. because according to occult historian Francis King he had been admitted to its lower grades a year earlier.⁷² What surprised the British occultist was Reuss's claim that Crowley had published a statement which revealed the most prized secret of the Order's ninth degree – the sacrament of sex magic.⁷³ Crowley was initially perplexed by Reuss's accusation and wondered which publication he was referring to. Reuss then reached across to Crowley's bookshelf and pulled down a copy of his recently published work *The Book of Lies*, a collection of magical commentaries and reflections. The offending lines were contained in Chapter XXXVI titled 'The Star Sapphire' which begins with the words: 'Let the Adept be armed with his Magick Rood and provided with his Mystic Rose.'⁷⁴ Further on Crowley's text reads as follows: 'Let him drink of the Sacrament and let him communicate the same.'⁷⁵

Crowley pointed out to Reuss that he had not yet been admitted to the ninth degree of the O.T.O., so he was not in a position to reveal its secrets. In 'The Star Sapphire' Crowley had used the Old English word *rood* to mean a cross, and Reuss had assumed that he was referring to the phallus. Reuss had also assumed that the Mystic Rose was a reference to the vagina.⁷⁶ Then there was the issue of what 'drinking the Sacrament' could actually be referring to. As they were speaking Crowley realised intuitively that sexual intercourse between priest and priestess must be a culminating event in the ritual of the O.T.O.'s ninth degree, and he now engaged Reuss in a discussion about sex magic which lasted for several hours. The outcome was that Crowley would in due course become the head of a new magical

order to be called the *Mysteria Mystica Maxima*, effectively an English subsidiary of the German *Ordo Templi Orientis*.⁷⁷ Much later, in 1922 – following Reuss's retirement – Crowley would replace Reuss as the head of the O.T.O. itself, a position he held until his death in 1947 (see below).⁷⁸



Plate 31: Crowley as 'Baphomet' in 1912 – after being appointed head of the O.T.O. in Britain

The rise of the Ordo Templi Orientis

Although the practice of sex magic was central to Aleister Crowley's doctrine of *Thelema* it did not originate with him. In recent times the rise of the O.T.O. and the history of sex magic as a branch of Western esotericism have been documented by a small group of specialist academic scholars, among them Peter.R.Koenig in Switzerland, Hugh B. Urban, Joscelyn Godwin, John Deveney and J.Gordon Melton in the United States, and Henrik Bogdan in Sweden.

From a historical perspective it is clear that the two key figures in the early development of the O.T.O in Europe were Carl Kellner and Crowley's German O.T.O. contact, Theodor Reuss. Kellner (1851-1905) was a wealthy Austrian chemist and industrialist and also a Freemason –



Plate 32: Carl Kellner

he was a member of the Humanitas Lodge, established in Neuhäusl, Austria, in 1871 under the constitution of the Grand Lodge of Hungary.⁷⁹ Reuss (1855-1923) was an Anglo-German Freemason who specialized in buying and selling Masonic charters, even though he was not recognised by any authentic Lodges in Craft Masonry. According to Koenig, Reuss invented an organization known as the 'Order of the Illuminati' as well as several Rosicrucian societies.⁸⁰ While it is evident that Kellner was a businessman and inventor of considerable integrity, Reuss's reputation was more dubious and some historians consider him a swindler.⁸¹ Nevertheless it was through their joint efforts that the organization known as the Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.) would eventually emerge.

Around 1895 Kellner had the idea of forming a private group which could explore various 'Tantric' exercises within a Hatha Yoga circle.⁸² Kellner had a long-standing interest in both the Western esoteric tradition and



Plate 33: Theodor Reuss

also Eastern mysticism. According to Urban, Kellner is said to have studied with three Eastern masters – a Sufi and two Hindu Tantrikers – and was

also in touch with an American esoteric order known as the Hermetic Brotherhood of Light (an offshoot of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor),⁸³ which in turn drew on the sex magic ideas of the influential American occultist Paschal Beverly Randolph (see below).⁸⁴ Kellner and Reuss had in mind that they would form a new esoteric order that would fuse Craft Masonry, Rosicrucianism and Hindu Tantra.⁸⁵ Urban maintains that at the time Kellner was one of the few Western figures with a detailed knowledge of Yoga and that he regarded 'white sexual magic' as a source of godlike power. Kellner performed Tantric rites with his wife and a small group of disciples in order to produce the so-called 'divine Elixir' – an amalgam of male and female sexual fluids.⁸⁶

Like Kellner, Reuss was also interested in phallic cults and Tantra and would later produce a treatise on sexual worship titled *Lingam-Yoni*.⁸⁷ He believed that sexual congress mirrored the cosmic act of creation and that the *lingam*, or phallus, was a key symbol of the creator of the universe.⁸⁸ Urban argues that it was Reuss who incorporated sexual magic into the upper grades of the O.T.O.⁸⁹ Unfortunately Kellner did not live to see the actual establishment of the new esoteric organisation. He became terminally ill in 1904 and died the following year. Reuss was forced to act on his own, recruiting a range of 'Oriental Freemasons' for the new Order and eventually naming it the 'Order of Oriental Templars' [Ordo Templi Orientis].⁹⁰ With the assistance of Franz Hartmann and Heinrich Klein, Reuss prepared a constitution for the O.T.O. in 1906.⁹¹

Koenig maintains that Reuss never intended that the O.T.O. should become a vehicle for Crowley's doctrine of Thelema.⁹² However, Reuss was sufficiently impressed by Crowley's ideas that he translated the latter's sex-magick ritual, the *Gnostic Mass* (composed 1913), into German and had it recited at a special O.T.O. congress at Monte Verità.⁹³ Reuss also announced at the same congress that he was translating Crowley's *Book of the Law* into German. Crowley reciprocated the gesture by publishing several major O.T.O. documents in *The Equinox*, among them *Liber LII: the Manifesto of the O.T.O.*⁹⁴

In his *Confessions*, Crowley states that Reuss 'resigned the office [of the Outer Head of the Order] in 1922 in my favour' although even in the official O.T.O. History it is conceded that that no evidence or letter from Reuss has ever been found confirming this claim.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, Crowley succeeded Reuss as O.H.O. (Outer Head of the Order) in 1922 and would hold this position until his death in 1947.

Under Crowley, the O.T.O.'s original nine degrees were expanded to eleven. The eighth, ninth and eleventh degrees focused on non-reproductive sexual acts including masturbation, the consumption of sexual fluids (referred to above as the 'magical elixir'), and homosexual intercourse.⁹⁶ Koenig notes that other elements of Crowleyian sex magic, in addition to the ritual consumption of semen and vaginal fluids, were incorporated into the rites of the O.T.O. at this time. They included various forms of sexual visualisation and the act of masturbating on magical sigils:

Crowley's VIIIth degree unveiled...that masturbating on a sigil of a demon or meditating upon the image of a phallus would bring power or communication with a [or one's own] divine being... The IXth degree was labelled heterosexual intercourse where the sexual secrets were sucked out of the vagina and when not consumed...put on a sigil to attract this or that demon to fulfil the pertinent wish... In the XIth degree, the mostly homosexual degree, one identifies oneself with an ejaculating penis. The blood (or excrements) from anal intercourse attract the spirits/demons while the sperm keeps them alive.⁹⁷

Crowley's writings on sex magic

Crowley produced several short texts on sex magic, some of which are written in veiled symbolic language. These texts include *De Arte Magica* (written in 1914 and also translated and published in Reuss's German-language O.T.O. magazine, *Oriflamme*, in the same year); *Liber Agape*; *Energized Enthusiasm: a Note on Theurgy*, and the notorious, but blandly titled *Emblems and Modes of Use*. Crowley's *Gnostic Mass* and the *Mass of the Phoenix* also contain sex magic references. Despite their often discursive language and veiled symbolism these texts provide intriguing insights into Crowley's philosophy and practice of sex magic.

De Arte Magica was intended as a document for IX° O.T.O. candidates. After reminding the reader that 'the Phallus is the physiological basis of the Oversoul'⁹⁸ – a statement with which Reuss would surely have agreed – Crowley goes on to describe sex magic methods drawn from both the Jewish Kabbalah and the Hindu spiritual tradition. With regard to the former, Crowley states that 'in the semen itself...lies a creative life which cannot be balked'. According to Jewish teachings, says Crowley, conjugal love should be a holy act, preceded by ablutions and prayer: 'All lustful thoughts must be rigidly excluded, the purpose must be solely that of procreation [and] the blessing of God must be most earnestly invoked.'⁹⁹ However Crowley was also interested in the magical consequences of other types of sexual act:

All other sexual acts involving emission of semen... attract other spirits, incomplete and therefore evil... nocturnal pollutions bring succubi, which are capable of separate existence and of vampirising their creator. But voluntary sterile acts create demons, and (if done with concentration and magical intention) such demons... may subserve that intention.¹⁰⁰

Crowley also makes reference to the Hindu concept that *prana* or life-force 'resides in the *Bindu*, or semen'. Certain yogic practitioners, writes Crowley, are able to

stimulate to the maximum its [ie. sperm's] generation, and at the same time vigorously withhold by will. After some little exercise they claim that they can deflower as many as eighty virgins in a night without losing a single drop of the Bindu. Nor is this ever to be lost, but reabsorbed through the tissues of the body. The organs thus act as a siphon to draw constantly fresh supplies of life from the cosmic reservoir, and flood the body with their fructifying virtue ... in the semen itself exists a physical force which can be turned to [the] magical or mystical ends of the Adept.¹⁰¹

Here we have a clear expression of the concept that the individual human will can harness the life-force in semen and direct it to a specific magical purpose. Writings like *Liber Agape* and *Energized Enthusiasm: a Note on Theurgy*, on the other hand, are much more obscure: they contain veiled symbolism and require more detailed scrutiny. *Liber Agape* is also known as *The Book of the Unveiling of the Sangraal* and was intended as 'a secret instruction of the Ninth degree' in the O.T.O.¹⁰²

Liber Agape begins with a prayer, a salutation to Baphomet¹⁰³ and a statement inferring that the Ninth degree of the O.T.O. will reveal occult secrets hitherto associated with the Knights of the Temple (Knights Templar) and the 'Brethren of the Rose Crosse'. The rite itself is described as a 'High Mass to be celebrated in the Temple of the Holy Ghost'. Crowley also employs alchemical imagery in his text, making reference to the 'Medicine of Metals', 'the Philosopher's Stone', 'Tinctures White and Red' and 'the Elixir of Life'. The latter are clearly intended as sexual images. As mentioned earlier, the Elixir of Life refers to the sexual fluids produced and co-mingled in the vagina through sexual intercourse. The white tincture is also described elsewhere in Crowley's sex magic writings as the 'Gluten of the White Eagle'¹⁰⁴ and is a reference to the sexual fluids (and sometimes also the menstrual blood) of the female participant in sex magic. The red tincture is the 'Blood of the Red Lion', a reference to the semen generated by the male participant (Crowley often linked blood symbolically with semen).¹⁰⁵

Interestingly, *Liber Agape* incorporates within its structure the text of *The Star Sapphire* (previously published as Chapter 36 of *The Book of Lies*) – the short work which Theodor Reuss believed betrayed the innermost secret of the Ninth degree of the O.T.O. (see above). We are fortunate that a commentary on *The Star Sapphire* has recently been made available by American ceremonial magician Frater Osiris, a former member of the O.T.O., who was privy to the inner-Order *Thelemic* interpretation of the text.¹⁰⁶

While it is clear at the outset that *The Star Sapphire* is intended as a sex-magic tract, and it comes as no surprise that the *Magick Rood* is the phallus, and the *Mystic Rose* is the vagina, it is perhaps less obvious that the reference to ‘make the Holy Hexagram’ is an instruction that the man and woman should interlock their heads and bodies in a mutual oral sex position to form the shape of a hexagram.¹⁰⁷ Crowley provides a clue in the aptly numbered Chapter 69 of *The Book of Lies* where he refers to the Holy Hexagram and the ‘Double Gift of Tongues’.¹⁰⁸ Frater Osiris explains that ‘Making the Rosy Cross’ is also a reference to sexual intercourse and the participants should utter the magical exclamation ‘*Ararita*’ three times at the moment of orgasm. The instruction ‘Let him drink of the Sacrament and let him communicate the same’ is an instruction that the ‘sacrament’ – the ‘elixir’ or fluids arising from sexual intercourse – should be consumed by both participants, each providing this elixir to the other. As Frater Osiris notes, ‘It is suggested elsewhere in Crowley’s writings that the Sacrament be dissolved and absorbed in the mouth to obtain the fullest effect.’¹⁰⁹

Energized Enthusiasm: a Note on Theurgy (Liber DCCCLX) – a work dedicated to ‘IAO, the supreme One of the Gnostics, the true God’¹¹⁰ – is one of Crowley’s most interesting writings on sex magic, combining didactic content with a seemingly autobiographical, yet highly symbolic, narrative written in the first person. Crowley begins by introducing the reader to the idea that divine consciousness is ‘reflected and refracted’ in works of Genius [capitalised in Crowley’s text] and in turn feeds on ‘a certain secretion... analogous to semen, but not identical to it.’¹¹¹ Later Crowley claims that he can always trace a connection between his sexual state and ‘the condition of [his] artistic creation’ and that what he calls ‘energized enthusiasm’ is ‘the lever that moves God’.¹¹² In other words, there is a technique of ecstasy, heightened by sexuality, which is directly related to artistic creativity and Genius, and this is a technique that subjects God to the artistic intent and human will. We will encounter a similar concept in the artistic and magical trance-method of Austin Osman Spare, described in Chapter Six. Spare was briefly a member of Crowley’s O.T.O.

circa 1910 but seems to have formulated his ideas independently. Both men believed that they could use the transcendent power of the sexual orgasm to subject the visionary universe to their own individual will in order to bring about a desired result – artistic or otherwise. In *Energized Enthusiasm* Crowley writes quite specifically that through ‘the sacramental and ceremonial use of the sexual act, the divine consciousness may be attained’.¹¹³

Later in the same work (which consists of sixteen short chapters) Crowley describes a sex-magick ceremony of the Rose Croix. The ceremony – which is presented in Crowley’s text as taking place in a mystical vision – is a High Mass and is conducted in a private chapel. The altar is covered by a cloth which displays the symbols of the Rose and Cross, and at the entrance of the chapel stand a young man and woman ‘dressed in simple robes of white silk embroidered with gold, red and blue’. The High Priest presiding over the ceremony is a man of about sixty, with a white beard, and he is accompanied by a High Priestess. Both wear richly ornamented robes, have a ‘stately’ presence, and embrace each other. Knights and Dames make up the congregation. The chapel is consecrated, the litany begins, and the High Priest takes from the altar a flask which resembles a phallus – an indication that the ceremony about to be performed has a sexual orientation. The High Priestess then kneels and presents a boat-shaped cup of gold (the cup, as a receptive vessel, being traditionally perceived in the Western esoteric tradition as a ‘female’ symbol, especially in the sexual sense). The High Priest’s flask contains wine that looks like fire but which is cool to drink. Crowley somehow receives this as a sacrament – he is an onlooker at the ceremony and feels he is experiencing this sacred rite while in a mystical out-of-the-body state.¹¹⁴ Crowley writes that he ‘trembles’ as he consumes this sacred drink, as do other members of the congregation – for the ritual is charged with sacred meaning. In due course the celebrants move down the chapel aisle and the Knights and Dames rise up and give the secret sign of the Rose Croix. The High Priestess discards her robe, stands naked before the congregation, and begins to sing: ‘Io Paian! Io Pan!’... A sacred mist now rises up around the participants, heightening the sense of mystery as organ music wafts through the chapel, and the High Priest joins his partner at the altar of the Rose Croix where they both lie down. The celebrants, meanwhile, stretch forth their arms in the shape of a cross...

Presumably the ‘Great Rite’ is about to be performed by the High Priest and High Priestess – Crowley does not provide us with the details of what happens next. However, given (as Frater Osiris has already explained

above) that in the O.T.O. 'Making the Rosy Cross' is a reference to ritual sexual intercourse, it would seem that Crowley's High Mass of the Rose Croix is analogous to the mystic marriage of the alchemical King Sol and Queen Luna who consummate their sacred union and thereby create the 'Elixir of Life'.¹¹⁵

Crowley's Thelemic sex-magick ritual, the *Gnostic Mass* (*Liber XV, Ecclesiae Gnosticae Catholicae Canon Missae*), composed in 1913, is linked thematically to *Energized Enthusiasm* and was written around the same time.¹¹⁶ The *Gnostic Mass* – Crowley's *Thelemic* (and perhaps also blasphemous) response to the Roman Catholic Eucharist – employs specific sexual motifs and draws on the theme of transubstantiation. Although other minor characters play a part, the Mass focuses on two central figures, the Priest, who bears the Sacred Lance (a symbol of the phallus) and the Priestess, who in this ritual context is deemed to be 'Virgo Intacta' and is identified symbolically with the Holy Graal (the sacred Cup). During the 'Consecration of the Elements', the Priest gives a blessing and oversees the transubstantiation of the 'cakes of light' ('By the virtue of the Rod / Be this bread the Body of God!') and wine ('By the virtue of the Rod / Be this wine the Blood of God'), and during the 'Mystic Marriage and Consummation' the Priest and Priestess jointly lower the Sacred Lance into Cup in a symbolic expression of sexual union.¹¹⁷ All congregants then partake of the consecrated 'cakes of light' which contain the sexual elixir and which are said to embody 'the essence of the life of the Sun'.¹¹⁸

The Mass of the Phoenix (*Liber XLIV*), by way of contrast, is a simplified form of the Eucharist intended for daily life by the practising Thelemic magician.¹¹⁹ Despite its simpler form Crowley nevertheless considered it to be just as significant as the *Gnostic Mass*.¹²⁰ *The Mass of the Phoenix* derives its name from the mythical phoenix, an alchemical symbol of transmutation and resurrection. The phoenix was said to feed its young on blood drawn from its own breast. First published as Chapter 44 of *The Book of Lies* (1912), the Mass is performed only at sunset and is undertaken as a solitary ceremonial activity. At the climax of the ritual the magician makes the Mark of the Beast¹²¹ on his (or her) breast, either drawing blood directly with a burin (a small sharp knife) or by cutting a finger and inscribing the sign in blood. A cake of light is used to staunch the blood and is then ritually consumed.¹²²

Crowley's most controversial work on sex magic, however, is a short four-page article titled *Emblems and Modes of Use*, which was intended as a 'secret' text for the Ninth degree of the O.T.O.¹²³ Once again, Crowley

utilises alchemical imagery, writing that the ‘Egg’ (Emblem 1) is borne by the ‘menstruum [that] the Alchemists call the Gluten [capitals in Crowley’s text]. The Egg will be fertilized by the ‘Serpent’ (Emblem 2). Crowley says that the Serpent is ‘the principle of immortality, the self renewal through incarnation, of persistent will, inherent in the “Red Lion” *who is, of course, the operator*’ [My italics – Crowley generally presents his magickal texts from the viewpoint of the male practitioner, even when a woman is involved].¹²⁴ Crowley writes that ‘both Lion and Eagle must be robust, in good health...overflowing with energy, magnetically attracted to one another, and in absolute understanding [and] harmony about the object of the operation’.¹²⁵

According to Crowley the sex magick operation has to be sufficiently intense that it creates a state of ‘Black-Out’ where ‘the Ego-consciousness itself is abolished’.¹²⁶ This is remarkably similar to Austin Spare’s notion of the ‘Void moment’ which is described in Chapter Six. At this stage, notes Crowley,

the Will should still continue to create, stopping only when ‘the blood of the Red Lion’ [ie. semen] is one with the ‘Gluten of the White Eagle’ and the ‘Serpent’ and the ‘Egg’ have fused completely. The result of this fusion is called the Elixir – and numerous other names, eg. The Stone of the Philosophers, the Medicine of the Metals etc., especially the Quintessence.¹²⁷

It would seem from this statement that Crowley believes the symbolism of medieval Alchemy – a key branch of the Western esoteric tradition – should be interpreted primarily in sexual terms. For him the elixir itself has innate magical potency. From a purely pragmatic point of view, it can be used to achieve specific magical outcomes and therefore becomes useful in the practice of sorcery:

The Lion must collect it – the best method is by suction [ie., sucking it out of his partner’s vagina] so as to avoid waste, and share it with the Eagle. It should be absorbed by the mucous membrane [ie through the upper palate of the mouth, rather than swallowed]. A portion is reserved and placed in physical contact with the magickal link, or with a talisman specially prepared for the Operation, and consecrated accordingly. At the very least, some suitable symbol, eg. if you are making an opus for \$\$ smear the Elixir on a gold coin, or ring; if for health, touch the bare earth, or the patient with it. In any case, be careful to consume it by absorption for it restores with interest any virtue that may have been expended in the work itself.¹²⁸

This is not the only occasion where Crowley refers to the idea of the elixir, or semen, being used to achieve specific magical outcomes. In another

short text, *Liber A'Aash vel Capricorni Pneumatici (Liber CCCLXX)* – which is recognised as a major (Class A) sex magic document by members of the O.T.O.¹²⁹ – Crowley makes a veiled reference to masturbating on demonic sigils by using the magical utterance as a metaphor for ejaculation:

Let him sit and conjure; let him draw back the hood from his head and fix his basilisk eye upon the sigil of the demon. Then let him sway the force of him to and fro like a satyr in silence, until the Word burst from his throat... that which floodeth him is the infinite mercy of the Genitor-Genitrix of the Universe, whereof he is the Vessel.¹³⁰

Crowley's idea that the elixir could be used to activate magical talismans and demonic sigils must have become known to a select number of magical practitioners within the O.T.O. because the same technique surfaces again many years later in the relationship between Eugene Goossens and Rosaleen Norton: this time it is Goossens who wishes to instruct Norton in the sex-magic practice of masturbating on demonic magical seals (or sigils) from the *Goetia* (see Chapter Five). Goossens presumably learned this technique of sorcery from his close friend Philip Heseltine, who was a member of the O.T.O.¹³¹ and first met Crowley around 1914, during the period when these sex-magick teachings were first being formulated.¹³² As far as we know, Goossens himself was not a member of this Thelemite organisation.

Sex Magic and 'Spermo-Gnosis' prior to the O.T.O.

As mentioned above, within the context of the Western esoteric tradition the practice of sex magic precedes both Carl Kellner and Theodor Reuss and the establishment of the O.T.O. Several scholars, among them Hugh B. Urban (2006), John Deveney (1997), Joscelyn Godwin (1995) and J. Gordon Melton (1985), have drawn attention to the unique contribution made by the influential American occultist Paschal Beverly Randolph (1825-75). Randolph is significant because, as Melton puts it: 'Like Crowley, Randolph discovered the essential aspect of sex magick by suddenly combining long-term interests in sexuality and the occult.'¹³³ The bridging link between Randolph and the O.T.O. is provided by two American esoteric orders, the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, and Randolph's Brotherhood of Eulis.

Born in New York in 1825, Paschal Beverly Randolph was the son of a wealthy Virginian named William Randolph, and a slave woman named Flora Beverly who was of mixed East Indian, European and Madagascan

descent. Flora raised her son by herself in a ‘gloomy old stone house on Manhattan Island’.¹³⁴ However when Randolph was five, his mother died during an epidemic and he was placed in an orphanage. Essentially



Plate 34: Paschal Beverly Randolph

growing up on his own, Randolph taught himself to read and write by copying letters from printed posters and billboards.¹³⁵ Classified as a ‘free man of colour’, he trained as a natural physician and also studied spiritualism and Franz Anton Mesmer’s theory of ‘animal magnetism’, a precursor of modern hypnosis.¹³⁶ Randolph worked for the Abolitionist cause before the Civil War and helped raise money for the Black Militias of Louisiana. He also gained a reputation as a trance speaker and spiritualist medium.¹³⁷ During the late 1840s he travelled widely in Europe, visiting England, Scotland, Ireland, France and Malta as well as also visiting Egypt, Turkey and Palestine.¹³⁸ Intent on seeking out the sources of esoteric wisdom wherever he could find them, Randolph maintained that he received many high initiations while he was in Europe. During his travels he met the famous French Kabbalist and magician, Eliphas Lévi, whose writings and occult ideas would later greatly influence the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (see Chapter Two). He also met the notable Rosicrucian occultists Kenneth R.H. Mackenzie and Edward Bulwer-Lytton¹³⁹ and the eccentric cleric and Rosicrucian historian Hargrave Jennings (1817-1890), who was interested in ancient phallic worship.¹⁴⁰ After returning to the United States, Randolph founded the Fraternitas Rosae Crucis in 1858, the oldest Rosicrucian organization in North America (currently headquartered in Beverly Hall, Quakertown, Pennsylvania).¹⁴¹ In 1861, after returning to Europe, Randolph was

initiated into the Order of the Rose, a group headed by Hargrave Jennings. He then travelled on to Syria where he was inducted as a Hierarch of the Ansairah before returning to the United States in 1863.¹⁴²

Randolph explored clairvoyant scrying¹⁴³ with magic mirrors and also wrote a treatise on the use of hashish as an aid to trance possession (1860). However he became a controversial figure largely because of his ideas on occult sexuality, expressed publicly at a time when such issues were largely a taboo subject. Randolph's Rosicrucian activities were interrupted during the Civil War period but in 1870 he re-established his Rosicrucian organisation in Boston, calling it the Brotherhood of Eulis and using it as a vehicle to explore sex magic.¹⁴⁴ Three years later Randolph published one of his best-known and most controversial books, *Eulis! The History of Love: Its Wondrous Magic, Chemistry, Rules, Laws, Modes, Moods and Rationale, Being the Third Revelation of Soul and Sex*.¹⁴⁵

In *Eulis!* – which derives its title ultimately from the Greek *eos*, meaning 'the dawn, the gate of light'¹⁴⁶ – Randolph provides an account of how he was first initiated into the mysteries of sex magic while travelling in the Middle East:

One night – it was in far-off Jerusalem or Bethlehem, I really forget which – I made love to... a dusky maiden of Arabic blood. I of her and that experience learned... the fundamental principle of the White Magic of Love; subsequently I became affiliated with some dervishes and fakirs by whom... I found the road to other knowledges... I am become practically... a mystic and in time chief of the lofty brethren... discovering the ELIXIR OF LIFE, the universal Solvent... and the philosopher's stone.¹⁴⁷

Basing his ideas substantially on the ritual sex practices of the Islamic Nusairi sect in Syria, Randolph came to believe that the sexual instinct was a fundamental force in the cosmos. Randolph maintained that 'the pellucid aroma of divinity' suffuses the sex act¹⁴⁸ but he also believed that sexual union could become a metaphysical and sacred ritual *only* between married loving couples and *only* when it resulted in full and complete orgasms for both partners.¹⁴⁹ Many years before Crowley and Austin Spare (see Chapter Seven), Randolph proposed that the sexual orgasm could be used to gain practical and tangible outcomes, that is to say, *subject to willed intent, the power of sexuality could be harnessed to produce specific magical results*.¹⁵⁰

It follows that as are the people at *that moment* [orgasm] so will be that which enters into them from the regions above, beneath, and round about; wherefore, whatsoever

male or female shall truly will for, hopefully pray for, and earnestly yearn for, when love, pure and holy, is in the nuptive ascendent, in form, passionate, affectional, divine and volitional, that prayer will be granted, and the boon given. *But the prayer must precede* [the moment of orgasm].¹⁵¹

In another text, *The Ansairctic Mystery: A New Revelation Concerning Sex!* (circa 1873-74), which was circulated privately to his Rosicrucian followers, Randolph lists over a hundred outcomes that he believed could be achieved or resolved through this type of sex magic. They include topics and issues relating to money matters, marital discord, prolonging life, eliminating disease and charging amulets with life-force.¹⁵² Randolph was unstinting in proclaiming the potency of sexuality but warned that it could lead to both highs and lows in the quest for spiritual awakening:

The ejective moment... is the most divine and tremendously important one in the human career as an independent entity, for not only may we launch Genius, Power, Beauty, Deformity, Crime, Idiocy, Shame or Glory on the world's great sea of Life, in the person of the children we may then produce, but we may plunge our own souls neck-deep in Hell's horrid slime, or else mount the Azure as coequal associate Gods; for then the mystic Soul swings wide its Golden gates, opens its portals to the whole vast Universe and through them come trooping either Angels of Light or the Grizzly Presence from the dark corners of the Spaces. Therefore, human copulation is either ascentive and ennobling, or descensive and degrading...¹⁵³

Superficially, Randolph's theories of sex magic and tangible outcomes seem to mirror those of Aleister Crowley, described earlier. However, Randolph's interpretation of sex magic was actually very different from Crowley's. Randolph deplored masturbation and homosexuality and other forms of non-reproductive sexuality¹⁵⁴ and believed that sacred sex could only occur between a loving heterosexual husband and wife. Randolph's approach essentially involved love among *equals*, whereas Crowley sometimes employed prostitutes or other available women who were not personally committed to his magical purpose and who were used purely for sex.¹⁵⁵ Crowley's magical episode with Victor Neuburg in Algeria involving homosexual anal sex (referred to above) was also an act of ritual sexual *submission* by Crowley and would therefore have failed Randolph's criteria on at least two counts.

Randolph seems to have been far more averse than Crowley to the negative [or *Qliphothic*] realms of primal consciousness that could be unleashed through what Randolph regarded as misplaced acts of sex magic. Nevertheless, Randolph and Crowley would certainly have agreed that the orgasm itself was among the most powerful and profound of all human experiences,¹⁵⁶ and Randolph would also have agreed with Crowley's

statement in *Energized Enthusiasm* (1913) that through ‘the sacramental...use of the sexual act, the divine consciousness may be attained’.¹⁵⁷ For both men, sexuality was a vital key to potency and transcendence.

Robert North, who contributed an introduction to the 1988 edition of Randolph’s *Sexual Magic*,¹⁵⁸ maintains that Carl Kellner derived many of the O.T.O. teachings directly from Randolph’s instructions for the Brotherhood of Eulis. However, other writers, including T.Allen Greenfield (2003), Samuel Scarborough (2001) and Joscelyn Godwin (1994), believe it was the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor – which in turn drew on Randolph’s sex magic teachings – that was probably the specific connecting link between Randolph, Kellner and Reuss.



Plate 35: Max Théon

The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor was founded in 1870 by the Polish mystic Max Théon (1848-1927). Théon was interested in Hermeticism and looked to ancient Egypt as the source of the Western esoteric tradition. However he was also highly eclectic, embracing the Kabbalah, the Rig-Veda, Tantrism, and elements of Freemasonry. For a time he lived in Algeria, where he formulated what he referred to as the Cosmic Tradition and took the mystical name Aia Aziz (‘the beloved’).¹⁵⁹ In 1873 Théon recruited the Scottish occultist and Freemason Peter Davidson (1837-1915), a close friend and colleague of Dr Gerard Encausse (also known as Papus – see Chapter Two), to join him in administering the Brotherhood. As an initiatory organisation the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor first became public in London in 1884, even though it had been in existence since 1870¹⁶⁰ and its initiations – based on Rosicrucian and Masonic principles – resembled those of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, established

several years later.¹⁶¹ Théon took the role of Grand Master of the Exterior Circle of the Order while Davidson was appointed Provincial Grand Master of the North (Scotland) and later also the Eastern Section (America). Together, Théon and Davidson made extensive use of ancient Egyptian symbolism in their magical ceremonies. This symbolic emphasis was further developed by Thomas H. Burgoyne (1855-1895), who joined the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor in 1883 and helped Théon and Davidson run the organisation from this time on. The early curriculum of the Hermetic Brotherhood also included selections from the writings of the Rosicrucian author Hargrave Jennings as well as Paschal Beverly Randolph.¹⁶² During the 1880s and 1890s Davidson and Burgoyne adapted Randolph's *The Mysteries of Eros*¹⁶³ and *Eulis!*,¹⁶⁴ thereby placing more emphasis on practical sex magic in the Brotherhood's curriculum. It seems likely that it is through the reworking of Randolph's sex magic concepts in the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, and in particular through Davidson's close association with Papus in Europe, that Randolph's sex magic teachings eventually attracted the attention of Reuss and Kellner.¹⁶⁵ According to P-R.Koenig, Reuss first made contact with Papus in 1901.¹⁶⁶



Plate 36: Dr Gerard Encausse, also known as Papus

Nevertheless, as indicated earlier, there is something of a gulf between Randolph's version of sex magic as the 'White Magic of Love' and the homo-erotic approach to sex magic advocated by Reuss and Crowley in the O.T.O. Clearly, Randolph cannot be considered the only major precursor of Crowley's Thelemic sex magick since there are major aspects of Crowley's occult doctrine that are entirely absent in Randolph's writings and philosophy. It is necessary to explore other sources entirely – sources much closer to the origins of the Western esoteric tradition itself – and it comes as no surprise that some of Crowley's libertine mystical and sex-magick ideas are mirrored quite specifically in the ritual practices of certain heretical Gnostic sects whose origins date back to the early centuries of the Christian era.¹⁶⁷ These include the Gnostic sects that Mircea Eliade refers

to as *Pneumatikoi* ¹⁶⁸ and O.T.O. historian P-R.Koenig calls ‘Spermo-Gnostics’. ¹⁶⁹

One of the most intriguing elements in the rise of Gnosticism during the early Christian era was the concept that spiritual redemption could be attained by collecting, salvaging, and carrying to heaven the sparks of divine light that were buried in living matter – primarily within the human body. Eliade notes that

the equation divine light = *pneuma* [Greek: ‘spirit’] = semen plays a central role only among the Phibionites (and sects related to them) and among the Manichaeans. But while the latter, on the ground of this very equation, scorned the sexual act and exalted a severe asceticism, the Phibionites extolled the most abject sexual orgies and practised the sacramental absorption of *semen virile* and menstrual fluids, careful only to avoid pregnancy. ¹⁷⁰

Despite the overt sensuality of their sexual rituals, the Syrian Phibionites regarded themselves as Christian Gnostics: they believed that the divine power of the crucified Son had been trapped within the physical confines of the material world. The Phibionites also believed they were giving true expression to their Christian beliefs by releasing this spiritual power during their sacred rituals without creating more children in the process – from their perspective, pregnancy and the act of giving birth would trap more souls within the painful constrictions of physical existence. For them, consuming semen and menstrual blood during the Eucharist was a purer form of ritual communion than the more conventional symbolism of blood and wine.

The practices of the Phibionites are described in the *Panarion*, written by the 4th century Christian writer, Epiphanius:

The power, which is in menstruation and in the sperm they called *psyche*, which would be gathered and eaten. And whatever we eat, flesh or vegetables or bread or anything else, we do a favour to the creatures because we gather the psyche from everything...And they say that it is the same psyche which is dispersed in animals and beasts, fishes, snakes, men, vegetables, trees and anything that is produced. ¹⁷¹

Epiphanius was clearly horrified by what he describes as the ‘shameless’ sexual practices of the Phibionites:

...they serve rich food, meat and wine even if they are poor. When they thus ate together and so to speak filled up their veins, from the surplus of their strength they turn to excitements. The man, leaving his wife, says to his own wife: ‘Stand up and make love with the brother (‘Perform the *agapē* with the brother’). Then the

unfortunates unite with each other, and as I am truly ashamed to say the shameful things that are being done by them... nevertheless I will not be ashamed to say those things which they are not ashamed to do, in order that I may cause in every way a horror in those who hear about their shameful practices. After they have intercourse in the passion of fornication they raise their own blasphemy toward heaven. The woman and the man take the fluid of emission of the man into their hands, they stand, turn toward heaven, their hands besmeared with the uncleanness, and pray as the people called *Stratiotikoi* and *Gnostikoi*, bringing to the Father of the Nature of All, that which they have on their hands, and they say: 'We offer to thee this gift, the body of Christ.' And then they eat it, their own ignominy, and say: 'This is the body of Christ and this is the Passover for the sake of which our bodies suffer and are forced to confess the suffering of Christ.' Similarly also with the woman: when she happens to be in the flowing of the blood they gather the blood of menstruation of her uncleanness and eat it together and say: 'This is the blood of Christ.'¹⁷²

The Phibionite ritual of consuming menstrual blood and semen is mirrored in Crowley's sex magick practice of consuming 'cakes of light', which contained precisely the same key ingredients (based on the instructions conveyed to Crowley by Aiwass in 1904, as recorded in *The Book of the Law*). As with the Phibionites, Crowley included the consumption of sacramental 'cakes of light' in both his *Gnostic Mass* and also in the *Mass of the Phoenix* (see above), and it is clear that Crowley intended that in these magickal ceremonies the 'cakes of light' should serve as an alternative to the Body of Christ consumed by congregants during Christian communion. Although Crowley does not mention the Phibionites specifically in his writings, he nevertheless believed he was perpetuating the Gnostic tradition through such ceremonies, and for him the ritual consumption of blood and semen was a sacred act. According to the text of the *Gnostic Mass*, consecrated 'cakes of light' contain the sexual elixir and therefore embody 'the essence of the life of the Sun'.¹⁷³

The surviving papers of Theodor Reuss show that the sex magic practices incorporated within the O.T.O. by its founder also had an essentially 'Spermo-Gnostic' orientation, and that this was linked to the mystical legend of the Holy Grail. According to P-R.Koenig,

The whole body was considered divine (the Temple of the Holy Ghost) and the sexual organs were meant to fulfil a peculiar function: a Holy Mass was the symbolic act of re-creating the universe. The root belief is that only by co-operation between man and woman can either advance spiritually. Sexually joining is a shadow of the cosmic act of creation. Performed by adepts, the union of male and female approaches more closely the primal act and partakes of its divine nature... The central secret of his Ordo Templi Orientis was built around Richard Wagner's *Parsifal*. The spear became the phallus while the Graal, of course, was the vagina which contained the 'Grals-speise' (sperm and vaginal fluids).¹⁷⁴



Plate 37: Karl Germer, Crowley's successor in the O.T.O.

The O.T.O. after Crowley

When Crowley died in 1947 he was succeeded as Head of the O.T.O. by his former representative in Germany, Karl Germer (1885-1962). At this time the focus of the O.T.O. had already begun to shift to the United States, the organization of its European affiliates having become fragmented and dispersed as a result of the impact of World War Two.¹⁷⁵ At the end of the war in 1945 only the Agapé Lodge of the O.T.O. in Pasadena was still actively functioning: this was a lodge established in the 1930s by Wilfred Talbot Smith (1885-1957), a loyal Thelemite who had first met Crowley in Vancouver in 1915, and Jane Wolfe (1875-1958), who had stayed at Crowley's sex-magick Abbey at Cefalu, Sicily, in the early 1920s.¹⁷⁶ After Crowley's will was probated, Germer received most of the materials from Crowley's estate and took them to his home in Westpoint, California¹⁷⁷ – various court proceedings have since determined that Crowley's copyrights are held legally by the U.S. Grand Lodge of the O.T.O. which now seeks to control publication of Crowley's works around the world.¹⁷⁸

In Britain the thrust of Crowley's Thelemic teachings continued under the enthusiastic leadership of Kenneth Grant (1924 -). Following Crowley's



Plate 38: A rare photograph of Thelemic disciple, Kenneth Grant

death, Germer charted a British branch of the O.T.O. under Grant but then expelled him in July 1955 for associating with a rival O.T.O. offshoot, the *Fraternitas Saturni*,¹⁷⁹ and circulating a new, unauthorised O.T.O. manifesto.¹⁸⁰ Grant now heads the so-called Typhonian O.T.O., which is not legally connected to the American O.T.O. and has since become very much a rival occult organisation.¹⁸¹

Grant first met Crowley at Netherwood, Hastings (UK), in December 1944 and worked with him for a brief period as his secretary.¹⁸² Grant has since emerged as one of Crowley's most notable Thelemic disciples. A prolific author in his own right, Grant has released a number of important volumes on the Western esoteric tradition, several of them highly significant in relation to the occult source areas explored by Rosaleen Norton. These works provide important insights into the magic of the Left-Hand Path¹⁸³ and cover such subject areas as the *Qliphothic* realms of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, Tantric sex magic, and the practical applications of Kundalini yoga, all of which are central to any understanding of Norton's magical orientation and artistic *oeuvre*. Grant has also produced important publications on the visionary artist Austin Osman Spare (1886-1956), whom he knew personally, from 1949 onwards.¹⁸⁴ The parallels between the trance magic and visionary art of Spare and Rosaleen Norton are described in detail in Chapter Six.

Grant's occult perspective is especially significant because it affirms the esoteric connection between Indian Tantra, Gnosticism and what he calls the Draconian, Ophidian and Typhonian currents in modern sex magick.¹⁸⁵ In 1948 Grant published a *Manifesto of the British Branch of the Ordo Templi Orientis* in which he claimed that the Order promulgated a range of esoteric practices spanning both the Western and Eastern esoteric traditions:

In the O.T.O. are promulgated the essential teachings of the Draconian Tradition of Ancient Egypt; the teachings of the Indian Shakta Tantra Shastra; the teachings of the pre-Christian Gnosis; the Initiated Western Tradition as enshrined in the mysteries of the Holy Qabalah, and the Alchemical Mystical and Magical Formulae of the Arcane Schools of the age long past, as well as the mode of applying practically the essential principles underlying the Spagyric or Hermetic Sciences, the Orphic Mysteries and the use of the Ophidian Current.¹⁸⁶

Crowley was sufficiently impressed by Grant's research into the subject of sex magick that he admitted him to the Ninth degree of the O.T.O.¹⁸⁷ and this initiation was complemented by secret Tantric instructions from another occultist, David Curwen, who had become a Ninth degree member

of the Order in 1945.¹⁸⁸ It was Curwen who provided Grant with a full initiation into the Tantric *vama marg* (the ‘left-hand path’).¹⁸⁹ According to Grant, Curwen’s instructions convinced him that Crowley did not fully appreciate the significance of the female sexual fluids (*kalas*) which, together with the male fluids, form the basis of the ‘elixir’ in Thelemic sex magick.¹⁹⁰ The contemporary Thelemic practitioner Frater Zephyros elaborates on this theme in a recent article titled ‘The Ophidian Current’, which fuses the sex-magick doctrines of Grant and Crowley with references to the *chakras*, or spiritual energy centres in the body, that are awakened by the Kundalini serpent in Tantric yoga [see next section of this chapter]:

The formula and function of the Scarlet Woman starts with zones of occult energy intimately related to the network of nerves and plexuses associated with the endocrine glands. Kundalini energy affects the chakras in her body ... [see below for a description of chakras] ... and its vibrations influence the chemical composition of her glandular secretions. Such fragrances are devoured by the Priest and transmuted into magickal energy. ...

Kalas [genital secretions] may only be evoked into a chakra that has been properly prepared... Consuming the kalas charged with the upwardly directed currents (nectar) transforms consciousness and makes it possible to contact and communicate with transcendental entities...

For the female to arouse the Kundalini, she visualizes the Serpent in phallic form in the Mulhadara chakra and inflames herself to the point of orgasm. Yet before orgasm, she must move to the Ajna chakra [see below for descriptions of these two chakras]. Then she must maintain the image until consummation occurs. The male must proceed by identifying Kundalini with Hadit and the Cerebral Centre with Nuit [the Egyptian deities involved in Crowley’s *Thelemic* revelation]. The Hadit force is awakened and forces its way up the spinal column past all the sealed chakras into the cerebral centre [ie. Ajna].¹⁹¹

The significance of Grant’s Typhonian O.T.O. is that through its occult doctrines and practices it seeks to reaffirm the importance of the Tantric tradition both within Western sex magick specifically, and also within the Western esoteric tradition as a whole. Interestingly, this relationship between magick and Tantra is something that Rosaleen Norton also understood, acting independently¹⁹² and drawing on her practical knowledge of Kundalini Yoga while exploring various states of magical consciousness.

Kundalini Yoga and Tantra

The word ‘yoga’ derives from the Sanskrit *yuj*, meaning ‘to bind’ or ‘to

yoke’¹⁹³ and the essential aim of yoga is union with the Godhead, Brahman. The Sanskrit word *kundalini* translates literally as ‘of spiral nature’,¹⁹⁴ while the Sanskrit word *tantra* (‘weft, context, continuum’) refers to the nature of energy and power in the universe. In *Tantra: The Yoga of Sex*, Omar Garrison provides a concise overview of the philosophy associated with Tantra:

The broad, underlying foundation of Tantra philosophy may be summarised briefly as follows: The universe and everything in it is permeated by a secret energy or power, emanating from the single Source of all being. This power, although singular in essence, manifests in three ways, namely, as static inertia, dynamic inertia or mental energy, and as harmonious union of these reacting opposites. The universe or macrocosm through which these modalities of cosmic force function is exactly duplicated by the human form as microcosm. The Tantrik [sic] seeks, therefore, by mystic formularies, rites and symbols, to identify the corresponding centres of his own body with those of the macrocosm. Ultimately, he seeks union with God Himself.¹⁹⁵

Agehananda Bharati, an authority on the different branches of Tantra, distinguishes between guru-oriented, meditative yoga and Tantra *per se*, by drawing attention to the focus on a sexual partner in the Tantric tradition:

Orthodox yoga, that is the system of Patanjali and his protagonists, teaches the ascent of the dormant, coiled-up force as a process induced in the individual adept after due instruction by his own guru, and as a procedure in which the adept practises in solitude. The tantric’s practice, however, is undertaken in conjunction with a partner of the other sex. She is considered as the embodiment of Sakti [Shakti], the active principle conceived as female, by the Hindus...¹⁹⁶

In the Tantric tradition of Kundalini Yoga this sexual partnership is expressed as the merging of two opposites – Shiva and Shakti – who represent the male and female polarities of existence respectively. While the Higher Self (Atman) is represented in Kundalini Yoga as male, all created forms, all manifestations of life energy, intelligence, will, thoughts and feelings, are considered to be female, and as such are aspects of Shakti. As the Great Goddess, Shakti encompasses three *gunas*, or characteristics of creation, known as *sattva* (purity), *rajas* (activity) and *tamas* (inertia) as well as the five elements from which the universe is formed. Swami Sivananda Sarasvati provides an eloquent summation:

She [Shakti] is the primal force of life that underlies all existence. She vitalises the body through her energy. She is the energy in the Sun, the fragrance in the flowers, the beauty in the landscape... the whole world is her body. Mountains are her bones. Rivers are her veins. Ocean is her bladder. Sun and Moon are her eyes. Wind is her breath. Agni is her mouth.¹⁹⁷

Kundalini Yoga encompasses many different techniques, including the use of mantras, visualisation and breath control, in order to activate specific chakras [*chakra*: Sanskrit, ‘wheel’] or spiritual centres, in the body. These chakras can be listed as follows:



Plate 39: Kundalini Yoga chakras

First chakra: Muladhara, located at the base of the spine, near the coccyx

Second chakra: Svadisthana, located below the navel in the sacral region

Third chakra: Manipura, located above the navel in the lumbar region

Fourth chakra: Anahata, located near the heart

Fifth chakra: Visuddha, located in the throat

Sixth chakra: Ajna, located between the eyebrows

Seventh chakra: Sahasrara, located above the crown of the head ¹⁹⁸

Different goddess-manifestations of Shakti are ascribed to the first six chakras.¹⁹⁹ In addition, Kundalini Yoga assigns the so-called Tattva motifs associated with each of the elements, Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Spirit, to the first five chakras.²⁰⁰

Kundalini Yoga identifies a potentially cosmic process within every yogic practitioner: manifestations of the Hindu gods and goddesses are said to lie within the energy matrices of the human organism and the purpose of Kundalini Yoga is to bring them to life, unleashing their energy through the nadis [*nadi*: Sanskrit: ‘tube’, ‘vessel’], or spiritual channels in the body. The principal channel through which the Shakti energy can be awakened is via a nadi which passes through each of the seven chakras referred to above,

extending from Muladhara at the base of the spine to Sahasrara located just above the crown of the head. This energy-channel is known in Kundalini Yoga as *Sushumna* and corresponds to the central nervous system in the human body. Around the Sushumna are coiled two other major channels: Pingala – which is symbolically masculine and associated with the heat of the Sun – and Ida, which is symbolically feminine and is represented by the cool, reflected light of the Moon. As Ida and Pingala coil themselves around the Sushumna, they meet in the lowest chakra energy centre in the body, Muladhara, and again in the sixth centre, Ajna. The essential meditative task in Kundalini Yoga is to ‘raise’ the energy of the Goddess Shakti so she may once again be united with her consort Lord Shiva in the supreme bliss of *Samadhi*.²⁰¹ This occurs in the supreme chakra, Sahasrara, which is considered Shiva’s domain.²⁰² This chakra is associated with the experience of Brahman or ‘One-ness’.²⁰³

The Tantric practice of Kundalini Yoga focuses on the mystical properties of energy and this in turn is reflected in the ritual use of mantras (energy as sound) and in meditations employing specific colours in relation to each chakra (energy as light). It is also demonstrated by the symbolic dance of Shiva and Shakti as they unite one with the other, dissolving old forms and creating the universe anew (energy as movement). The chakras themselves are conceived as sources of subtle energy depicted as ‘wheels’ (the literal meaning of the Sanskrit word *chakra*) or as lotuses (*padma*). As yogic practitioner Madhav Pandit has noted, the meditative process in Kundalini Yoga involves ‘flowing’ from one chakra to the next by visualising each Tattva (or element) in turn, dissolving it in the associated mantra vibration, and then merging it with the next Tattva in sequence.²⁰⁴ The five Tattva elements – Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Spirit – are associated with the first five chakras. No element is ascribed to the transcendent sixth chakra, Ajna, which is considered the seat of all spiritual knowledge.²⁰⁵ Shakti is united with her consort, Lord Shiva, in the seventh chakra, Sahasrara, which is located above the crown of the head, just outside the physical body and beyond the realm of human awareness. This is a sacred union represented by the symbolism of mystical androgyny²⁰⁶ for, as Swami Sivananda Radha notes: ‘In the Kundalini symbolism, the union of Siva [Shiva] and Sakti [Shakti] is presented in one body, not as two bodies united. Lord Siva ultimately becomes half-man and half-woman indicating that power and its manifestations are inseparable.’²⁰⁷

The sacred union of Shiva and Shakti within the One-ness of Brahman can also be considered a mystery for, according to the Tantric tradition, at this point all aspects of form and creative manifestation are transcended. As the

psychologist C.G. Jung has written, Sahasrara represents a ‘philosophical concept with no substance whatever for us – it is beyond any possible experience’.²⁰⁸

Magic and the Left-Hand Path in Tantra

In *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Norton defines the Kundalini as the ‘undifferentiated elemental and potential creative power of the Self, generally symbolised as a Serpent, and traditionally associated with the spinal cord’.²⁰⁹ She goes on to state:

When latent it manifests only sporadically and partially in the sex force and sometimes as artistic or inventive creativity. Active, it confers supernormal powers in various directions.²¹⁰

Given Norton’s reference to ‘supernormal powers’ it is reasonable to assume that her interest in Kundalini yoga would have been primarily to explore the practical applications of Tantra in awakening heightened occult, sexual and creative sources of energy and inspiration. Indeed, in the text which accompanies Plate XXX in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, titled *At Home*, Norton makes reference to the Kundalini in a specifically



Plate 40: Rosaleen Norton, *At Home* (Plate XXX in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*)

magical context. Here she writes that Kundalini ‘sometimes assumes the shape of a serpent’ and is ‘my most powerful Familiar’ [capitals in Norton’s text],²¹¹ a ‘familiar’ being a spirit-helper who, in the medieval witchcraft tradition, accompanies the witch or warlock and provides its mistress or master with magical powers and occult knowledge.

Tantra and Thelemic sex magick

It is clear from data provided earlier that Norton was extremely interested in the magical writings of Aleister Crowley and that she had access to rare and relatively obscure works that Crowley published in England. One of Sir Eugene Goossens’ letters to Norton²¹² makes coded reference to a second-hand copy of ‘G.B.’ that Goossens had acquired for her; it is very likely that this was John Symonds’ biography of Crowley, *The Great Beast*, first published in London in 1951.²¹³ The same letter also makes reference to ‘cakes of light’, a specific reference to Aleister Crowley’s practice of sex magick described earlier. We know that while he was on one of his many overseas trips to Europe Goossens purchased masks for use in ritual magic activities at Brougham Street, and that he also acquired a special magical ‘unguent’ in Paris for Norton to apply to her body,²¹⁴ so it is highly likely that Goossens also acquired some of the rarer works by Crowley for Norton while he was on various overseas trips to London.²¹⁵ In this context it is useful to consider Crowley’s perspective on the magical applications of Tantra, especially in relation to sex magic, which was of considerable interest both to Norton and Goossens.

Lawrence Sutin, author of a recent biography of Aleister Crowley, believes that Crowley’s first reference to sex magic is recorded in a diary titled *The Writings of Truth* which was later published in a modified form in his *Temple of Solomon the King*.²¹⁶ It was while visiting his friend and former Golden Dawn colleague Allan Bennett (*Frater Iehi Aour*) in Ceylon in 1901 that Crowley was tutored for the first time in yoga. Bennett had left the world of ceremonial magic behind in England and had come to Ceylon to become a Buddhist monk. Bennett was willing to share his practical knowledge of yoga with his friend and together they rented a furnished bungalow in the hills near Kandy for a period of several months so Crowley could be shown the yogic techniques.²¹⁷

Crowley’s diary entries in *The Writings of Truth* record that during his stay in Kandy he practised yogic *pranayama* (control of prana, or life-energy, utilising breathing techniques) and that he had also been exploring

vamacharya, a form of ‘Left-Hand Path’ Tantra devoted to licentious rites and sexual debauchery.²¹⁸ Sutin writes:

This reference to *vamacharya* is most important, as it documents his [ie.Crowley’s] first known foray into ritual sexual magic. This Sanskrit term refers to a Hindu tantric practice of sexual intercourse that could – if the spiritual aspirations were untainted by lust – re-enact the cosmic coupling of Shiva and Shakti... In tantric tradition *vamacharya* is the ‘left-hand path’ that involves physical intercourse with a woman (*vama*) as partner, while the ‘right-hand path’ of *dakshinachara* enacts a symbolic intercourse.’²¹⁹

In *Tantra: The Way of Action*, occult historian and ceremonial magician Francis King describes the ritual procedure adopted in left-handed Tantra:

The rite proper begins with the worshippers gathered in a circle, seated on the ground, man alternating with woman, the woman on the left of each man being his intended sexual partner – hence, of course, the term left-handed Tantra. At the centre of the circle stands the male adept who will conduct the ceremony, the ‘priest’, and near him sits or lies a naked woman, or ‘priestess’. For tantrics all women are holy – as one text has it ‘every woman is your image, O Shakti, you reside in the forms of all women in this world’ – but for the duration of the rite the priestess, the woman at the centre of the circle who is to be the sexual partner of the officiating adept, is considered especially holy, a particular manifestation of Shakti. As such her vulva is peculiarly sacred, a symbol of her creative power which sustains the universe, and it is displayed as fully as possible to the assembled congregation, the priestess lying or sitting with her legs held wide apart.²²⁰

Before the Tantric rite itself can commence, however, certain purificatory procedures have to take place:

...the body of the priestess is ritually cleansed by being sprinkled with wine and consecrated ‘holy water’, and then Shakti is invoked into that body by the priest. This latter is done by the priest gently caressing her head, trunk and limbs while muttering or chanting invocations. Almost every part of the body receives these caresses but particular attention is paid to the vulva, which has an aromatic sandalwood paste applied to it, is lightly kissed, and is then, as the supreme expression of the nature of the Goddess, the recipient of symbolic sacrifice – that is to say libations of water, wine, or coconut milk are poured over it or on the ground beneath it.... The priestess is now looked upon as being deified, for the time being an avatar of Shakti.²²¹

Within this ritual context the Shakti priestess is venerated by the entire assembled group but the priest himself has a specific sexual role:

The ritual worship of the priestess is often immediately followed by her copulation with the priest, the assembled worshippers devoutly observing what is regarded as a sacred action, a physical expression of the eternal embrace of Shiva and Shakti. The

sexual coupling is regarded as holy and so are the participants, *but only as manifestations of Shiva and Shakti* [King's emphasis in italics]²²².

King also comments further on the distinction between left-handed and right-handed Tantra, noting that in the first instance the ritual sexual coupling actually takes place, whereas in the latter case it is symbolic. Left-handed Tantra is also more exuberant and spontaneous:

In right-handed Tantra the woman sits to the right side of the man; if the rite is left-handed, one which culminates in physical sexuality, the opposite is the case....In either case the practitioners now endeavour to think of each other as the God and Goddess, Shiva and Shakti. In right-handed worship this 'divine identification' remains on a fairly abstract level, but in left-handed rites it is very specific, the woman regarding her partner as 'the phallus of Shiva', while she is thought of as being not only Shakti but the living altar on which sacrifice is offered to herself – in the words of one text, held in high regard by many schools of Tantra, 'Her belly is the sacrificial altar, her pubic hairs the sacred grass-mat... the lips of her vagina are the sacrificial fire.' ...

In left-handed working... fervour and spontaneity are the essence of the rite. The participants not only identify themselves with the God and Goddess, but they give the divine forces full play, letting themselves improvise, as the divine polarities inspire them, the feasting, the love play and the copulation of Shiva and Shakti. Within the boundaries of the Temple there are no hard and fast rules – 'Exceed, exceed' are the key words, and the Road to Excess leads to the Palace of Wisdom and Understanding and to that Greater Palace which subsumes them.²²³

King maintains that Hindu tantrics allow the ritual ejaculation of semen, whereas Buddhist tantrics try to avoid it.²²⁴ However, on this point he is contradicted by Agehananda Bharati who writes:

The central rule behind the left-handed rites, both Hindu and Buddhist, is the retention of semen during the sexual act [ie. during *maithuna*, ritualistic copulation]. The man who discharges semen is a *pasu*, an 'animal' in the Mahanirvana and the Yogini Tantra, whereas he who retains it during *maithuna* is *divya*, 'divine'.²²⁵

Because of Crowley's fascination with the magical potency of semen and his emphasis in Thelemic magical practice on the ritual consumption of sexual secretions as part of the 'magical elixir', it is possible that even if he was following a practice of retaining semen during his exploration of *vamacharya* in 1901 he was prepared to abandon this aspect of Tantra after his transformative revelations in Cairo, just three years later.

In his article, 'The Origins of Modern Sex Magick' (1985) J.Gordon Melton points out that there were certain aspects of Hindu Tantra that

would definitely not have been to Crowley's liking post-1904. Commenting on the traditional concept of Shakti as 'Goddess' or 'power', Melton notes that

while variously understood by different tantrics, an understanding of the role of the female and her energy is central to all Hindu tantrism, but is absent from Crowley's treatment of sex magick. As John Woodroffe would write just a few years after Crowley finished the new O.T.O. rituals, Hindu tantrism teaches that 'S'akti [Shakti] in the highest causal sense is God as Mother, and in another sense it is the universe which issues from Her Womb.'²²⁶ ...Such concepts are quite foreign to and stand in stark contrast to the O.T.O. teaching of God as Sun and phallus.²²⁷

Melton also rightly observes that Crowley's notion of the Scarlet Woman as a sexual consort is based on the biblical Book of Revelation and has nothing whatever to do with the Tantric tradition. 'Crowley's Scarlet Woman,' he writes, bears 'no substantive resemblance to Shakti in any of her forms, including Kali.'²²⁸

Kenneth Grant meanwhile provides an important insight into the connection between the practice of Left-Hand Path sex magic and the image of the Kundalini serpent – or 'fire-snake'. This is significant because it was the connection between the serpent (as spirit-familiar) and Kundalini (as a source of potent energy within the human organism) which fascinated Rosaleen Norton, especially with regard to exploring the so-called 'astral planes' while in a state of magical trance:

The ability to function on the inner, or astral planes, and to travel freely in the realms of light or inner space, derived from a special purification and storage of vital force. This force in its densest form is identical with sexual energy. In order to transform sexual energy into magical energy (*ojas*), the dominant Fire Snake at the base of the spine is awakened. It then purges the vitality of all dross by the purifying virtue of its intense heat. Thus the function of the semen – in the tantras is to build up the body of light [the astral body], the inner body of man. As the vital fluid accumulates in the testicles it is consumed by the heat of the Fire Snake, and the subtle fumes or 'perfumes' of this molten semen go to strengthen the inner body. The worship of *shakti* means in effect the exercise of the Fire Snake, which not only fortifies the body of light but gradually burns away all impurities in the physical body and rejuvenates it.²²⁹

Grant also supports Norton's contention that arousing the Kundalini can stimulate 'artistic or inventive creativity'. In *The Magical Revival* (1972) he refers to the Kundalini as 'the serpentine or spiral power of creative consciousness'²³⁰ and he goes on to emphasize that this type of occult exploration has the potential to bestow profound spiritual insights:

Men will become as gods, because the power of creation (the prerogative of gods) will be wielded by them through the direction of forces at present termed 'occult' or hidden.²³¹

Contemporary Satanism

The desire of certain human beings to 'become as gods' has long been considered by Christian devotees to be a classic Satanic vanity, and a significant question overshadowed the magical career and persona of Rosaleen Norton during the 1950s: *was she, in fact, a Satanist?* While it is clear that Norton pursued a range of highly unconventional 'pagan' practices in Sydney during this period – activities which included her own version of witchcraft as well as various sex magick rituals based on Kundalini yoga and the writings of Aleister Crowley – it would seem to be quite another matter to label her a Satanist. Nevertheless, Norton was openly branded as a 'Devil-worshipper' in the popular Australian media of the time. In October 1955 the tabloid magazine *Australasian Post* published an article titled 'A Warning to Australia: Devil Worship Here!'²³² The article showed a half-naked Norton, wearing a ritual mask and sitting in front of her mural of Pan, and opened with the following paragraph:

How much evidence do you want? Lucifer's worshippers meet secretly in Sydney today. Read the facts and you won't laugh for long!²³³

This article had been preceded by two other sensationalistic articles, published in the same magazine earlier that year, both carrying the alarmist banner heading: '*The Devil is on our doorstep!*' The first of these articles featured a photograph of a naked acolyte worshipping over a human skull, and a picture showing masked occultists parading around a magical circle inscribed with a ritual pentagram.²³⁴ The second was titled '*Witchmaster!*' and opened with a dramatic photograph of British coven leader Gerald Gardner accompanied by a provocative introductory paragraph:

Openly, without hindrance, avowed witches practise their evil craft today. In England, in Australia, covens meet for blasphemous ritual. They no longer fear the injunction 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.' They appear as harmless eccentrics – but they corrupt all they touch.'²³⁵

In the popular media-driven imaginings of 1950s Australia, witchcraft and Satanism evidently meant much the same thing. However, as will become clear from data presented below, this form of rigid categorisation is one which both witches and Satanists themselves reject. Contemporary Satanists oppose any form of worship involving 'protective transcendental

deities’²³⁶ – whether this worship is addressed to a God or to a Goddess – and several contemporary witches, among them the well known American goddess-worshipper Z. Budapest referred to in Chapter Two, have similarly been outspoken on the issue of confused identity. As Budapest has expressed it:

Witchcraft is a universal, joy-oriented, artistic kind of religious practice that celebrates the earth and its journey around the sun. Now, we got a bad rap from the Christians about this. We have been told that we worship Satan, the Devil. Well, the Devil is a Christian god. We have never heard of the Devil. Many of us got burned [in the Middle Ages] because we didn't know who they were talking about...so many died. Many were going to their death still wondering who the Devil was...²³⁷

Norton undoubtedly compounded the problem of her pagan identity in an autobiographical article published in *Australian Post* in 1957 when she wrote: ‘If Pan is the “Devil” (and the joyous Goat-God probably is, from the orthodox viewpoint), then I am indeed a “Devil” worshipper.’²³⁸ However, Norton’s statement is intentionally ironic: she was a Pan-worshipper and not a Devil-worshipper. The ‘orthodox viewpoint’ she refers to – that is to say, the viewpoint that Norton believed would have prevailed in Australia at a time when the population was over 80 per cent Christian²³⁹ – was that most people were inclined to confuse pagan worship with Satanism and would have no hesitation in branding them collectively as ‘demonic’.

During its formative years Christianity synthesized Greek and Jewish concepts of the Devil. The word ‘devil’ itself derives from the Greek: *diabolos* – an ‘accuser’ or ‘obstructor’²⁴⁰ – and most practising Christians regard the battle against Satan (or the Devil) as an ongoing saga that will not be resolved until the Final Judgement. Historian Jeffrey Russell (1977) summarizes the main characteristics of the Devil in the New Testament as follows: he is the personification of evil; he physically attacks and possesses humans; he tempts people to sin in order to destroy them or recruit them in his struggle against God; he accuses and punishes sinners; he leads a host of evil spirits, fallen angels or demons; he has assimilated many evil qualities of ancient destructive Nature spirits or ghosts; he will rule the world until the coming of the Kingdom of God and in the meantime is engaged in constant warfare against Christ; he will be defeated by Christ at the end of the world and, above all, he is identified with temptation and death.²⁴¹

Norton’s fascination with demons and devils – which was evident even in her early *Danse Macabre* drawings – possibly developed further as an

individual response to the conventional Christian beliefs of her parents: they had hoped that she would be ‘confirmed’ as a member of the Anglican Church when she was twelve.²⁴² Norton first began reading histories of demonology, occultism and the Western esoteric tradition in her late teenage years – she pursued these subjects while she was an art-student at East Sydney Technical College – and she lists several such titles in the bibliography of her 1952 publication, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, which reflects her long-standing occult influences.²⁴³ These occult histories include Kurt Seligmann: *The Mirror of Magic*; Montague Summers: *A History of Witchcraft and Demonology* and Daniel Moncure: *History of Demonology*.²⁴⁴ However, as I will show in Chapter Five, Norton had little or no working knowledge of the *Goetia* as a practical system of ‘black magic’, and when she began to explore this area of demonic evocation with Eugene Goossens it was he who offered to instruct her in the use of magical seals (or sigils), and not the other way around. As I will seek to demonstrate below, in the concluding section on chthonic magic in this chapter, it was Norton’s fascination with the Kabbalah, and in particular with the *Qliphoth* emanating from the ‘reverse’ side of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life (see Chapter Two), that drew her into what some Left-Hand Path magicians have referred to as the ‘nightside tradition’.²⁴⁵

During Norton’s own lifetime there were only two major organisations associated with the practice of Satanism – the Church of Satan founded in San Francisco in 1966 and its rebellious offshoot, the Temple of Set, established in the same city in 1975, four years before Norton’s death – and there is no evidence suggesting that Norton was familiar with either. Nevertheless, because both organisations were influenced in varying degrees by Aleister Crowley (who in turn exerted a strong influence on Norton) and because both are aligned with the Left-Hand Path in magic, it is pertinent to describe them briefly here.

The Church of Satan

As Jean La Fontaine has observed in a recent academic overview of 20th century magic and witchcraft:

There are only two long-standing, well-established groups of Satanists and each is largely the creation of one man... The founder of the Church of Satan died only in October 1997 and the founder of the Temple of Set is still its leader... Both organizations have an international membership but it is not clear whether all the groups outside the USA are affiliated to the original organizations, have been founded with their agreement as independent off-shoots, or are simply imitations.²⁴⁶

The Church of Satan was founded in San Francisco in 1966 by Anton

LaVey (1930-1997), who remains a controversial figure not only because of his role in the rise of contemporary Satanism but also because of the substantially fictitious persona that he helped create with the help of two sympathetic co-authors.²⁴⁷ As religious scholar James R. Lewis points out, LaVey has two categories of biography, ‘one historical and one legendary...[and] his real life was far more prosaic than the story he fabricated for the benefit of the media’.²⁴⁸

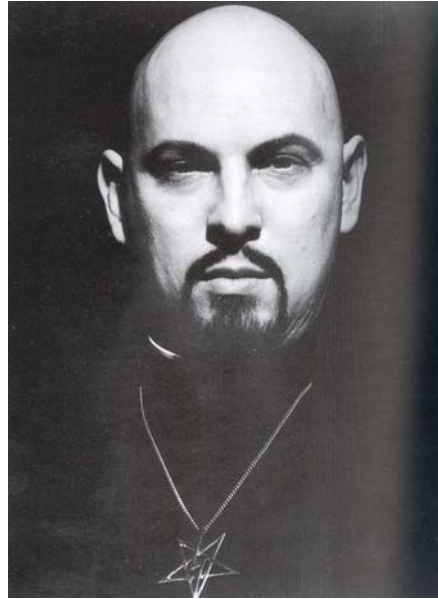


Plate 41: Anton LaVey, founder of the Church of Satan

LaVey's main 'authorized' biography, written by his former partner and current Church of Satan High Priestess, Blanche Barton, and published in 1990,²⁴⁹ claims that LaVey was born in Chicago and was of French, Alsatian, German, Russian and Romanian descent. According to this 'legendary' account, LaVey learnt about vampires from his maternal grandmother Luba Kolton, and immersed himself in reading occult and fantasy literature like Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and the popular magazine *Weird Tales*.²⁵⁰ After a period spent working as a carnival entertainer in the Clyde Beatty Circus, LaVey studied criminology at San Francisco City College and then became a photographer with the San Francisco Police Department. It was in the latter capacity that LaVey observed the gruesome side of urban life – 'people shot by nuts, knifed by friends, kids splattered in the gutter by hit-and-run drivers. It was disgusting and depressing.'²⁵¹ These grim events had a strong impact on LaVey's spiritual perspectives: he concluded that violence was part of the divine plan and turned away from God as a source of inspiration and benevolence.²⁵² The 'legendary' LaVey also played oboe in the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, had a cameo

role as the Devil in the movie *Rosemary's Baby*, and had an affair with Marilyn Monroe before she became famous. LaVey claimed to be a multi-millionaire and maintained that the Church of Satan had 'hundreds of thousands' of fully paid-up members.

LaVey's 'legendary' biography was not challenged until 1991 when journalist Lawrence Wright, a contributor to *Rolling Stone*, published the results of an investigation into some of LaVey's claims.²⁵³ Wright established that the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra didn't actually exist, that LaVey hadn't worked as a musician or trainer for the Beatty Circus, and that he had never been employed by the San Francisco Police Department. Wright concluded:

...as I began to take apart the literary creation he had made of his life, I would realize that 'Anton LaVey' was itself his supreme creation, his ultimate satanic object, a sort of android composed of all the elements his mysterious creator had chosen from the universe of dark possibilities.²⁵⁴

Nevertheless, as James Lewis points out, LaVey *was* born in Chicago, his family *did* move to San Francisco, he *did* work as a musician (though not in a ballet orchestra), and he *did* establish the Church of Satan in 1966.²⁵⁵ In 1998 LaVey's estranged daughter, Zeena, and her husband, Nikolas Schreck, published a more detailed summary of the 'legendary' claims and the actual historical reality of events in LaVey's life, thereby extending Wright's earlier findings. They confirmed that LaVey's grandmother was Ukrainian rather than Transylvanian, that he had never met Marilyn Monroe, that he had played no acting role in *Rosemary's Baby*, that he lived in near-poverty for most of the 1970s, and that his Church of Satan had fewer than 300 members.²⁵⁶

The core facts associated with the birth of the Church of Satan are as follows: prior to establishing the Church itself, LaVey had begun holding weekly classes, known as Magic Circle meetings, in order to explore various esoteric topics. These meetings were attended by a diverse range of people, including avant-garde film producer Kenneth Anger,²⁵⁷ and were held in LaVey's tightly shuttered house at 6114 California Street, San Francisco. They included lectures on vampires, werewolves, haunted houses, extra-sensory perception and zombies – and other related subjects. LaVey also lampooned the Roman Catholic Church with a 'Black Mass' which involved desecrating the Host, using an inverted cross and black candles, and reciting Christian prayers backwards.

Fascinated by the concept of Sir Francis Dashwood's 18th century Hellfire Club ²⁵⁸ – where establishment figures would meet for evenings of revelry and debauchery – LaVey believed that the Magic Circle could provide the basis for a modern-day counterpart. With this idea in mind, LaVey shaved his head and announced the formation of the Church of Satan on Walpurgisnacht, 30 April 1966, traditionally associated with the ascendancy of the Powers of Darkness. LaVey declared 1966 to be Year One, *Anno Satanas* – the first year of the reign of Satan. ²⁵⁹

LaVey's Church of Satan celebrated sensual indulgence and personal empowerment; its ceremonies were conceived as a means for channelling magical power into an expression of intense carnal desire. LaVey's ritual altar room was completely black with an inverted pentagram ²⁶⁰ mounted on the wall above the fireplace: LaVey believed that this particular pentagram represented the Sigil of Baphomet, a symbol allegedly adapted from the Knights Templars in the 14th century. ²⁶¹ Services began and ended with satanic hymns and a ritual invocation to Satan. A naked woman – a human symbol of lust and self-indulgence – was used as an



Plate 42: Anton LaVey with one of his followers in the Church of Satan

‘altar’. The following contemporary account describes a typical service in the Church of Satan:

A bell is run nine times to signal the beginning of the service, the priest turning in the circle counter clockwise, ringing the bell to the four cardinal points. The leopard-skin cover is removed from the mantelpiece, revealing the nude body of the female volunteer altar for the evening. The purification is performed by one of the assistant priests, who sprinkles the congregation with a mixture of semen and water, symbolic of creative force. LaVey then takes a sword from its sheath, held by Diane, his wife and high priestess, and invokes Satan in his cardinal manifestations. Satan, in the South, represents Fire; Lucifer in the East, is symbolic of Air; Belial, in the North, represents Earth; and Leviathan, in the West, is his watery aspect. The officiating priest then drinks from the chalice, which is filled with any liquid he may desire, from lemonade to 100-proof vodka, making a symbolic offering to Satan. The chalice is then placed on the pubic area of the girl-altar, where it stays for the remainder of the evening.²⁶²

LaVey believed in celebrating Christian ‘sins’ as virtues and formulated the following satanic statements for his key work, *The Satanic Bible* (1969), as an expression of his occult approach:

Satan represents indulgence instead of abstinence.

Satan represents vital existence instead of spiritual pipe dreams.

Satan represents undefiled wisdom instead of hypocritical self-deceit.

Satan represents kindness to those who deserve it instead of love wasted on ingrates.

Satan represents vengeance instead of turning the other cheek.

Satan represents responsibility to the responsible instead of concern for psychic vampires.

Satan represents man as just another animal...who, because of his ‘divine spiritual and intellectual development’ has become the most vicious animal of all.

Satan represents all of the so-called sins as they all lead to physical, mental or emotional gratification.

*Satan has been the best friend the Church has ever had, as he has kept it in business all these years.*²⁶³

LaVey believed that the Church of Satan presented a clear and uncompromising challenge to the conventional Christian mores of Middle

America – there was no place in his magical credo for humility, weakness, or ‘turning the other cheek’.²⁶⁴ However LaVey did not regard his Church as anti-Christian, arguing instead that Christianity was irrelevant because it failed to address humanity's basic emotional needs, denied man's carnal nature, and placed its devotees in a position of dependence on ‘an unmerciful God who cares not whether we live or die’.²⁶⁵ LaVey similarly had no illusions about vows of poverty as a means of gaining spiritual redemption, maintaining instead that magic was essentially about power, and that wealth was a type of power.²⁶⁶ LaVey reserved the right to divert funds otherwise intended for the Church of Satan across for his own personal use, and it was this particular issue that would result in a split in the Church leadership in 1975. At this point, contemporary American Satanism would divide into two opposing camps: those remaining loyal to LaVey and those who would depart, establishing the Temple of Set.

The Temple of Set

By 1975 it had become evident that there were significant rifts within the Church of Satan. According to LaVey's colleague Michael Aquino – editor of the Church's newsletter, *The Cloven Hoof* – the Church was attracting far too many ‘fad-followers, egomaniacs and assorted oddballs whose primary interest in becoming Satanists was to flash their membership cards for cocktail-party notoriety’.²⁶⁷ At the same time LaVey was also complaining that the ten dollar annual fee levied for Church membership was not yielding him sufficient personal income.²⁶⁸

In early 1975, LaVey sent out advice in the Church newsletter advising that, forthwith, all higher degrees of initiation would be available for contributions in cash, real estate or valuable objects of art. According to Aquino, the effect on many Church members was shattering:

If there had been a single unifying factor that had brought us to Satanism, it was the Church's stand against hypocrisy. So when we learned of this policy, our reaction to it was that Anton LaVey was betraying his office, betraying everything that he had worked for, for so many years.²⁶⁹

In June 1975 an act of desertion took place: key members of the priesthood resigned from the Church of Satan, at the same time making it clear that they were not leaving the priesthood itself. ‘In fact,’ Aquino has stated, ‘we had a sacred responsibility to take it with us.’²⁷⁰



Plate 43: Dr Michael Aquino, High Priest of the Temple of Set

A doctoral graduate from the University of California at Santa Barbara, with a strong interest in comparative religion and philosophy, Aquino had joined the Church of Satan in 1969.²⁷¹ At the time of the split within the Church of Satan he was a Priest of the fourth degree and the senior member of the splinter group. Nevertheless, in a manner somewhat comparable to Crowley's revelatory communication from Aiwass in 1904, Aquino now sought new instructions from Satan. On the evening of 21 June 1975, in a ritual magic ceremony, Aquino summoned the Prince of Darkness, 'to tell us what we may do to continue our Quest'.²⁷² The result, according to Aquino, was an act of automatic writing: 'a communication from a god to a human being'.²⁷³

In a document titled *The Book of Coming Forth by Night*, Satan revealed himself as the ancient Egyptian god Set, and named Michael Aquino as LaVey's replacement.²⁷⁴ Aquino was described in the script as the successor to Aleister Crowley, and Magus, fifth degree, of the new Aeon of Set. *The Book of Coming Forth by Night* also identified a new name for both Church and deity: 'Reconsecrate my Temple and my Order in the true name of Set. No longer will I accept the bastard title of a Hebrew Fiend.'²⁷⁵ There were also other instructions for the new magical epoch:

When I came first to this world, I gave to you my great pentagram, timeless measure of beauty through proportion. And it was shown inverse, that creation and change be exalted above rest and preservation.

With the years my pentagram was corrupted, yet time has not the power to destroy it. Its position was restored by the Church of Satan, but its essence was dimmed with a Moorish name, and the perverse letters of the Hebrews, and the goat of decadent Khar. During the Age of Satan I allowed this curious corruption, for it was meant to do me honour as I was then perceived.

But this is now my Aeon, and my pentagram is again to be pure in its splendour. Cast aside the corruptions, that the pentagram of Set may shine forth. Let all who seek me be never without it, openly and with pride, for by it shall I know them.

*Let the one who aspires to my knowledge be called by the name Setian.*²⁷⁶

Set also announced a sacred magical word for the new era:

*The Word of the Aeon of Set is **Xeper** – ‘become’.*

The implications of Xeper

Aquino claims that the revelation from Set led the priesthood of the former Church of Satan into new areas of enquiry:

The founders of the Temple of Set knew very little about Egyptology and we had to go and find out who Set was, and why something like this should be happening. We found out some very interesting things. The usual understanding of Set is that he was an evil god in the old Egyptian system – the benevolent father-god being Osiris and his evil antagonist, Set, who murdered him.

In our research we discovered that this was in fact a much later corruption, and that the initial identity of Set had been that of the god of night, of the darkness, as opposed to the god of the day, the sun. Set symbolised the *isolated psyche*, the spark of life within the self, a creative force in the universe rather than an enemy figure, an inspiration for the individual consciousness.²⁷⁷

The magical word *xeper* also became central to the philosophy of the Temple of Set. Pronounced *khefer* and translated as ‘I have come into being,’ its associated symbols were the scarab beetle and the dawning sun. In a recent statement exploring the significance of *xeper*, senior Temple of Set member Don Webb has written that this word

generates the Aeon of Set, and is the current form of the Eternal Word of the Prince of Darkness. To know this word is to know that the ultimate responsibility for the evolution of your psyche is in your hands. It is the Word of freedom, ecstasy, fearful responsibility, and the root of all magic.²⁷⁸

Webb describes *xeper* as ‘the experience of an individual psyche becoming aware of its own existence and deciding to expand and evolve that existence through its own actions’.²⁷⁹ Because the Temple of Set emphasises the magical potential of the individual, the focus of the entire organisation reflects this orientation: all Setians are on an individual, self-determined magical journey, and the consequences are entirely up to them. According to Webb:

Xeper is the experience of an individual psyche becoming aware of its own existence through its own actions. Xeper has been experienced by anyone who has decided to seek after his or her own development.²⁸⁰

Although the Temple of Set recognises a system of initiatory degrees²⁸¹ there are no prescribed rituals or dogmas and no specific vows. According to Lilith Sinclair, Aquino’s wife and fellow priestess in the Temple of Set, the rituals in the Church of Satan used to be presented ‘on a very self-indulgent, materialistic level’ and Satan himself was ‘more a symbol than an actual reality’.²⁸² However Sinclair maintains that her relationship with Satan within the context of the Temple of Set has evolved to a new level. Her ongoing personal contact with the Prince of Darkness is now both tangible and powerful – ‘a very quiet, serene, beautiful touching of minds’. According to Sinclair there is no pact signed in blood but instead a type of private vow: ‘It’s done on an individual basis, and it’s something that I myself wanted to do.’²⁸³

While most forms of mysticism advocate the surrender of the ego in a state of transcendent union with the infinite Godhead – an act described earlier by members of the Dragon Rouge as ‘melting into God’ – according to the Setian perspective an awareness of the personal self should be maintained at all times. According to Sinclair, when a Temple member is communicating with Set, ‘you retain your individuality...but at the same time you are linked with the essence of the Prince of Darkness. It’s a natural exchange and flow of energy, of mind awareness.’²⁸⁴

The Setian perspective

As both the first and current High Priest of the Temple of Set,²⁸⁵ Michael Aquino remains its leading advocate: the Temple reflects both his intellectual background and his emphasis on rational thought. The activities of the Temple are also far removed from LaVey’s earlier focus on carnality and sensual indulgence. As Aquino observes in *The Crystal Tablet of Set*, ‘The Church [of Satan] had been arrogantly sensationalistic; the Temple [of Set] was cautiously philosophical.’²⁸⁶

Aquino's principal text on the nature of magical consciousness is a lengthy essay titled 'The Black Magical Theory of the Universe', which is included in a collection of writings assembled in *The Crystal Tablet of Set* (1983, revised 1986).²⁸⁷ Here Aquino distinguishes between what he calls 'Lesser Black Magic' and 'Greater Black Magic'. In the first of these two approaches, the magician 'applies his knowledge to entities and events in the objective universe...in accordance with his Will'.²⁸⁸ Greater Black Magic, however, involves what Aquino refers to as 'the theory and practice of non-natural interaction with the subjective universe'²⁸⁹ and is based on the concept of the Magical Link between the objective and subjective universes.²⁹⁰ Aquino defines Greater Black Magic as 'the causing of change to occur in the subjective universe in accordance with the Will. This change in the subjective universe will cause a similar and proportionate change in the objective universe.'²⁹¹ Aquino also draws on the philosophical writings of Fichte, who postulated the existence of a 'mental essence' encompassing the objective world:

[Fichte] postulated the original existence of a mental essence divided into the ego (the sensation of the self) and the non-ego (sensations of things not perceived as the self). This mental essence is ...a sort of 'supermind' which transcends all particular ego and non-ego manifestations.²⁹²

Applying Fichte's concept to a magical context, Aquino maintains that the 'concentrated energies' of the ego can be used to bring about changes in the 'non-ego' part of the 'mental essence...which defines and binds together the laws of consistency in the objective universe'.²⁹³ According to Aquino every individual is essentially *separate* from the universe and it therefore follows that 'any conscious act relative to that universe...is an exercise in that separateness. Hence to be aware of one's disconnection from that universe is to remain disconnected from it.'²⁹⁴

Aquino rejects Christianity on philosophical grounds because he believes its doctrines are essentially irrational and are not based on an authentic understanding of the nature of the soul:

Jesus Christ is reputed to have said that, to enter Heaven, one must be 'as a little child'. To put it another way, such a person would have to radiate an innocent, selfless passion for the harmony of the Universe; *he would be unable to conceive himself as apart from it* [my italics]. The irony of Christ's admonition, however, is that neither innocence nor selflessness are products of the rational intellect...One can conduct one's life as though one were innocent and selfless [but] beneath all appearances, all affectations, the actual state of the soul remains as it is: either animal/natural or human/enlightened, either asleep and ignorant or awake and all too aware.²⁹⁵

Aquino's magical conception is clearly based on a form of *gnosis* – on the idea of 'being awake and all too aware' – but it is a type of *gnosis* grounded also in a notion of human existential *separateness* that sets it apart, for example, from the Gnostic transcendentalism of the Kabbalah where all aspects of creative manifestation merge eventually into *Ain Soph Aur*, the Limitless Light (see Chapter Two). Aquino rejects the mystical concept of 'melting into God', which he associates with the Right-Hand Path,²⁹⁶ defining this type of occult approach as a form of 'white magic'. According to Aquino, white magic 'embraces not only all conventional religions, but all pagan and nature-worship ideologies as well. To the Temple, the only distinction between them is one of style and imagery, not of underlying substance.'²⁹⁷ Aquino maintains that Satanism provides a unique approach to the objective and subjective universes because it advocates personal behaviour *that is entirely self-determined*:

All conventional religions, including the pagan ones, are simply a variation on the theme of reunion and submergence of the self within the natural universe. So from our point of view, it really makes no difference whether you pray to a Father god or to a Mother goddess – or to an entire gaggle of gods and goddesses! You are still wishing for their acceptance. You are waiting for them to put their arms around you and say: 'You belong. You are part of us. You can relax. We will take care of you. We approve of you. We endorse you...' The Satanist, or Black Magician, does not seek that kind of submergence of the self. We do not seek to have our decisions and our morality approved or validated by any higher god or being. We take responsibility unto ourselves.²⁹⁸

According to Aquino,

it is in the process of making the preliminary exploration of the subjective and objective universes that the Black Magician begins to discover and ultimately to know how things really work. He exists wholly in neither the subjective universe (like a mystic) nor the objective universe (like a materialist)...He moves back and forth between the two with increasing ease and expertise, influencing the Magical Links between them and thus causing changes in accordance with his Will [capitals in the text].²⁹⁹

Aquino's wife and Temple priestess Lilith Sinclair claims that the unique magical quest undertaken by members of the Temple of Set justifies the elitist attitude that sets them apart from other occult practitioners: 'We regard ourselves very highly because we feel we are superior beings. We feel that we are gaining the knowledge of a deeper universe.'³⁰⁰ Don Webb similarly supports Sinclair's elitist perspective, maintaining that the Setian approach allows its initiated members to think and act like gods:

If we want to participate in the cultural revolution / evolution of the New Cycle, the best method is to transform ourselves. To actively seek, every day, those experiences and perform those deeds that lead to wisdom. If the magician transforms himself or herself, the actions of the magician lead to a transformation of the world around them. If one becomes as a god, one's words and deeds will have the effect of gods.³⁰¹

Webb also argues that practitioners of the Left-Hand Path have a unique approach to sacred awareness that sets them apart from more conventional religious devotees:

Magic is the way that the follower of the Left Hand Path can have the *lived experience* of being a god, rather than praying to an image of a god created by his or her imagination.³⁰²

Xeper and immortality

In addition to claiming that the Setian practitioner can journey ‘back and forth’ between the objective and subjective worlds and impose his or her magical Will in both domains, Aquino also endorses the classic Gnostic perspective that the psyche is neither dependent on, nor imprisoned by, the physical body. According to Aquino, the mind of the Setian magician is capable of reaching out ‘towards the limitlessness of its conscious existence’.³⁰³ This, for Aquino, is what *xeper* really implies. For the master Setian, the conscious universe literally has no boundaries. Aquino developed this idea from a statement contained in *The Book of Lucifer* in Anton LaVey's *Satanic Bible*:

If a person has been vital throughout his life and has fought to the end for his earthly existence, it is this ego which will refuse to die, even after the expiration of the flesh which housed it... It is this ...vitality that will allow the Satanist to peek through the curtain of darkness and death, and remain earthbound.³⁰⁴

What, then, of the darkness and death referred to in this extract from *The Book of Lucifer*? Paradoxically, the answer emerges in the Setian response to self-determination. Setians regard the image of Set – the Egyptian God of the Night – as a dynamic force for change. Set is the ‘separator’ or ‘isolator’ – the God who slew stasis (represented by Osiris) and overcame chaotic mindlessness (represented by Apep).³⁰⁵ In this context Set represents the elimination of obsolete thought patterns and social conditioning – a ‘dethroning of those internal gods that we have received from society’³⁰⁶ – and as Don Webb explains in his essay on the sacred word *xeper*, the nature of the Setian quest, as he sees it, is ‘to become an immortal, potent and powerful Essence’.³⁰⁷ Webb has also stated quite specifically that the mission of the Temple of Set ‘is to recreate a tradition

of *self-deification*.’³⁰⁸ According to Webb, the quest for self-deification and the attainment of immortality are intimately connected:

We choose as our role model the ancient Egyptian god Set, the archetype of Isolate Intelligence, rather than the somewhat limiting Hebrew Satan, archetype of the Rebel against cosmic injustice... We do not worship Set – only our own potential. Set was and is the patron of the magician who seeks to increase his existence through expansion.... Black Magic is to take full responsibility for one's actions, evolution and effectiveness.³⁰⁹

In ancient Egyptian mythology Set was the only God who overcame death, and this is of special significance to Setians because they believe it is possible to transcend physical death through the potency of the magical will. As Michael Aquino explains in his essay ‘Satanism and the Immortality of the Psyche’ (1996):

The essence of the psyche... is such that its existence is neither dependent upon the material nor imprisoned in it... Rather, the physical body provides a vehicle in which the psyche can become aware of itself and reach out towards the limitlessness of its consciousness existence... It is all too easy to perceive ‘life’ as only the active functioning of one’s material body. Such an attitude fosters a disease of the psyche far worse than any of the body. It numbs you to that immortality which is inherent in the Gift of Set.³¹⁰

Variations within the Left-Hand Path

I have argued in this chapter that Aleister Crowley’s doctrine of *Thelema* – which includes the practice of sex magick – was a radical departure from the Hermetic magic of the Golden Dawn and moved 20th century Western esotericism in the direction of what has since become widely known as the ‘Left-Hand Path’. I have also shown that many modern and contemporary occult practitioners regard themselves as belonging to the Left-Hand Path; these practitioners are members of organisations that have emerged in Crowley’s wake and have been strongly influenced by him – among them Kenneth Grant’s Typhonian O.T.O., Anton LaVey’s Church of Satan and the Temple of Set, headed by Michael Aquino. Further, one can isolate the principal philosophical elements associated with the Left-Hand Path as follows:

- a focus on the ‘solitary, individualistic and personal’ based on ‘*self*-development, *self*-analysis and *self*-empowerment’ (see Vexen Crabtree, fn.19 above). An emphasis also on the ‘unique, deviant and exclusive’ (fn.22)

- an emphasis on the ‘dark’ side of magic, and an exploration of ‘hidden desires and fears’ (see *Dragon Rouge*, fn.21)
- an acknowledgement of ‘antinomianism’ as an overriding defining principle (see *Dragon Rouge* fn.22 and also Dr Stephen Flowers fn.24) and a willingness by practitioners to have the ‘spiritual courage’ to embrace symbols ‘feared and loathed by conventional culture’ (Flowers, fn.24)
- an emphasis on the spiritual quest for ‘self-deification’ or the act of ‘becoming a god’ (see *Dragon Rouge* fn.22 and Flowers fn.24)

During his exotic magical career Crowley was himself an iconoclast, introducing most of these specific elements into the Western esoteric tradition following his Thelemic ‘revelation’ in 1904. Crowley’s cult of Thelema focused on the unique role played by the Beast 666 (Crowley himself) and the Whore of Babalon (Crowley’s sexual partner) in heralding the sex-magick of the New Aeon (‘love under Will’).

In *Liber Al vel Legis* – the key document announcing the New Aeon – Horus (regarded here as an incarnation of the Divine Child) declares his opposition to all the major religious traditions that have preceded the Thelemic revelation: ‘I peck at the eyes of Jesus...I flap my wings in the face of Mohammed... I tear at the flesh of the Indian and Buddhist... I spit on your crapulous creeds.’³¹¹ Crowley also highlights his antinomian credentials through the ceremonial consumption of ‘cakes of light’ containing semen and vaginal fluids: from a Christian perspective his *Gnostic Mass* and *Mass of the Phoenix* could reasonably be regarded as a blasphemous parody of the Eucharist. Further, as I have indicated above, Crowley’s *Gnostic Mass* has a specific precursor in the consumption of menstrual blood and semen by the Gnostic Phibionites, whose ceremonial rituals were deplored by the 4th century Church Father, Epiphanius, and denounced as heresy in his *Panarion*.

In his doctrine of Thelema, Crowley emphasizes spiritual communication with the Holy Guardian Angel, a spiritual being whom he personally associated with the figure of Aiwass, the mysterious entity who had dictated the *Book of the Law* (*Liber Al vel Legis*). Although we do not find the same emphasis on ‘self-deification’ in Crowley’s teachings that we find, for example, in the *Dragon Rouge* and the Temple of Set, Crowley’s approach to magic was nevertheless highly individualistic and he believed he could employ the techniques of magick to attain god-like powers and

subjugate the universe to his Will, an approach later mirrored in the Temple of Set.³¹²

While there is clear agreement among many of the sub-groups associated with the Left-Hand Path, with regard to the principles and practices that unite them, it is also apparent that there are significant differences as well. As I have indicated above, Anton LaVey emphasized sensual indulgence and carnality as the path to self-empowerment in the Church of Satan, whereas the Temple of Set is clearly more philosophical and restrained in its approach and has moved away from hedonistic and libertine sexuality towards a more meditative and inner-directed association with the Prince of Darkness. According to Zeena Schreck, a one-time High Priestess of the Temple of Set, the practice of sex magic is not specified within the curriculum of the Temple and no emphasis is placed upon it,³¹³ thus differentiating the approach of Aquino and his associates from the sex-magick of Thelema and the Typhonian O.T.O. Meanwhile, the Dragon Rouge and Kenneth Grant's Thelemic practitioners emphasize the significance of the so-called 'Draconian current' in which sexual energies are awakened through Tantra and Kundalini Yoga – thereby introducing a notably Eastern influence to the Western esoteric tradition. This is in stark contrast to the Temple of Set which directs its spiritual focus specifically towards the ancient Egyptian figure of Set, who is perceived as the 'Principle of Isolate Intelligence' and 'the patron of the magician who seeks to increase his existence through expansion'.³¹⁴

In subsequent chapters of this thesis I will argue that as a practising occultist and trance artist Rosaleen Norton drew on many of the elements associated with the Left-Hand Path in magic, and that this particular focus aligns her as much with the Thelemic sex-magick practices of Aleister Crowley as with the more specifically pantheistic and Nature-based orientation of modern witchcraft. I will also explore Norton's artistic and magical fascination with what members of the Dragon Rouge refer to as the 'nightside tradition', since a preoccupation with 'images of darkness' is certainly characteristic of her work. Finally, I will examine the *chthonic* nature of her magical philosophy and practice since this particular dimension has also, more recently, emerged as a characteristic of the Left-Hand Path in magic. Recognition of the chthonic elements in Norton's art and magic enables us to position her more specifically across the spectrum of modern occult practices referred to in Chapter Seven, and allows for a more accurate appreciation of the many variables that have operated within the Western esoteric tradition in recent times.

Chthonic elements in modern Western magic

The term 'chthonic' (Greek *khthōn*: 'earth') refers to deities and ritual artefacts symbolically associated with the Earth. In ancient Greece the term *khthōn* referred to the interior of the soil, rather than its surface, and for this reason the word 'chthonic' is generally used with reference to the gods, goddesses and spirits of the Underworld, especially in the context of ancient Graeco-Roman religion. Typically, chthonic deities are associated with agriculture and the fertility of the land (eg. the Greek goddesses Demeter and Persephone) or are directly associated with the Underworld itself (eg. Hekate, Aidoneus/Hades). Chthonic deities are frequently represented by snakes³¹⁵ and some, like Attis and Adonis, are associated with ancient Mystery cults of death and rebirth.³¹⁶

Contemporary Thelemic writer Vadge Moore has recently suggested that the term 'chthonic' may be used to refer generally to deities both '*of the earth or under the earth*'³¹⁷ – including Pan, Dionysus and Bacchus, as well as non-Hellenic deities such as Set and Abraxas.³¹⁸ He also relates their symbolic attributes to the occult quest for spiritual transcendence. Moore associates chthonic deities primarily with sexuality and the cycles of Nature:

The chthonic gods represent the primal instincts that come to us directly through Nature. The Greek god Dionysus is certainly one of these...Representative of the creative and destructive aspects of Nature, Dionysus is the ultimate chthonic figure. He can inspire the most beautiful, delirious sexual activity and the most degrading, violent, murderous activity. Dionysus' mother, Semele, has been described variously as a Moon-Goddess and as a mortal woman. His father was the leader of the Greek gods, Zeus. His mother as mortal then combines the earthly with the divine...bringing the balance that chthonic more deeply represents.³¹⁹

Moore maintains that chthonic deities, by their very nature, provide the basis for magical transformation and spiritual transcendence:

The chthonic process is an occult 'awakening' that includes the very lowest instinctual elements of the human psyche leading to the very highest elements. It is the base, primordial material that the psyche needs in order to evolve and grow. Chthonic is the soil, the fertilizer, and the dark, primitive unconscious material *that can turn the beast into a god*.³²⁰ [my emphasis in italics]

For Moore, potent chthonic images can be found ranging from the depths of the mythic unconscious through to the pure light of transcendence, and can be quite varied in form. For example, Moore claims that dragons are regarded as symbols of magical transformation because they combine the chthonic serpent with the wings of a bird and therefore range symbolically

‘from earth to “divinity”’.³²¹ He also maintains that the Gnostic archon Abraxas, who was often depicted on ancient Middle Eastern amulets with serpentine legs and the head of a rooster, ‘is an ideal chthonic representation, embracing the depths symbolized by the serpents



Plate 44: The Gnostic archon Abraxas – a characteristically chthonic deity

rising to the human, and achieving solar transcendence as depicted by the rooster head.’³²² Moore supports French decadent writer Georges Bataille, who similarly explores chthonic themes and emphasizes their potential for transcendence:

In opposition to the ancient sky and sun gods, Bataille proposes a worship of the gods of darkness and of the earth: Demeter, Hecate and Dionysus... We must not forget that it is just this sinking into the underworld of the id and the dark unconscious that helps to plant the roots for our ascent.³²³

However, if Moore’s chthonic approach is to be regarded as a model for spiritual rebirth and transformation, it is clear that some form of ‘*ascent*’ has to actually occur – for without an ascent, according to Moore’s chthonic conception, there can be no experience of transcendence. This in turn begs the question of what is meant or implied, within a magical context, by the nature of the visionary ‘*ascent*’ itself.

A carefully considered understanding of magical ‘*ascent*’ requires an exploration of altered states of consciousness.³²⁴ As I will show in Chapters Four, Five and Six, an appreciation of the nature of magical trance is also essential in evaluating the art and magic of Rosaleen Norton since self-induced trance states were central to her magical approach. Not only does Norton’s visionary art derive substantially from her experience of trance states accessed through self-hypnosis but her *oeuvre* is pervaded by occult

imagery that is distinctively *chthonic* in nature. To this extent, Moore's approach – and also Bataille's – provides a valuable perspective that enables us to understand key aspects of Norton's creative process. However, if we are to consider the implications of Moore's Thelemic concept of 'ascent' we are in turn required to explore the role of altered states of consciousness within the Western esoteric tradition itself – which takes us into territory rarely accessed by academic enquiry. Significant questions then arise: how have modern magical practitioners described their experiences of these altered states of consciousness, and what techniques have they employed in order to bring them about?

Altered states of consciousness in modern magical practice

Within the context of the 20th century magical revival the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn provides extensive documentation of modern magical techniques involving altered states of consciousness (ie. trance states, mystical experiences and out-of-the-body experiences).³²⁵ These magical techniques are described in a series of semi-official documents known as 'Flying Rolls' which, according to occult historian Francis King, were privately circulated 'among the Adepti of the pre-1900 Golden Dawn'.³²⁶ The Flying Rolls themselves were written by high-ranking members of the Golden Dawn but were not included in Israel Regardie's monumental four-volume collection of Golden Dawn rituals (first published 1937-1940),³²⁷ and did not become widely known in magical circles until the early 1970s.³²⁸

The Golden Dawn magicians employed a technique of willed imagination utilising what was known as the 'body of light'. The body of light has been described within an occult context as a 'magical personality' that is 'deliberately built for a purpose [and] acquired through practice and concentration'.³²⁹ In a magical context it is the vehicle of conscious awareness through which the magician interacts with 'thought-forms', spirit-entities and archetypal beings on the inner, or 'astral' planes.³³⁰ Michael Aquino has described the role of this 'magical double' in quasi-Egyptian terms as follows:

The magician constructs within his subjective universe a magical double or *ka*. (Goethe's *Doppelgänger*). This is an idealized entity whose precise characteristics may vary from Working to Working. He then, by an act of Will, transfers his soul or *ba* to the vehicle of this *ka* and then executes his Will in the subjective universe. This may be completely dissociated from the physical body of the magician, or it may be closely aligned with it... At the conclusion of the Working, the *ba* is redirected to the physical body and the *ka* is disintegrated. The elements of the

subjective universe specifically summoned for the Working are released into their normal contexts, there to influence their objective counterparts.³³¹

Transferring consciousness to a magical simulacrum or ‘body of light’ through willed concentration and visualisation is central to the practice of visionary magic in the Western esoteric tradition, and the experience of ‘consciousness-transfer’ is described in *Flying Roll XXV*, written by *Frater Sub Spe* – Dr John W. Brodie-Innes – who was a prominent figure in the Golden Dawn's Amen-Ra temple in Edinburgh (Brodie-Innes had a ritual rank of Zelator Adeptus Minor, or 5° = 6°: see Chapter Two for ritual grades based on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life). *Frater Sub Spe* describes the shift in consciousness that occurs when a practitioner focuses meditatively on a Major Arcana Tarot card or one of the *Tattva* symbols of the elements,³³² thereby switching personal awareness to the inner world of magical perception:

Gradually the attention is withdrawn from all surrounding sights and sounds, a grey mist seems to swathe everything, on which, as though thrown from a magic lantern on steam, the form of the symbol is projected. The Consciousness then seems to pass through the symbol to realms beyond... the sensation is as if one looked at a series of moving pictures ... When this sensitiveness of brain and power of perception is once established there seems to grow out of it a power of actually going to the scenes so visionary and seeing them as solid, indeed of actually *doing things* and producing effects there... The sensation... is first to become, as it were, dimly conscious of a figure walking among the scenes of the new country – or the Astral Plane – gradually to become conscious that it is my own figure that I am looking at – gradually, as it were, to be able to look through the eyes – and feel with the sensations of this *doppelganger*. Further to be able consciously to direct its motions, to control it, to inhabit it... It is as though my Consciousness had extruded from my own body to take possession of a body which I had either created for the purpose, or invoked out of the Astral Sphere as a vehicle for myself.³³³

The key elements in this process include concentrating the mind on a specific magical symbol, such as a Major Arcana Tarot card image or a *Tattva* symbol, and then using it to bring about a transfer of consciousness to the inner, imaginal realm of perception. Sometimes the magician also uses various utterances (pronouncement of sacred god-names or one's personal magical name) to reinforce the sense of a transfer of awareness. According to Dion Fortune, who was a member of the Alpha and Omega Temple of the Golden Dawn,³³⁴ the act of projecting her ‘body of light’ was greatly assisted by uttering her magical name. As she notes in *Applied Magic*:

In my own experience of the operation, the utterance to myself of my Magical name led to the picturing of myself in an idealised form, not differing in type, but upon an

altogether grander scale, superhuman in fact, but recognisable as myself, as a statue more than life-size may yet be a good likeness. Once perceived, I could re-picture this idealised version of my body and personality at will, but I could not identify myself with it unless I uttered my Magical name. Upon my affirming it as my own, identification was immediate. ³³⁵

Following the transfer of consciousness, the magician then experiences the contents of the visionary realm as perceptually ‘real’ – including mythic landscapes populated by gods, spirit-beings and various other entities. According to *Frater Sub Spe*:

At first it seems as though everything thus perceived were just the product of one’s own imagination... But a little further experience generally convinces one that the *new country one has become conscious of* has its inviolable natural laws just as the physical world has: that one cannot make or unmake at will, that the same causes produce the same results, that one is in fact merely a spectator and in no sense a creator. *The conviction then dawns on one that one is actually perceiving a new and much extended range of phenomena; that in fact, which is known as the Astral World or Astral Plane.* ³³⁶ [my emphasis in italics]

According to the cosmology established in the Golden Dawn, the Tarot cards of the Major Arcana and the Hindu *Tattvas* could be used as ‘symbolic doorways’ granting access to various realms of visionary consciousness on the astral plane. As mentioned in Chapter Two the *Tattvas* were among the few specifically Eastern motifs incorporated within the ritual practices of the Golden Dawn. In their basic form the *Tattvas* are associated with the five Elements as follows:

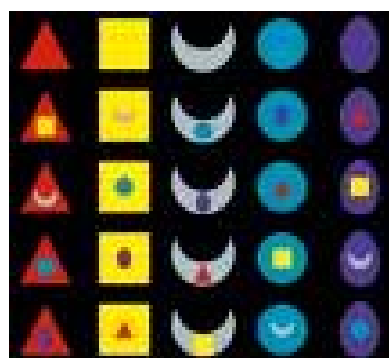


Plate 45: The Tattvas in various combinations

<i>Tejas</i> , a red equilateral triangle	Fire
<i>Apas</i> , a silver crescent	Water
<i>Vayu</i> , a blue circle	Air
<i>Prithivi</i> , a yellow square	Earth
<i>Akasha</i> , an indigo or violet egg	Spirit ³³⁷

Flying Roll XI describes a Tattva vision by Mrs Moina Mathers (*Soror Vestigia*) which arose as she sat in her ceremonial robes, meditating on a Tattva card combining *Tejas* and *Akasha* – a violet egg contained within a red triangle (Spirit within Fire).³³⁸ Following her projection of the body of light, the Tattva symbol seemed to grow before her gaze, enabling her to pass into a ‘vast triangle of flame’. She felt herself to be in a harsh desert of sand. Intoning the god-name *Elohim*, she then perceived a small pyramid in the distance and, drawing closer, noticed a small door on each face. She then vibrated the magical formula *Sepharial* and a warrior appeared, leading a procession of guards. After a series of tests involving ritual grade signs, the guards knelt before her and she passed inside:

...dazzling light, as in a Temple. An altar in the midst – kneeling figures surround it, there is a dais beyond, and many figures upon it – they seem to be Elementals of a fiery nature... She sees a pentagram, puts a Leo in it [ie, a Fire sign], thanks the figure who conducts her – wills to pass through the pyramid, finds herself out amid the sand. Wills her return – returns – perceiving her body in robes.³³⁹

In this account and others like it, it is clear that the visionary landscape is experientially ‘real’ to the meditator undertaking the projection of the body of light. However the contents of the visionary journey itself are also closely related to the meditative symbol that the magician has used in the transfer of consciousness: the magical entities Moina Mathers perceived in her ‘spirit vision’ were fire elementals – anthropomorphic figures embodying the *essential* properties of Fire.

On another occasion, Moina Mathers employed the Tattva symbols for Water and Spirit. Once again her account demonstrated the connection between the meditative symbol and the visionary beings present in the ensuing vision:

A wide expanse of water with many reflections of bright light, and occasionally glimpses of rainbow colours appearing. When divine and other names were pronounced, elementals of the mermaid and merman type [would] appear, but few of the other elemental forms. These water forms were extremely changeable, one moment appearing as solid mermaids and mermen, the next melting into foam.

Raising myself by means of the highest symbols I had been taught, and vibrating the names of Water, I rose until the Water vanished, and instead I beheld a mighty world or globe, with its dimensions and divisions of Gods, Angels, elementals and demons – the whole Universe of Water. I called on HCOMA and there appeared standing before me a mighty Archangel, with four wings, robed in glistening white and crowned. In one hand, the right, he held a species of trident, and in the left a Cup filled to the brim with an essence which he poured down below on either side.³⁴⁰

However, in this example, in addition to using the *Tattvas* for Water and Spirit as her meditative symbols, Mrs Mathers also uttered the sacred magical name HCOMA,³⁴¹ thereby causing an archangel to appear in her visions. She was also utilising a Golden Dawn technique known as ‘rising in the planes’, which is directly related to Vadge Moore’s concept of magical ‘ascent’, referred to earlier. In *Flying Roll XI*, Moina Mathers’ husband, MacGregor Mathers, provides specific instructions for this particular technique:

Rising in the Planes is a spiritual process after spiritual conceptions and higher aims; by concentration and contemplation of the Divine, you formulate a Tree of Life passing from you to the spiritual realms above and beyond you. Picture to yourself that you stand in Malkuth – then by use of the Divine Names and aspirations you strive upward by the Path of Tau towards Yesod, neglecting the crossing rays which attract you as you pass up. Look upwards to the Divine Light shining down from Kether upon you. From Yesod leads up the Path of Temperance, Samekh, the arrow cleaving upwards leads the way to Tiphareth, the Great Central Sun of Sacred Power.³⁴²

MacGregor Mathers’ account makes it clear that within the Golden Dawn, magical ‘ascent’ was achieved by visualising oneself coursing like an arrow towards the higher realms of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. In *Flying Roll XI*, Mathers is referring specifically to the symbolic pathways connecting Malkuth, Yesod and Tiphareth: collectively they represent the path of mystical ascent via the Middle Pillar of the Tree of Life (see Chapter Two). When one considers that the symbols of the Major Arcana of the Tarot were also employed in the Golden Dawn as meditative pathways connecting all ten *sephiroth* on the Tree of Life – resulting in a total of 22 interconnecting pathways on the Tree – it becomes clear that the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, itself a symbol of the Body of God, was regarded by the members of the Golden Dawn as nothing less than a map of the ‘terrain’ accessed through visionary magical consciousness. For them, the Body of God represented the *operative magical territory*: what Vadge Moore has referred to as ‘ascent’ and what the Golden Dawn magicians referred to as ‘rising in the planes’ could be achieved by ‘rising’ or ‘ascending’ meditatively from one *sephirah* to the next, on a path culminating eventually in the spiritual experience of *Kether* and mystical union with the Godhead. Rosaleen Norton’s encounters with various deities and spirit-beings accessed through trance on the astral planes are described in Chapter Four.

There can be little doubt that the spiritual purpose associated in the Golden Dawn with ‘rising in the planes’ was ultimately a quest for spiritual

transcendence and union with the Godhead, which in turn aligns the Golden Dawn with the Right-Hand Path rather than the Left-Hand Path in the Western esoteric tradition.³⁴³ A Golden Dawn document on the *Qliphoth* or negative energies of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life titled *The Book of the Black Serpent* (c.1900) encourages its initiates to ‘banish thou therefore the Evil and seek the Good...let thy countenance be raised up towards the Light of the Holy One to invoke the Divine Brightness.’³⁴⁴

Dan Merkur, a scholar well known for his study of Hermeticism and Gnosticism, argues that ‘ascension’ is a key element in the Hermetic tradition (which in turn was an important precursor of modern Western esotericism as practised in the Golden Dawn). Merkur also describes Hermetic ‘ascension’ in terms that resemble the Golden Dawn conception of ‘rising in the planes’:

In the Hermetic literature...different varieties of mystical experience were each associated with a specific celestial region on the trajectory of ascension...A single region of the sky might be termed the seven planetary heavens or the twelve zodiacal mansions... The ascension was literal, but mental rather than bodily. The ascent beyond the seven planetary zones of the sensible world was a motion of the mind [and involved] an experiential sense of the mind’s detachment from the body.³⁴⁵

In *Corpus Hermeticum XIII*, Hermes explains to his son Tat that in the course of Seeing ‘I went out of myself into an immortal body, and now I am not what I was before. I have been born in mind.’³⁴⁶ Elsewhere in the *Corpus Hermeticum* the sense of mystical ascent achieved during an out-of-the-body state is specifically associated with the spiritual will:

Command your soul to travel to India, and it will be there faster than your command. Command it to cross over to the ocean, and again it will quickly be there, not as having passed from place to place but simply as being there. Command it even to fly up to heaven, and it will not lack wings. Nothing will hinder it, not the fire of the sun, nor the aether, nor the swirl nor the bodies of the other stars... You must think of god in this way, as having everything – the cosmos, himself [the] universe – like thoughts within himself. Thus, unless you make yourself equal to god, you cannot understand god.³⁴⁷

[‘god’ is spelt lower case in Merkur’s quotation]

According to Merkur, for the Hermetic initiate the visionary or ‘imaginal’ realm was located in the Eighth celestial region, in a ‘dimension’ beyond the seven planetary heavens; however, in due course the initiate had to ascend still further, rising eventually to the Ninth cosmic region and achieving union with the pure Mind of the Creator. ‘The Hermetic God’,

writes Merkur, ‘was the Mind that contains the cosmos as its thoughts’,³⁴⁸ and the Hermetic initiate had to proceed ‘from vision to *union*’,³⁴⁹ thereby experiencing the sacred realisation that ‘both the universe and self were located in the mind of God’,³⁵⁰

In the Kabbalistic Tree of Life the first three *sephiroth* (ie. emanations from the Godhead) similarly transcend the imaginal realm of forms, because they are located above the Abyss that separates the seven lower *sephiroth* associated with Creation (see Chapter Two). MacGregor Mathers makes it clear that the initiate’s task in ‘rising in the planes’ is to ‘Look upwards to the Divine Light shining down from Kether.’³⁵¹ The spiritual aspiration of the Hermetic magician is ultimately towards the highest point on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life and transcendent union with the Godhead.

If Hermetic ‘ascent’ is characteristic of Right-Hand Path magic as practised in the Golden Dawn, where does this leave the ‘ascent’ advocated by Thelemic occultist Vadge Moore, who clearly aligns his magical philosophy with Aleister Crowley and the chthonic realms of the Left-Hand Path? The answer is by no means obvious. Both Vadge Moore and Bataille maintain that it is ‘the dark unconscious that helps to plant the roots for our ascent’.³⁵² However other contemporary occultists associated with the Left-Hand Path appear to have an entirely different focus. As mentioned earlier, the Temple of Set emphasises the role of the dark god Set as the ‘Principle of Isolate Intelligence’³⁵³, a magical concept vastly different from the Hermetic assertion that both the universe and self are located within the mind of God. The antinomianism and self-deification associated with the Left-Hand Path are similarly far removed from the Hermetic perspective.

The *Qliphothic* orientation of the Typhonian O.T.O. and Scandinavian Dragon Rouge is also quite specific. In *Cults of the Shadow* (1975) Kenneth Grant makes specific reference to the *Qliphoth* in distinguishing the path of the mystic (Right-Hand Path) from that of the Typhonian magician (Left-Hand Path):

The ascent of the Tree of Life is achieved by ‘rising on the planes’ until consciousness is merged with the Highest (ie. Kether). In order to reify this state in Malkuth (ie. to ‘earth’ magical consciousness) the process has to be reversed and the Tree descended *via* the *back* of the Middle Pillar... The Mystic retains consciousness in the *Brahmarandra* (the topmost *chakra*, at the region of the cranial suture) but the Magician brings it down again to earth. It is the formula of Prometheus, who brought down fire from heaven... Thus also the Tantric Adept brings down the Light to manifest in Maya – the shadow-world of illusory images.... The Secret Pathway through the realms of the *Qliphoth* at the back of the

Tree follows the downward path and comports the assumption of animal forms which correspond to the ‘gods’ of the Qabalistic [Kabbalistic] system. This is a valid explanation of the *were-animal* and its relation to pre-human atavisms.³⁵⁴

While Grant perceives the grounding of mystical consciousness *via* the *Qliphoth* essentially as a re-directed flow of Tantric energy, the Dragon Rouge is somewhat more assertive in proclaiming the strengths and virtues of the *Qliphoth*. According to the Dragon Rouge, ‘the Qliphothic Qabalah [Kabbalah]³⁵⁵ uses the forces of destruction to free the adept from the limitations of creation’³⁵⁶ and its Draconian initiations have the potential to lead the adept ‘down into the darkness where he or she can become a god’.³⁵⁷ In contradistinction to the principle of Hermetic transcendence and union with the Divine Mind mentioned earlier, the Dragon Rouge maintains that the ‘dark forces [of the *Qliphoth*]...make a free will and *an individual existence outside God possible*’ [my emphasis in italics]. As a magical organisation that openly aligns itself with what it calls the ‘nightside tradition’, the Dragon Rouge also supports the practice of *Goetic* magic through which ‘the magician conjures and evokes personified dark forces in the shape of different demons’.³⁵⁸

The demonic aspects of the *Qliphoth* are similarly addressed in the Golden Dawn document *The Book of the Black Serpent*, mentioned earlier, although the purpose and intent of this particular magical text is quite different. Here the *Qliphoth* are described as ‘unclean and evil’ and the *Qliphothic* planetary rulers and their ‘archdaemon servitors’ are identified as evil spirits similar to those associated with the *Goetia* and medieval grimoires.³⁵⁹ However the message to members of the Isis Urania Temple of the Golden Dawn in *The Book of the Black Serpent* is both clear and emphatic: ‘Banish thou therefore the Evil and seek the Good.’³⁶⁰

At this point it is perhaps appropriate to emphasise the relevance of this material to the art and magic of Rosaleen Norton, since it is her art and visionary magic that are the key focus of this thesis. Intriguingly, the connection between Rosaleen Norton and the *Qliphoth* is quite specific and lends support to my suggestion that Norton’s art and magic align her substantially with the Left-Hand Path in modern Western magic. As already noted, even while Norton was still an art student during her teenage years she had become interested in the Kabbalah and the symbolism of the Tree of Life. She also had an ongoing fascination with aspects of demonology and would later study practical *Goetia* with Eugene Goossens (see Chapter Five). Norton used the title *Qlipha* for one of her artistic

works,³⁶¹ and *Qliphothic* entities like the Werplon are referred to in Chapter Six, which examines Norton's magical art in detail.

It is also of particular interest that in *Cults of the Shadow* Grant employs the term 'astral lycanthropy'³⁶² to refer to *were-animal* transformations associated with the astral plane. Although Grant and Norton appear not to have been in direct contact with each other,³⁶³ Norton undoubtedly had a creative facility that enabled her to evoke artistic images of *were-animals* very similar to the entities Grant is referring to, and the term 'astral lycanthropy' aptly describes some of the terrifying experiences Norton underwent while exploring the nether regions of the 'astral plane' in a state of deep magical trance. Norton's trance-based magical encounters are described in detail in Chapter Four.

Summary of main points

This chapter has argued that Aleister Crowley's doctrine of *Thelemic* sex magic had a substantial influence on the 20th century Western esoteric tradition. (It also strongly influenced the occult practices of Rosaleen Norton – see comments below and Chapter Five.) Crowley's *Thelemic* approach is also characteristic of the so-called 'Left-Hand Path' in modern Western magic, sharing a number of key characteristics with other occult groups and organisations.

Crowley's approach to sex magic can summarised as follows:

- a) Following the revelations contained in *Liber Al vel Legis* Crowley advocated a form of libertine occult sexuality in which he was the Beast 666 and his magical partner the Whore of Babalon, or Scarlet Woman.
- b) Crowley focused on the concept of sacramental sex, or 'love under will'. In this form of sexuality every act of sexual congress with a partner had the potential for magical and sacred relevance.
- c) After establishing the Argenteum Astrum and divorcing his wife Rose in 1909, Crowley's bisexuality came increasingly to the fore. As his magical relationship with Victor Neuburg flourished, Crowley adapted his magical approach to include homosexual ritual sex. In the case of his sex-magic relationship with Neuburg, as evidenced by the ritual on the mountain at Da'leh Addin in Algeria, Crowley adopted the passive-lunar-receptive role, allowing anal penetration, whereas Neuburg took the active-solar-assertive role.

d) Crowley maintained that the fluids and secretions that flowed from sexual union constituted a 'magical elixir', and that this elixir should form part of an offering to a deity (eg. Ra-Hoor Khuit). It was appropriate that this elixir should be 'consumed utterly' by the ritual participants. In addition to sexual secretions, fresh menstrual blood was also a constituent in baked ritual offerings known as 'cakes of light'. (Ritual references to 'cakes of light' would later emerge in the magical relationship between Eugene Goossens and Rosaleen Norton – see Chapter Five.)

e) The moment of sexual orgasm could be combined with magical visualisation to 'will' certain goals or outcomes to occur. These outcomes were given the potential to exist in physical reality because of the magical energy associated with sexual orgasm. Sexual energy could therefore bring magically willed goals or outcomes into existence. This idea was not unique to Crowley, and had earlier been advocated by the 19th century American occultist, Paschal Beverly Randolph. However Randolph believed that sex magic should only be practised by a married heterosexual couple, whereas Crowley maintained that employing sexual energy to produce tangible results was simply part of the magical process and was not confined to wives and/or husbands. Crowley's *Emblems and Modes of Use* indicates that sex magic could be used to achieve financial gain.

f) Because sperm represented magical *life-force*, semen ejaculated through acts of masturbation could be used to 'activate' the magical sigils traditionally used to evoke demons. These sigils, or graphic magical symbols, were a feature of several medieval magical grimoires, like the *Goetia*, which were well known to Crowley. (This technique would also re-surface in the magical relationship between Eugene Goossens and Rosaleen Norton – see Chapter Five.)

g) Because of the controversial nature of sex magic Crowley believed it was both appropriate (and with regard to homosexuality, legally necessary) to cloak the activities associated with sex magic in symbolic language. For example, the expression 'magical elixir' referred to sexual secretions, 'the Sacrifice of the Mass' was a reference to ritualised ejaculation, and the 'privy chapel' a reference to a woman's vagina.

The key characteristics of the Left-Hand Path in modern Western magic can be summarised as follows:

a) There is an emphasis in all forms of Left-Hand Path magic on *individual* mastery and *self*-empowerment. (The focus in Crowley's magick is on individual communication with the Holy Guardian Angel – *one's higher self*.) In Left-Hand Path occult practice it is the *self* that is finally triumphant, as in the Dragon Rouge where the 'created' becomes the 'creator', or in the Temple of Set where the 'isolated psyche' achieves immortality. This magical *self* does not 'merge' or 'experience union' with the Godhead, as in the Hermetic and mystical traditions, but remains *distinct* and *separate* from God, and may even become a god in its own right (see also *self-deification* below).

b) There is a distinct orientation towards the 'dark' side of magic. Goetic (demonic) evocation may be employed to conquer fears and limitations (as in the Dragon Rouge), and 'Greater Black Magic' may be practised in order to subjugate the universe to the will of the individual in his or her quest for 'infinite potential' (as in the Temple of Set). The Kabbalistic *Qliphoth* can also be considered potentially demonic.

c) 'Antinomianism', or the act of 'going against the grain', is an overriding defining principle of the Left-Hand Path in magic. In the modern magical context this includes 'heretical' or 'blasphemous' ritual acts (eg. Crowley's *Gnostic Mass* or LaVey's naked female 'altar'), or the use of ritual elements 'feared and loathed by conventional culture' (eg. the consumption of semen, vaginal secretions and menstrual blood as advocated by Crowley and practised in the O.T.O.). Most modern magical or 'occult' groups, by their very nature, would be regarded in Christian circles as 'heretical', 'heathen' or 'demonic' and therefore, by definition, *antinomian*.

d) There is an emphasis on the spiritual quest for 'self-deification' or the act of 'becoming a god'. This magical aspiration is clearly expressed in the Temple of Set and the Dragon Rouge. (It is also less obvious but nevertheless present in Wicca – see Chapter Two, where the High Priestess incarnates the Goddess within a ceremonial context by 'Drawing Down the Moon'.)

e) The Left-Hand Path is associated with *chthonic* elements in magic – with pagan gods and goddesses of the Underworld and deities associated with fertility, lust, ecstasy and the primal forces of the *id*. Vadge Moore and Georges Bataille propose a worship of the gods and goddesses of

darkness and the earth – including such deities as Demeter, Hecate and Dionysus – because it is ‘the underworld of the id and the dark unconscious that helps to plant the roots for our ascent’. The Ophidian nature of O.T.O. Tantric sex-magick, with its emphasis on the arousal of the Kundalini serpent energy from the base of the spine, similarly has chthonic overtones: traditionally chthonic deities are symbolised by, or associated with, serpents. (Norton’s personal cosmology, which focused particularly on Pan, Hecate and Lilith, was also strongly chthonic in nature – see Chapter Four.)

¹ MacGregor Mathers, the influential co-founder of the Golden Dawn, died in 1918.

² The Witchcraft Act 1735 was repealed in New South Wales by the Imperial Acts Application Act, 1969. See L. Hume, *Witchcraft and Paganism in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne 1997: 224.

³ These include the Ordo Templi Orientis in the United States, the Typhonian O.T.O. in Britain, and the Church of Satan and the Temple of Set in the United States. Chaos Magick has also been strongly influenced by Crowley.

⁴ In the 2001 National Census for England and Wales, out of 79,404 neo-pagan respondents there were only 1657 Druids, 508 Celtic pagans and 93 followers of Asatrú (Odinist practitioners). See D. Evans, *The History of British Magick After Crowley*, Hidden Publishing, London 2007: 74.

⁵ See N. Drury, *The History of Magic in the Modern Age*, Constable, London 2000: 110.

⁶ *John Bull* used this headline on 24 March 1923, for an article deploring what it described as ‘the blasphemous and bestial ceremonies – or orgies’ which had taken place in Crowley’s Abby of Thelema in Cefalu, Sicily. He was also described in the same article as a ‘degenerate poet and occultist, traitor, drug fiend and Master of Black Magic’.

⁷ R. Sutcliffe, ‘Left-Hand Path Ritual Magick’ in G. Harvey and C. Hardman (ed.), *Pagan Pathways: A Guide to the Ancient Earth Traditions*, Thorsons, London 2000: 110.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ See L. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley*, St Martin’s Press, New York 2000: 91. Crowley also acknowledged the considerable Tantric knowledge of the occultist David Curwen who later became a high-ranking member of the O.T.O. See D. Evans, *The History of British Magick After Crowley*, Hidden Publishing, London 2007: 288.

¹⁰ Born in the Ukraine, Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891) co-founded the Theosophical Society with Colonel Henry Steel Olcott in New York in 1875. After an unsuccessful marriage at the age of seventeen, Blavatsky travelled widely through Europe and the Middle East and claimed that she had been initiated by ‘Mahatmas’, or spiritual Masters, into the secrets of esoteric mysticism. She believed that the Masters helped her write many of her major works, thereby providing the foundation for modern Theosophy. These works include *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Key to Theosophy*, and *The Voice of Silence*. Madame Blavatsky presented herself to her followers as a powerful psychic medium but it is likely that many of the psychic powers she claimed she had received from the Masters were clever deceptions. Her main contribution to mystical thought was the manner in which she sought to synthesize Eastern and Western philosophy and religion, thereby providing a framework for understanding universal occult teachings.

¹¹ Matthew 25:33.

¹² V. Crabtree, ‘Left Hand Path Practices in the West’, 2002, published on-line at www.dpjs.co.uk/lefthandpath.html.

¹³ *Apollodorus*, Bibl.iii, 10, 3, 8-9, quoted in Dave Evans, *The History of British Magick After Crowley*, Hidden Publishing, London 2007: 177.

¹⁴ Ibid: 182-183.

¹⁵ A.E. Waite, *The Book of Ceremonial Magic*, Rider, London 1911:16.

¹⁶ Chaos Magick, which dates from the late 1970s, was inspired initially by both Austin Osman Spare (see Chapter Six) and Aleister Crowley. Its anarchistic and chthonic orientation, its pursuit of magical

individualism, and its tendency towards antinomianism, locate it on the 'left-hand path' in contemporary Western magic.

¹⁷ V. Crabtree, loc cit.

¹⁸ Ibid. (The LaVey quotation is from his key work, *The Satanic Bible*: 'Book of Lucifer', para.30.)

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ General information statement from the Dragon Rouge published on-line at www.dragonrouge.net.

²² Ibid.

²³ D. Lee, review of Stephen E. Flowers, *Lords of the Left-Hand Path*, Runa-Raven Press, Smithville, Texas 1997, published on-line at www.philhine.org.uk (including lengthy quotations from the text).

²⁴ L. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley*, loc cit: 69.

²⁵ While he was at Cambridge University, Crowley changed his name from Edward Alexander Crowley to Aleister Crowley, by adopting a variant Gaelic spelling of his middle name. See L. Sutin, loc cit: 48.

²⁶ L. Sutin, loc cit: 65.

²⁷ A. Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice* [1929], Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1973: xv.

²⁸ Ibid: xvi.

²⁹ Ibid: xvii.

³⁰ Ibid: 4.

³¹ Ibid.

³² The 'Secret Chiefs' of the Golden Dawn were high-ranking spiritual beings who, it was claimed, provided guidance and inspiration to the leaders of the Inner Order. MacGregor Mathers, in particular, emphasized their importance. See Chapter Two.

³³ Ibid: 69.

³⁴ L. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley*, loc cit: 118.

³⁵ Crowley believed Aiwass was messenger from the Egyptian deity Horus, the falcon-headed god that had the sun and the moon for his eyes. Crowley came to believe that he was Lord of the Aeon of Horus, which began in 1904, replacing Christianity and the other major religious traditions of both West and East.

³⁶ Although a psychoanalytic perspective on why there should have been an anti-Christian component to Crowley's spiritual revelation is outside the scope of this thesis, Crowley's new role as the Beast 666 is almost certainly related to his restrictive and oppressive Christian upbringing within a Plymouth Brethren family: Crowley's entire magical philosophy is grounded in notions of personal freedom and a libertine philosophy.

³⁷ Crowley's unique spelling for the Scarlet Woman of the Apocalypse, as revealed in *The Book of the Law*. The spelling 'Babalon' has a Kabbalistic numerical value of 156 which, according to Crowley's disciple Kenneth Grant, equates with the number of shrines in the City of Pyramids. Grant maintains that the name 'Babalon' means 'Gateway of the Sun, or solar-phallic power' (see *Nightside of Eden*, London 1977: 259) – thereby revealing its symbolic significance to practitioners of sex-magick.

³⁸ See J. Symonds, *The Great Beast: the Life and Magick of Aleister Crowley*, Mayflower/Granada, London 1973: 81.

³⁹ The Boulak Museum no longer exists; the antiquities housed in this museum were transferred to the National Museum, Cairo. (Symonds, loc.cit: 1973: 81 fn)

⁴⁰ J. Symonds, *The Great Beast: the Life and Magick of Aleister Crowley*, loc. cit.: 1973: 82.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² The text of *The Book of the Law* is included as an appendix in *The Magical Record of the Beast 666*, ed. J. Symonds and K. Grant, Duckworth, London 1972.

⁴³ See stanzas I: 15 and 16 of *Liber Al vel Legis*, in the appendix to *The Magical Record of the Beast 666*, loc.cit 1972: 303.

⁴⁴ See A. Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice*, loc cit.:12.

⁴⁵ See stanza I:40 of *Liber Al vel Legis*, in the appendix to *The Magical Record of the Beast 666*, loc.cit: 304. See also *The Comment* which comes at the conclusion of *Liber Al vel Legis*, loc cit: 315.

⁴⁶ A. Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice*, loc.cit: xv.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ K. Grant, *The Magical Revival*, Muller, London 1972 :20.

⁴⁹ See stanza I:49 of *Liber Al vel Legis*, in the appendix to *The Magical Record of the Beast 666*, loc.cit 1972: 305.

⁵⁰ See J. Symonds and K. Grant (ed.), *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1970: 22.

⁵¹ See appendix containing the text of *Liber Al vel Legis* in *The Magical Record of the Beast 666*, ed. J. Symonds and K. Grant, Duckworth, London 1972:314.

⁵² Ibid: stanzas III: 44-45: 314.

⁵³ K. Grant, *The Magical Revival*, loc cit.:45. Grant elaborates on this point later in the same book : 'In sexual congress each coition is a sacrament of peculiar virtue since it effects a transformation of consciousness through annihilation of apparent duality. To be radically effective the transformation must be also an initiation. Because of the sacramental nature of the act, each union must be magically directed... the ritual must be directed to the transfinite and non-individualised consciousness represented by Egyptian Nuit... The earthly Nuit is Isis, the Scarlet Woman.' (loc cit.:145)

⁵⁴ Crowley's insatiable search for sexual partners is described in Colin Wilson's *Aleister Crowley : the Nature of the Beast*, Aquarian Press, Wellingborough 1987.

⁵⁵ See appendix containing the text of *Liber Al vel Legis* in *The Magical Record of the Beast 666*, ed. J. Symonds and K. Grant, Duckworth, London 1972:311-312.

⁵⁶ L. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley*, St Martin's Press, New York 2000: 292.

⁵⁷ F. King (ed.), *The Secret Rituals of the O.T.O.*, C.W.Daniel, London 1973: 226.

⁵⁸ King maintains that Crowley joined the O.T.O. in 1911. See F. King (ed.), *The Secret Rituals of the O.T.O.*, loc.cit.: 28. However according to the O.T.O. *History of the Ordo Templi Orientis* (www.oto-usa.org/history.html), Crowley was admitted to the first degrees of the O.T.O in 1910. Reuss made frequent trips to England.

⁵⁹ F. King (ed.), *The Secret Rituals of the O.T.O.*, loc cit: 225.

⁶⁰ John Michael Greer and Carl Hood have suggested (*Gnosis* magazine: 43, Spring 1997) that there may have been a secret sexual dimension to the rituals of the Golden Dawn, but in my view their arguments are unconvincing. MacGregor Mathers, arguably the most influential figure in the formation of the Golden Dawn, valued celibacy and virginity and never consummated his marriage to Moina Bergson (see I. Colquhoun, *Sword of Wisdom: MacGregor Mathers and the Golden Dawn*, loc cit.:54).

⁶¹ J.G. Melton, 'The Origins of Modern Sex Magick', Institute for the Study of American Religion, Evanston, Illinois, June 1985:3.

⁶² These writings included such texts as *Liber A'ash* (*Equinox* 1:6, September 1911: 33-39), *Liber Cheth* (*Equinox* 1: 6 (September 1911: 23-27) and *Liber Stellae Rubae* (*Equinox* 1:7, March 1912: 29-38).

⁶³ See J.G. Melton, 'The Origins of Modern Sex Magick', loc cit.

⁶⁴ The Second Order rituals related to the Kabbalistic *sephiroth* Tiphareth, Geburah and Chesed on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. See Chapter Two.

⁶⁵ F. King, *Ritual Magic in England*, Spearman, London 1970:117.

⁶⁶ See stanza 1:15 of *Liber Al vel Legis* in *The Magical Record of the Beast 666*, ed. J. Symonds and K. Grant, Duckworth, London 1972:303.

⁶⁷ Neuburg's magical diary describes how Crowley on one occasion rebuked him by giving him thirty-two strokes of a gorse switch, drawing blood. 'He is apparently a homosexual sadist,' wrote Neuburg, 'for he performed the ceremony with obvious satisfaction.' Quoted in C.Wilson, *Aleister Crowley: the Nature of the Beast*, loc cit: 91. See also J.O. Fuller, *The Magical Dilemma of Victor Neuburg*, W.H. Allen, London 1965 where Neuburg's diaries are also discussed in detail. .

⁶⁸ Enochian magic derives historically from the work of Elizabethan occultists Dr. John Dee (1527-1608) and Edward Kelley (1555-15950, who met in 1581. Dee and Kelley made use of wax tablets called almadels, engraved with magical symbols, and also used a large number of 49-inch squares filled with letters of the alphabet. Nearby, on his table, Kelley had a large crystal stone upon which he focused his concentration and entered a state of trance reverie. Kelley maintained that while he was in a state of trance 'angels' would appear, and they in turn would point to various letters on the squares. These letters were written down by Dee as Kelley called them out. When these invocations were completely transcribed, Kelley then reversed their order, believing that the angels had communicated them backwards to avoid unleashing the magical power which they contained. Dee and Kelley considered that the communications formed the basis of a new language known as Enochian. These magical conjurations were subsequently incorporated into magical practice by the ritual magicians of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, who used them to induce trance visions on the 'astral plane'. See Chapter Three.

⁶⁹ These magical visions are described in A. Crowley, *The Vision and the Voice* [1929], Sangreal Foundation, Dallas, Texas 1972.

⁷⁰ A. Crowley, *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, ed. J.Symonds and K.Grant, Hill and Wang, New York 1970: 621. According to Lawrence Sutin, Crowley was deeply ashamed of his homosexuality because it 'conflicted with his status as a manly gentleman coming of age' (*Do What Thou Wilt*, loc cit:

43). Crowley was also well aware of the famous libel action that led to the imprisonment of Oscar Wilde. This had occurred in 1895, during Crowley's first year at Cambridge University.

⁷¹ Spare was briefly a member of the O.T.O. circa 1910 but soon quarrelled with Crowley and thereafter sought to avoid him. Even though Spare became friendly with Thelemite Kenneth Grant in the late 1940s, Spare and Crowley were never reconciled. See Chapter Six and also K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks !: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, London 1998.

⁷² F. King (ed.), *The Secret Rituals of the O.T.O.*, loc.cit: 28. See also fn.57 above.

⁷³ Crowley writes in *The Confessions*: 'I protested that I knew no such secret. He said, "But you have printed it in the plainest language." I said that I could not have done so because I did not know it. He went to the bookshelves and, taking out a copy of *The Book of Lies*, pointed to a passage in the despised chapter.' See A. Crowley, *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, ed. J. Symonds and K. Grant, Hill and Wang, New York 1970: 710.

⁷⁴ A. Crowley, *The Book of Lies*, [1912] , Hayden Press, Ilfracombe, Devon 1962:82.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ J. Symonds, *The Great Beast: The Life and Magick of Aleister Crowley*, loc cit: 182 fn.

⁷⁷ Crowley later visited Berlin where he received instructional documents from the German O.T.O. He was also granted the grandiose title 'King of Ireland, Iona and all the Britains within the Sanctuary of the Gnosis' and took *Baphomet* as his new magical name. Later Crowley adapted the Ninth degree of the O.T.O so that it identified the priest and priestess as Osiris and Isis, 'seeking Nuit and Hadit through the vagina and the penis'. He also developed a series of homosexual magical rituals with Victor Neuburg featuring invocations to Thoth-Hermes. At one point in these rituals, which became known collectively as the *Paris Working*, Crowley scourged Neuburg on the buttocks and cut a cross on his chest For details see J.O. Fuller, *The Magical Dilemma of Victor Neuburg*, W.H. Allen, London 1965:203-216.

⁷⁸ See F. King (ed.), *The Secret Rituals of the O.T.O.*, loc.cit: 29. King points out that Crowley was not accepted by a majority of German O.T.O. members until 1925. The Order was suppressed by the Nazis in 1937.

⁷⁹ P-R. Koenig, 'Introduction to the Ordo Templi Orientis', published on-line at www.user.cyberlink.ch/~koenig/intro.htm.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ P-R. Koenig suggests that Kellner may have been one of the twelve co-founders of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Light in Boston/Chicago in 1895. See www.user.cyberlink.ch/~koenig/spermo.htm.

⁸⁴ H.B. Urban, *Magia Sexualis: Sex, Magic and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism*, University of California Press, Berkeley, California 2006: 96.

⁸⁵ Ibid: 97.

⁸⁶ Ibid:99.

⁸⁷ T. Reuss, *Lingam-Yoni*, Verlag Willsson, Berlin and London 1906.

⁸⁸ P-R. Koenig, 'Spermo-Gnostics and the Ordo Templi Orientis', published on-line at www.user.cyberlink.ch/~koenig/spermo.htm

⁸⁹ H. Urban, *Magia Sexualis*, loc.cit: 101.

⁹⁰ P-R. Koenig, 'Introduction to the Ordo Templi Orientis', loc cit.

⁹¹ Sabazius X° and AMT IX°, *History of Ordo Templi Orientis*, U.S. Grand Lodge, 2006: 12-13. Published on-line at www.oto-usa.org/history.html.

⁹² P-R.Koenig, 'Introduction to the Ordo Templi Orientis', loc cit.

⁹³ Sabazius X° and AMT IX°, *History of Ordo Templi Orientis*, loc cit.:17.

⁹⁴ Published in *The Equinox* Vol.III:1, March 1919 – the so called 'Blue Equinox'.

⁹⁵ Sabazius X° and AMT IX°, *History of Ordo Templi Orientis*, loc cit.:17.

⁹⁶ H. Urban, 'Magia Sexualis: Sex, Secrecy and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism,' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, September 2004, Vol.72, No.3: 711.

⁹⁷ P-R. Koenig, 'Spermo-Gnostics and the O.T.O', published on-line at www.cyberlink.ch/~koenig/spermo.htm.

⁹⁸ A.Crowley, *De Arte Magica*, Ch.XII , published on-line at www.skepticfiles.org.

⁹⁹ Ibid, Ch.XIII.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, Ch.XVI.

¹⁰² See See F. King (ed.), *The Secret Rituals of the O.T.O.*, loc.cit: 207.

- ¹⁰³ Baphomet was Crowley's magical name after he assumed leadership of the British branch of the O.T.O. in 1912. It is also the name of a demonic deity represented graphically by Eliphas Lévi as a goat-headed god with wings, breasts and an illuminated torch between his horns. The Knights Templar were accused by King Philip IV of France of worshipping Baphomet although few members of the Order admitted to this ritual practice. It has been suggested that the name Baphomet may be a corruption of Mohammed.
- ¹⁰⁴ See A. Crowley, 'Emblems and Modes of Use', private text intended for the Ninth degree O.T.O. Published on-line at www.aethyria.com.
- ¹⁰⁵ See Frater Osiris, 'Analysis of the Mass of the Phoenix', Seattle 2003, published on-line at www.hermetic.com/osiris and also A. Rhadon, 'Sex, Religion and Magick: a concise overview', 2004, published on-line at www.baymoon.com.
- ¹⁰⁶ Frater Osiris, 'Analysis of the Mass of the Phoenix', loc cit.
- ¹⁰⁷ See Frater Osiris, 'Analysis of Liber XXXVI, *The Star Sapphire*', Seattle 2004, published on-line at www.hermetic.com/osiris.
- ¹⁰⁸ A. Crowley, Chapter 69, 'The Way to Succeed – and the Way to Suck Eggs' in *The Book of Lies* [1912], Haydn Press, Ilfracombe, Devon 1962:148.
- ¹⁰⁹ Frater Osiris, 'Analysis of Liber XXXVI, *The Star Sapphire*', loc cit. Frater Osiris is probably referring to Crowley's sex magic text *Emblems and Modes of Use*, where it is suggested that the 'elixir' should be consumed in this way.
- ¹¹⁰ This is Crowley's expression. IAO was one of the sacred names ascribed to the archon Abraxas, a planetary deity associated with Basilides, a Gnostic philosopher who lived and taught in Alexandria c.125-140 CE. The name Abraxas in Greek letters has a numerical value of 365, thereby linking the deity to the number of days in a year. Abraxas was said to rule over 365 heavens and was depicted on numerous charms, amulets and talismans in order to attract good luck.
- ¹¹¹ A. Crowley, *Energized Enthusiasm: A Note on Theurgy*, published on-line at www.luckymojo.com/esoteric/occultism/magic/ceremonial/crowley.htm. This text was first published in *The Equinox*, vol.1 No.9, March 1913, and was republished by Weiser, New York 1976.
- ¹¹² Ibid.
- ¹¹³ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁴ See section in the present chapter dealing with altered states of consciousness in modern magical practice.
- ¹¹⁵ See L. Abraham, entry for the 'Chemical Wedding' of King Sol and Queen Luna, *A Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, Cambridge University Press, 1998:36.
- ¹¹⁶ A. Crowley, *Gnostic Mass (Liber XV, Ecclesiae Gnosticae Catholicae Canon Missae)*, composed in Moscow in 1913.
- ¹¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁹ A. Crowley, Liber XVIV, *The Mass of the Phoenix* (1912), published on-line at www.thelemicgoldendawn.org/rituals/phoenix.htm.
- ¹²⁰ In *Liber Aleph*, Crowley writes: 'Neglect not the daily Miracle of the Mass, either by the Rite of the Gnostic Catholic Church, or that of the Phoenix.' Quoted in Frater Osiris, *On the Mass of the Phoenix: An Analysis*, Seattle 2003. Published on-line at www.hermetic.com/osiris.
- ¹²¹ The Mark of the Beast is 'the sign of the Sun and Moon or Cross and Circle conjoined'. See www.thelemicgoldendawn.org/rituals/phoenix.htm.
- ¹²² Frater Osiris, *On the Mass of the Phoenix: An Analysis*, loc cit.
- ¹²³ First published in the Thelemite journal *Mezla*, Vol.1:111, 1, Ithaca, New York 1985.
- ¹²⁴ A. Crowley, *Emblems and Modes of Use*, loc cit.
- ¹²⁵ Ibid.
- ¹²⁶ Ibid.
- ¹²⁷ Ibid.
- ¹²⁸ Ibid.
- ¹²⁹ See listing of key Crowley texts on sex magic published on-line at www.hollyfeld.org. *Liber A'ash vel Capricorni Pneumatici* heads the list. A 'Class A' document in the Argenteum Astrum was one that could not be altered or modified in the slightest way and had to be adhered to by members strictly as presented by Crowley.
- ¹³⁰ A. Crowley, *Liber A'ash vel Capricorni Pneumatici (Liber CCCLXX)*, first published in *The Equinox*, vol.1 No.6.

- ¹³¹ See listing of O.T.O. members provided by O.T.O. practitioner Ithell Colquhoun in *Sword of Wisdom: MacGregor Mathers and the Golden Dawn*, Spearman, London 1975: 207-208.
- ¹³² M. Johnson, 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', conference presentation, Sex in History Symposium, University of Melbourne 2004.
- ¹³³ J.G. Melton, 'The Origins of Modern Sex Magick', loc cit.
- ¹³⁴ R. North, Introduction to P.B. Randolph, *Sexual Magic*, Magickal Childe, New York 1988 (original French-language text: *Magia Sexualis*, Paris 1931) published on-line at www.supoervirtual.com.br.
- ¹³⁵ Ibid.
- ¹³⁶ Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815) studied medicine at the University of Vienna and embraced the then-current scientific view that a magnetic fluid permeated all aspects of life. Mesmer then came to believe that when this natural source of energy was blocked in the body, disease and ill-health would result. After graduating from the University of Vienna, Mesmer worked as a healer, first in Vienna and later in Paris, using magnets to 'correct' imbalances in the human organism. He transmitted 'healing energy' to his patients by making passes over his patients with his hands, or by using iron rods or wands that he had magnetized. A Royal Commission established in Paris in 1784 to test Mesmer's concept of 'animal magnetism' (Mesmer's term for the magnetic life-energy), found that his healing method had no scientific basis but that some patients nevertheless responded positively because their own imagination provided the healing benefit. Mesmer is rightly regarded as one of the pioneers of psychosomatic medicine and hypnotherapy. During the late-Victorian era of the Golden Dawn, the term 'Mesmerist' was used to connote a hypnotist.
- ¹³⁷ H.B. Urban, *Magia Sexualis: Sex, Magic and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism*, loc cit.:63.
- ¹³⁸ R. North, Introduction to P.B. Randolph, *Sexual Magic*, loc cit.
- ¹³⁹ J.G. Melton, 'The Origins of Modern Sex Magick', loc cit.
- ¹⁴⁰ C. Yronwode, *The Reverend Hargrave Jennings and Phallism*, published on-line at www.luckymojo.com.
- ¹⁴¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁴² Randolph received this initiation from an Islamic sect usually referred to as the Nusairi, who live mainly in the mountains near the city of Latakia in Syria. These sect members were formerly known as the Namiriya, or Ansariyya – a reference to the mountainous region where they come from. Randolph's reference to 'Ansairitic Mysteries' is based on an early variant spelling.
- ¹⁴³ This is a form of divination using the trance state to achieve a magical outcome.
- ¹⁴⁴ R. North, Introduction to P.B. Randolph, *Sexual Magic*, loc.cit.
- ¹⁴⁵ P.B. Randolph, *Eulis!*, Randolph, Toledo, Ohio 1873, republished 1896.
- ¹⁴⁶ H.B. Urban, *Magia Sexualis: Sex, Magic and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism*, loc cit.:65.
- ¹⁴⁷ P.B. Randolph, *Eulis!*, loc cit.: 48, 218.
- ¹⁴⁸ See H.B. Urban, *Magia Sexualis: Sex, Magic and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism*, loc cit.:67 and C. Yronwode, 'Paschal Beverly Randolph and the Ansairitic Mysteries', published on-line at www.luckymojo.com.
- ¹⁴⁹ See P.B. Randolph, *Magia Sexualis*, tr. M.de Naglowska, Paris 1931: 76-77 (a composite work published in an English-language edition (trs. R.North), Magickal Childe, New York 1988).
- ¹⁵⁰ Randolph's term *Ansairitic* is a reference to the Nusairi Islamic sect in Syria, formerly known as the Ansariyya. See also B.H. Springett, *Secret Sects of Syria and Lebanon*, Allen & Unwin, London 1922.
- ¹⁵¹ P.B. Randolph, *Eulis!*, quoted in C. Yronwode, 'Paschal Beverly Randolph and the Ansairitic Mysteries', loc cit.
- ¹⁵² See P.B. Randolph, *The Ansairitic Mystery: A New Revelation Concerning Sex!*, Toledo, Ohio, c.1973-74, republished in J.P. Deveney, *Paschal Beverly Randolph: A Nineteenth-Century American Spiritualist, Rosicrucian and Sex Magician*, State University of New York Press, Albany, New York 1997: 319-25.
- ¹⁵³ P.B. Randolph, *The Ansairitic Mystery: A New Revelation Concerning Sex!*, loc cit.
- ¹⁵⁴ H.B. Urban, *Magia Sexualis: Sex, Magic and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism*, loc cit.:72.
- ¹⁵⁵ This is especially true of Crowley during his visit to the United States around the time of World War One. Crowley arrived in New York in October 1914 and during his first year in America experimented with a range of sexual partners – both male and female – in the IX° and XI° O.T.O. sex magick rituals. This included the use of prostitutes in his magical rituals. See L. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt: a Life of Aleister Crowley*, loc cit: 244.
- ¹⁵⁶ H.B. Urban, *Magia Sexualis: Sex, Magic and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism*, loc cit.:73.
- ¹⁵⁷ A. Crowley, *Energized Enthusiasm: A Note on Theurgy*, loc.cit.

¹⁵⁸ According to Joscelyn Godwin the original French-language edition of this book was probably not written by Randolph himself but adapted by M.de Naglowska in Paris, where the book was first published in 1931. See letter dated 13 October 1994 from Godwin to P-R.Koenig quoted in 'Correct Gnosticism', published on-line at www.user.cyberlink.ch/~koenig/correct.htm.

¹⁵⁹ M.A. Kazlev, 'The Teachings of Max Théon', published on-line at www.kheper.net/topics/Theon/Theon.htm.

¹⁶⁰ J. Godwin, C. Chanel and J.P. Deveney, *The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor*, Weiser, Maine 1995: 92-97.

¹⁶¹ Ibid: 6.

¹⁶² S. Scarborough, 'The Influence of Egypt on the Modern Western Mystery Tradition: The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor,' *Journal of the Western Mystery Tradition*, No.1, Autumn 2001: 2.

¹⁶³ J. Godwin, letter dated 13 October 1994 to P-R. Koenig quoted in 'Correct Gnosticism', loc cit.

¹⁶⁴ See T.A. Greenfield, 'Peter Davidson, Occultist', *Agape*, 2 May 2003.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ P-R. Koenig, 'Correct Gnosticism', loc cit.

¹⁶⁷ These Gnostic sects include the Carpocratians, the Ophites and the Phibionites and they are of interest because of their libertine tendencies, chthonic snake-imagery, and ritual consumption of blood and semen respectively. The Phibionites provide arguably the most intriguing parallel to Thelema in relation to Crowley's sacramental sex-magick practices. See also P-R. Koenig, 'Spermo-Gnostics and the O.T.O.', loc cit. and P-R. Koenig, 'Correct Gnosticism', loc cit.

¹⁶⁸ M. Eliade, *Occultism. Witchcraft and Cultural Fashions*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1976:109.

¹⁶⁹ P-R. Koenig, 'Spermo-Gnostics and the O.T.O', loc cit.

¹⁷⁰ M. Eliade, *Occultism. Witchcraft and Cultural Fashions*, loc cit: 113.

¹⁷¹ Epiphanius, *Panarion* 26: 9, 3-4.

¹⁷² Ibid: 26: 17, 1 ff. quoted in M. Eliade, *Occultism. Witchcraft and Cultural Fashions*, loc cit: 110.

¹⁷³ A. Crowley, *Gnostic Mass (Liber XV, Ecclesiae Gnosticae Catholicae Canon Missae)*, 1913, loc cit.

¹⁷⁴ P-R. Koenig, 'Spermo-Gnostics and the O.T.O', loc cit.

¹⁷⁵ According to the official historical statement issued by the U.S. Grand Lodge of the O.T.O. the various European branches of the Order were 'largely destroyed or driven underground during the War'. See Sabazius X° and AMT IX°, *History of Ordo Templi Orientis*, loc cit.:19.

¹⁷⁶ See Sabazius X° and AMT IX°, *History of Ordo Templi Orientis*, loc cit.:18, and L. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley*, loc cit.:286, 334.

¹⁷⁷ Sabazius X° and AMT IX°, *History of Ordo Templi Orientis*, loc cit.:22-23.

¹⁷⁸ The American O.T.O. remains vigilant in policing pirated editions of Crowley's voluminous writings on magick and the doctrine of Thelema. However it has been less successful preventing various websites on the Internet from publishing most of Crowley's significant magickal texts on-line. These rival websites include www.thelemicgnosticism.org ; www.luckymojo.com; www.hermetic.com; www.rahoorkhuit.net; www.bbs.bapho.net; www.skepticfiles.org; www.sacred-texts.com and www.aethyria.com.

¹⁷⁹ The Fraternitas Saturni was established in Germany in 1926 by Eugen Grosche (1888-1964) and was the second magical order to be based on Crowley's doctrine of *Thelema*. The first was Crowley's Argenteum Astrum which in turn merged into the O.T.O. after 1922.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid: 23.

¹⁸¹ One can sense this rivalry in such articles as Michael Staley's 'Typhonian Ordo Templi Orientis: the O.T.O. after Crowley' which seeks to reinterpret various historical events in the O.T.O. as documented by the American branch of the O.T.O. Staley, who is a senior member of the Typhonian O.T.O. in Britain and editor of its publication *Starfire*, is widely regarded as Grant's deputy and heir apparent. See www.freespeech.org/magick/koenig/staley2.htm.

¹⁸² H. Bogdan, 'Kenneth Grant: Marriage between the West and the East', edited extract taken from 'Challenging the Morals of Western Society: the Use of Ritualised Sex in Contemporary Occultism,' *The Pomegranate*, 8, 2, Equinox Publishing, London 2006 (published on-line at www.fulgur.co.uk).

¹⁸³ These works by Grant include *The Magical Revival*, 1972; *Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God*, 1973; *Cults of the Shadow*, 1975; *Nightside of Eden*, 1977, and *Hecate's Fountain*, 1992 – see Bibliography.

¹⁸⁴ See Introduction to K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks!: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, London 1998.

¹⁸⁵ Grant defines the Draconian Cult as 'the cult of the Fire Snake represented celestially by the stellar complex, Draco, the Dragon or Fire-breathing Beast of the Great Deep (of Space).' Grant claims that

‘Draco is identical with the Goddess Kali of the later Tantric Cults of the Left Hand Path. The Draconian Cult is also alluded to as the Ophidian Current when no specifically Egyptian reference is intended’ and he notes further that ‘It is also known as the Typhonian Tradition, for Typhon was the primal Goddess and the Mother of Set.’ See K. Grant, *Cults of the Shadow*, Muller, London 1975: 214.

¹⁸⁶ The manifesto is undated but Grant has confirmed that it was circulated around 1948. See H. Bogdan ‘Kenneth Grant: Marriage between the West and the East’, loc cit.: 4, fn 2.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid: 3.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ See Frater Zephyros, ‘The Ophidian Current’, n.d., published on-line at www.groups.msn.com/TheMage/theophidiancurrent.msnw.

¹⁹² There are no references in Norton’s writings or media interviews that indicate she had any knowledge of the Typhonian O.T.O. in Britain. This is not surprising because Kenneth Grant’s first book, *The Magical Revival*, was not published until 1972 – only seven years prior to Norton’s death. See bibliography.

¹⁹³ See M. Eliade, *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey 1970:5.

¹⁹⁴ According to Swami Sivananda Radha the concept of Kundalini also conveys ‘the implication is that of a double spiral moved up into three dimensions’. See S. Radha, *Kundalini Yoga for the West*, Shambhala, Boulder, Colorado 1981:xviii.

¹⁹⁵ O.V. Garrison, *Tantra: The Yoga of Sex*, Julian Press, New York 1964: xxi-xxii.

¹⁹⁶ A. Bharati *The Tantric Tradition*, Rider, London 1965: 293.

¹⁹⁷ Quoted in S. Radha, *Kundalini Yoga for the West*, Shambhala, Boulder, Colorado 1981: 25-28.

¹⁹⁸ J. Mumford, *Psychosomatic Yoga*, Aquarian Press, Wellingborough, UK 1979:44.

¹⁹⁹ Each of the first six chakras are governed by a particular aspect of Shakti. Muladhara is governed by Kakindi, Svadisthana by Rakini, Manipura by Lakini, Anahata by Kakini, Vishuddha by Shakini and Ajna by Hakini. See I. Fischer-Schreiber et al. (ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, Shambhala, Boston 1994: 313.

²⁰⁰ These are Muladhara, Svadisthana, Manipura, Anahata and Vishuddha respectively. See S. Radha, *Kundalini Yoga for the West*, Shambhala, Boulder, Colorado 1981.

²⁰¹ *Samadhi* is the state of yogic consciousness which leads to self-realisation. It is referred to in the *Bhagavad-Gita* as ‘seeing the self in all things and all things in the self’.

²⁰² The Sahasrara chakra is regarded as the abode of god Shiva, and ‘corresponds to cosmic consciousness’. ‘If the kundalini is unified with the god Shiva in the Sahasrara chakra, the yogi experiences supreme bliss.’ I. Fischer-Schreiber et al. (ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, Shambhala, Boston 1994: 61.

²⁰³ Some western interpreters of Kundalini Yoga have identified the *chakras* with specific nerve plexuses, ganglia and glands in the body. However yoga authority Haridas Chaudhuri notes in his article ‘Yoga Psychology’ (in C. Tart (ed.) *Transpersonal Psychologies*, Harper & Row, New York 1975 : 231-280) that this is misleading and contrary to Tantric teaching. Chaudhuri describes the chakras as ‘consciousness potentials’ (loc cit: 265) which only assume meaning as the Kundalini is aroused. The chakras themselves lie within the so-called *Brahmanadi* – the innermost channel within the *Sushumna*. While there is a correlation between the chakras and various regions and organs of the body, the chakras do not literally *equate* with them. Nevertheless because the chakras are visualised in certain locations it useful to summarise their positions in the body. The following listings also include the Tatta, or element, associated with each chakra (where applicable) and the associated Hindu deities:

First chakra: *Muladhara*, located at the base of the spine, near the coccyx;

Element: Earth; Meditation colour: red; Deities: Child Brahma and Dakini

Second chakra : *Svadisthana*, located two inches below the navel in the sacral region; Element:

Water; Meditation colour: orange or silver; Deities: Vishnu and Rakini

Third chakra : *Manipura*, located three inches above the navel in the lumbar region; Element:

Fire; Meditation colour: red-gold or yellow-gold; Deities: Rudra and Lakini

Fourth chakra : *Anahata*, located near the heart; Element: Air; Meditation colour: green or smoky grey; Deities: Isa (or Isvara) and Kakini

Fifth chakra : *Visuddha*, located in the throat; Element: Spirit; Meditation colour: indigo or smoky purple; Deities: Sadashiva and Sakini

Sixth chakra : *Ajna*, located between the eyebrows; Element: all elements in their pure essence; Meditation colour: white; Deities: Shambu/Paramashiva or Ardhanareshvara, and Hakini

Seventh chakra : *Sahasrara*, located above the crown of the head ; no Element assigned for this is a transcendent realm of pure consciousness; Meditation colour: white; Deity: Brahman (Oneness)

²⁰⁴ See M.P. Pandit, *Kundalini Yoga*, Ganesh, Madras 1968: 54-55.

²⁰⁵ A Voigt, *The Chakra Workbook*, Thunder Bay Press, San Diego, California 2004: 150.

²⁰⁶ The divine androgyne, which represents the fusion of male and female polarities within one being, is a symbol of mystical unity. It occurs not only in the Hindu tradition but also in western spiritual alchemy where King Sol and Queen Luna are joined together in 'the conjunction of opposites'.

²⁰⁷ S. Radha, *Kundalini Yoga for the West*, Shambhala, Boulder, Colorado 1981:336.

²⁰⁸ C.G. Jung, 'Psychological Commentary in Kundalini Yoga' (lecture given on 26 October 1932), *Spring*, New York 1976: 17.

²⁰⁹ R. Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc.cit. 1952: 78.

²¹⁰ Ibid

²¹¹ Ibid: 74.

²¹² Identified by Dr Marguerite Johnson as Letter Four in her article 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia': loc.cit: 20.

²¹³ By the British firm Rider & Co. in London, who also published Crowley's translation of Eliphas Levi's *The Key to the Mysteries* in 1959.

²¹⁴ This unguent would have contained psychotropic herbal ingredients intended to produce a dissociative effect when rubbed into the skin – see Chapter Five.

²¹⁵ For example, the rare Crowley limited edition, *Konx Om Pax* [1907] referred to earlier. Norton would have had great difficulty purchasing this book in Sydney during the 1950s or 1960s. The only specialist esoteric bookshop in Sydney at this time was the Adyar Bookshop, owned and managed by members of the Theosophical Society and they expressly refused to display Crowley's books on their shelves because of their explicit magical content.

²¹⁶ L. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley*, loc cit: 92.

²¹⁷ Ibid: 91.

²¹⁸ I. Fischer-Schreiber et al. (ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, Shambhala, Boston 1994: 355.

²¹⁹ Sutin adds the pertinent observation that 'There is, in this tradition, no moral judgment attached to the use of "left" and "right", although Western interpreters have frequently interposed a negative connotation to "left" that is native to their own, but not Hindu, cultures.' See L. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt : A Life of Aleister Crowley*, loc cit: 92-93.

²²⁰ F. King, *Tantra: The Way of Action*, Destiny Books, Rochester, Vermont 1990: 89.

²²¹ Ibid: 89-90.

²²² Ibid: 90.

²²³ Ibid: 126-27.

²²⁴ Ibid: 92.

²²⁵ A. Bharati, *The Tantric Tradition*, Rider, London 1965: 179.

²²⁶ J. Woodroffe, *S'akti and S'akta*, Ganesh, Madras 1975: 87.

²²⁷ J.G. Melton, 'The Origins of Modern Sex Magick,' Institute for the Study of American Religion, Evanston, Illinois, June 1985.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ K. Grant, 'Cults of the Shadow' in J. White (ed.), *Kundalini: Evolution and Enlightenment*, Paragon House, St Paul, Minnesota 1990:400-401.

²³⁰ K.Grant, *The Magical Revival*, Muller, London 1972: 21.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² D.L. Thompson, 'A Warning to Australia. Devil Worship Here!', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 6 October 1955:3.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Anon., 'The Devil is on our Doorstep', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 30 June 1955: 3-5. The article ended with the words: 'The ritual was a complete mockery of Christian worship.'

²³⁵ Anon., 'The Devil is on our Doorstep: Witchmaster!', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 14 July 1955: 11-13, 37.

- ²³⁶ Personal communication from Michael Aquino and Lilith St Clair (leading members of the Temple of Set) to the author during filming of *The Occult Experience*, loc cit., San Francisco, California 1984.
- ²³⁷ Personal communication from Z.Budapest to the author during filming of *The Occult Experience*, loc cit. Berkeley, California 1984.
- ²³⁸ R. Norton, 'Witches want no recruits', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 10 January 1957:35.
- ²³⁹ See Introduction, fn.14.
- ²⁴⁰ M. Eliade and C.J. Adams (ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Religions*, Macmillan, New York 1987: 81- 84.
- ²⁴¹ J.B. Russell, *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York 1977:256.
- ²⁴² See 'Inside Rosaleen Norton', *Squire* magazine, Sydney April 1965:42.
- ²⁴³ R. Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Walter Glover, Sydney 1952: 79.
- ²⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁴⁵ 'General Philosophy', statement from Dragon Rouge (Ordo Draconis et Atri Adamantis), published on-line at www.dragonrouge.net.
- ²⁴⁶ J. La Fontaine, 'Satanism and Satanic Mythology' in B.Ankarloo and S.Clark (ed.), *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Twentieth Century*, Athlone Press, London 1999: 94.
- ²⁴⁷ These 'co-authors' were Burton Wolfe, in *The Devil's Avenger* (1974) and Blanche Burton in *The Secret Life of a Satanist* (1990) – see Bibliography.
- ²⁴⁸ J.R. Lewis, 'Diabolical Authority: Anton La Vey, The Satanic Bible and the Satanist "Tradition",' *Marburg Journal of Religion*: 7, 1, September 2002: 5.
- ²⁴⁹ B. Barton, *The Secret Life of a Satanist*, Feral House, Los Angeles 1990.
- ²⁵⁰ LaVey's daughter, Zeena Schrek, confirmed to me that these elements of LaVey's personal biography are largely fabricated: personal communication to the author, 1999. See also fn.252 below.
- ²⁵¹ Quoted in A. Lyons, *The Second Coming: Satanism in America*, Dodd Mead, New York 1970: 173.
- ²⁵² Ibid.
- ²⁵³ L. Wright, 'Sympathy for the Devil', *Rolling Stone*, 5 September, 1991.
- ²⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵⁵ J.R. Lewis, 'Diabolical Authority: Anton LaVey, The Satanic Bible and the Satanist "Tradition",' loc cit.: 6.
- ²⁵⁶ Z.and N. Schreck, 'Anton LaVey: Legend and Reality', 2 February 1998, published on-line at www.churchofsatan.org/aslv.html.
- ²⁵⁷ Journalist Gavin Baddeley interviewed Anger a few months after LaVey's death in 1997 and confirmed that 'the Black Pope' and Anger had been friends for almost forty years: Anger had been active in the Church of Satan since its earliest days. See G. Baddeley, *Lucifer Rising*, Plexus, London 1999:78.
- ²⁵⁸ Sir Francis Dashwood (1708-1781) was a wealthy English aristocrat who combined a life of privilege with a taste for the bizarre. Dashwood worked for Frederick, Prince of Wales, and met many leading figures of the day. His contacts allowed him the opportunity of numerous liaisons with aristocratic mistresses and an outlet for his promiscuous and voracious tendencies. Despite his marriage to the somewhat pious widow of Sir Richard Ellis, Sarah, he continued to gather like-minded friends around him and decided to form a group of 'initiates' who would hold sexual orgies to worship the Great Goddess. Dashwood called his brotherhood The Knights of St. Francis – naming it after himself, not the saint – and attracted a membership of thirteen, including the Marquis of Queensberry, the Earl of Sandwich, and the Prince of Wales himself. Meetings were held at Medmenham Abbey near Marlow on the Thames, and employed the services of whores who were transported from London by coach. These sexual practices at the Abbey continued for around fifteen years, and it became known as the Hell-fire Club after acquiring a reputation as a place of devil-worship. Sir Francis Dashwood later moved the premises to a location at West Wycombe, where he had underground tunnels and a central chamber excavated, allowing his group to continue to meet in secret.
- ²⁵⁹ A.S. LaVey, *The Satanic Bible* (introduction by Burton H.Wolfe), Avon, New York 1969:17.
- ²⁶⁰ A. Lyons, *The Second Coming: Satanism in America*, loc cit: 183-184.
- ²⁶¹ See fn.102 above.
- ²⁶² A.Lyons, *The Second Coming: Satanism in America*, loc cit: 183-184.
- ²⁶³ See A.S. LaVey, *The Satanic Bible*, loc cit: 25. According to Neena and Nikolas Schreck in 'Anton LaVey: Legend and Reality', loc cit., LaVey was strongly influenced by Galt's speech in Ayn Rand's novel, *Atlas Shrugged*, in formulating these Satanic precepts.
- ²⁶⁴ A.S. LaVey, *The Satanic Bible*, loc cit: 18.
- ²⁶⁵ LaVey quoted in A.Lyons, *The Second Coming: Satanism in America*, loc cit: 184.
- ²⁶⁶ Ibid.

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- ²⁶⁷ Interview between the author and Dr Michael Aquino for the television documentary *The Occult Experience*, San Francisco 1984.
- ²⁶⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁶⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁷⁰ Ibid.
- ²⁷¹ Ibid.
- ²⁷² Ibid.
- ²⁷³ Ibid.
- ²⁷⁴ See *The Book of Coming Forth by Night*, in M. Aquino (ed.) *The Crystal Tablet of Set*, Temple of Set, San Francisco 1983 (Appendix 1).
- ²⁷⁵ Henceforth all reference to Satan was replaced by reference to Set.
- ²⁷⁶ See *The Book of Coming Forth by Night*, in M. Aquino (ed.) *The Crystal Tablet of Set*, loc cit.
- ²⁷⁷ Interview between the author and Dr Michael Aquino for the television documentary *The Occult Experience*, loc cit.
- ²⁷⁸ D. Webb, 'Xeper: the Eternal Word of Set', Temple of Set, San Francisco 1999, published on-line at www.xeper.org/pub/tos/xeper2.html.
- ²⁷⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁸⁰ Ibid.
- ²⁸¹ The Temple of Set recognises six formal degrees of initiation: Setian I °; Adept II °; Priest of Priestess of Set III °; Master of the Temple IV °; Magus V °, and Ipsissimus VI °.
- ²⁸² Interview between the author and Lilith Sinclair for the television documentary *The Occult Experience*, San Francisco 1984.
- ²⁸³ Ibid.
- ²⁸⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁸⁵ Aquino was the first High Priest of the Temple of Set, and this position was later held by other senior figures within the organisation, including Don Webb and (briefly) Zeena Schrek. Aquino returned to the post of High Priest in 2002.
- ²⁸⁶ M. Aquino, 'Origins of the Temple of Set' in *The Crystal of Set: selected extracts*, loc.cit:47.
- ²⁸⁷ M. Aquino, 'Black Magic in Theory and Practice', *The Crystal of Set: selected extracts*, loc cit:1-55.
- ²⁸⁸ Ibid: 17.
- ²⁸⁹ Ibid: 18.
- ²⁹⁰ Ibid: 19.
- ²⁹¹ Ibid: 28.
- ²⁹² Ibid: 15.
- ²⁹³ Ibid: 19.
- ²⁹⁴ Ibid: 16.
- ²⁹⁵ Ibid
- ²⁹⁶ M. Aquino, 'The Two Paths', *The Crystal of Set: selected extracts*, loc cit:41.
- ²⁹⁷ M. Aquino, 'Black Magic in Theory and Practice', loc cit: 16.
- ²⁹⁸ Interview between the author and Dr Michael Aquino for the television documentary *The Occult Experience*, loc cit.
- ²⁹⁹ M. Aquino, 'Black Magic in Theory and Practice', loc cit: 19.
- ³⁰⁰ Interview between the author and Lilith Sinclair, loc.cit.
- ³⁰¹ D. Webb, 'Seven of the Many Gateways' in L.D. Wild (ed.), *The Ninth Night*, 1, 2, Sydney, June 1998, published on-line at www.xeper.org.
- ³⁰² D. Webb, 'The Black Beyond Black', 2004, published on-line at www.xeper.org/australasia.html.
- ³⁰³ M. Aquino, 'Satanism and the Immortality of the Psyche', Temple of Set 1996, published on-line at www.xeper.org/nan_madol/immortal.html.
- ³⁰⁴ A.S. LaVey, *The Satanic Bible*, loc cit: 94.
- ³⁰⁵ D. Webb, 'Xeper: the Eternal Word of Set', Temple of Set 1999, published on-line at www.xeper.org/pub/tos/xeper2.html.
- ³⁰⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁰⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁰⁸ D. Webb, 'Seven of the Many Gateways' in L.D. Wild (ed.), *The Ninth Night*, 1, 2, Sydney, June 1998, published on-line at www.xeper.org.
- ³⁰⁹ D. Webb, 'The Black Beyond Black: The Temple of Set', loc cit.
- ³¹⁰ M. Aquino, 'Satanism and the Immortality of the Psyche', Temple of Set, San Francisco 1996, published on-line at www.xeper.org/nan_madol/immortal.html.

³¹¹ See appendix containing the text of *Liber Al vel Legis* in *The Magical Record of the Beast 666*, ed. J. Symonds and K. Grant, Duckworth, London 1972.

³¹² In *Magick in Theory and Practice* (1929) Crowley writes: 'Man is capable of being and using anything which he perceives, for everything that he perceives is in a certain sense a part of his being. He may thus subjugate the whole Universe of which he is conscious to his individual will.' (See fn.29 above). This approach is clearly mirrored in the practice of Greater Black Magic, as expounded by Michael Aquino in the Temple of Set.

³¹³ In an interview published in 1998 Zeena Schreck confirmed to Kiki Scar that 'the Temple of Set does not have an official curriculum concerning sexual magic and prefers to allow individual initiates to experiment with this method privately, if they wish to.' See K. Scar, 'Sado-Magic for Satan: an interview with Zeena Schreck', *Cuir Underground*, 4: Summer 1998:4, also published on-line at www.black-rose.com. Schreck was briefly High Priestess of the Temple of Set in 2002 and was succeeded by Michael Aquino, the current High Priest and co-founder of the Temple of Set.

³¹⁴ D. Webb, 'The Black Beyond Black', loc cit.

³¹⁵ See www.hekate.timerift.net/whois.htm, W. Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, Harvard University Press 1987, and J. Sellers, *Qadosh: the Johannite Tradition*, Manutius Press, Oakhurst, California 2006.

³¹⁶ See W. Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1987 and M.W. Meyer (ed.), *The Ancient Mysteries: a Sourcebook*, Harper & Row, San Francisco 1987.

³¹⁷ V. Moore, 'Chthonic: from Beast to Godhead', *Rose Noire*, 2004, also published on-line at www.vadgemore.com/writings/beast_to_godhead.html.

³¹⁸ The Gnostic archon Abraxas was said to rule over 365 heavens and was depicted on numerous charms, amulets and talismans throughout the ancient Middle East in order to attract good fortune. See fn.109 above.

³¹⁹ V. Moore, 'Chthonic: from Beast to Godhead', loc cit.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ For an overview of the nature of these altered states see C. Tart (ed.) *Altered States of Consciousness*, Wiley, New York 1969 and D. Goleman and R.J. Davidson (ed.), *Consciousness: Brain, States of Awareness, and Mysticism*, Harper & Row, New York 1979.

³²⁵ Anthropologists who have studied shamanism in pre-literate societies are especially aware of the highly significant relationship between altered states of consciousness and the nature of magical practice in these societies. See I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: an Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK 1971, and M. D. de Rios and M. Winkelman, 'Shamanism and Altered States of Consciousness: an Introduction' in the *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 21,1, 1-7, San Francisco, January-March 1989. Shamanic and visionary elements within the Western esoteric tradition have received somewhat less attention but are addressed in N. Drury, *Sacred Encounters: Shamanism and Magical Journeys of the Spirit*, Watkins, London 2003 and A.S. Cook and G.A. Hawk, *Shamanism and the Esoteric Tradition*, Llewellyn, St Paul, Minnesota 1992..

³²⁶ F. King (ed.), *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy*, Spearman, London 1971: 29.

³²⁷ I. Regardie (ed.) *The Golden Dawn*, four volumes, Aries Press, Chicago, 1937-1940.

³²⁸ When Francis King first published a collection of the Flying Rolls under the title *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy*. See also fn.331 above.

³²⁹ See M. Stavish, 'The Body of Light in the Western Esoteric Tradition', published on-line at www.hermetic.com/stavish/essays/bodylight.html.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ M. Aquino, *The Crystal of Set: selected extracts*, loc cit: 37.

³³² See Chapter Two for references to the Tarot Major Arcana and the five Tattva symbols of the elements utilised within the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn for meditative purposes and 'inner plane' magical workings.

³³³ J.W. Brodie-Innes (*Frater Sub Spe*), 'Flying Roll No. XXV: Essay on Clairvoyance and Travelling in the Spirit Vision', in F. King (ed.), *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy*, loc cit.: 73-74.

³³⁴ Dion Fortune was initiated into the London Temple of the Alpha and Omega in 1919. See A. Richardson, *Priestess: The Life and Magic of Dion Fortune*, Aquarian Press, Wellingborough, UK 1987:111.

³³⁵ D. Fortune, *Applied Magic*, Aquarian Press, London 1962: 56-57.

- ³³⁶ J.W. Brodie-Innes (*Frater Sub Spe*), 'Flying Roll No. XXV: Essay on Clairvoyance and Travelling in the Spirit Vision', loc cit.:73.
- ³³⁷ See I. Regardie (ed.) *The Golden Dawn*, vol.4, Aries Press, Chicago 1940: 12-13.
- ³³⁸ S.L. MacGregor Mathers (*Frater Deo Duce Comite Ferro*), 'Flying Roll No.XI: Clairvoyance', in F. King (ed.), *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy*, loc cit.: 68-69.
- ³³⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁴⁰ Quoted in I. Regardie (ed.) *The Golden Dawn* (vol.4), loc cit: 1940: 43.
- ³⁴¹ The sacred name HCOMA derives from the so-called Enochian system of angelic magic established by the Elizabethan occultists Dr John Dee and Edward Kelley. See fn. 68 above.
- ³⁴² S.L. MacGregor Mathers (*Frater Deo Duce Comite Ferro*), 'Flying Roll No.XI: Clairvoyance', loc cit.: 66.
- ³⁴³ See www.dragonrouge.net/english/general.htm.
- ³⁴⁴ Anon., *The Book of the Black Serpent*, c.1900, circulated among initiates of the Isis-Urania Temple in London. Included as an appendix in R.A. Gilbert, *The Sorcerer and his Apprentice*, Aquarian Press, Wellingborough, UK 1983.
- ³⁴⁵ D. Merkur, 'Stages of Ascension in Hermetic Rebirth' *Esoterica* 1 (1999):82, 84.
- ³⁴⁶ *Corpus Hermeticum XIII*:3, quoted in Merkur, *ibid*: 85.
- ³⁴⁷ *Corpus Hermeticum XI*: 19-20, quoted in Merkur, *ibid*: 85.
- ³⁴⁸ Merkur: 90.
- ³⁴⁹ *Ibid*: 89.
- ³⁵⁰ *Ibid*: 90.
- ³⁵¹ S.L. MacGregor Mathers (*Frater Deo Duce Comite Ferro*), 'Flying Roll No.XI: Clairvoyance', loc cit.
- ³⁵² V. Moore, 'Chthonic: from Beast to Godhead', loc cit.
- ³⁵³ D. Webb, 'The Black Beyond Black', loc cit.
- ³⁵⁴ K. Grant, *Cults of the Shadow*, Muller, London 1975: 169-170.
- ³⁵⁵ That is to say, an inverted Kabbalistic Tree featuring ten 'demonic' *sephiroth*.
- ³⁵⁶ See www.dragonrouge.net/english/general.htm.
- ³⁵⁷ *Ibid*.
- ³⁵⁸ *Ibid*.
- ³⁵⁹ According to the *Book of the Black Serpent*, the Qliphothic planetary rulers associated with the ten spheres on the reverse side of the Tree of Life are Thamiel (Neptune/Kether); Chaigidel (Pluto/Chokmah); Sateriel (Saturn/Binah); Gamehiath (Jupiter/Chesed); Galeb (Mars/Geburah); Tagaririm (Sol/Tiphareth); Harab-Serapel (Venus/Netzach); Samael (Mercury/Hod); Gamaliel (Luna/Yesod) and Nahemoth (Terra/Malkuth). Ten 'evil chiefs' are also assigned to these spheres. They are, respectively: Satan, Beelzebub, Lucifuge, Ashtaroth, Asmodai, Belphegor, Baal, Adramalach, Lilith and Nahemah. See *The Book of the Black Serpent*, loc cit.
- ³⁶⁰ Anon., *The Book of the Black Serpent*, c.1900, loc cit.
- ³⁶¹ See Plate XV, *Qlipha*, in R. Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Walter Glover, Sydney 1952: 44.
- ³⁶² K.Grant, *Cults of the Shadow*, loc cit.:171.
- ³⁶³ Norton does not refer to Kenneth Grant in any of her writings and it is unlikely that she would have known of him. Grant's first book, *The Magical Revival*, was not published in London until 1972, only seven years prior to Norton's death in 1979, and twenty years after the publication of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (1952).

Chapter Four

ROSALEEN NORTON'S MAGICAL UNIVERSE

Norton's persona as a witch

When Rosaleen Norton reflected on her youth and discussed her magical background in several interviews with journalist Dave Barnes,¹ she maintained that she had been born a witch² and that she was self-taught: 'If you are a witch nobody has to teach you. In my case, it came naturally, and nobody had to teach me.'³ Asked if she had the 'Devil's mark'⁴ on her body, Norton confirmed that she had some atypical physical attributes that she associated with her persona as a witch: 'My bodily peculiarities include a pair of freak muscles (extending from armpit to pelvic bone on either side) not normally found in the human body' [and] 'a rare, atavistic formation of the upper ears known as "Darwin's Peak"'. She also alluded to 'two small blue dots on my left knee, which are one of the traditional witch marks' and her 'quasi-feline vision, ie. sharper and clearer in subdued light than in bright light'.⁵ Norton later made a specific point of demonstrating some of her distinctive physical characteristics when two interviewers from a university newspaper visited her in 1962.⁶ In her autobiographical article, 'I was born a Witch', Norton maintained that the blue marks had appeared on her body when she was a child:

At seven years old two small blue marks very close together appeared on my left knee, and they are there still. I have since learned that two (or sometimes three) blue or red dots together on the skin are among the traditional witch marks. Although, of course, I didn't know this at the time, I remember noticing them the year we arrived in Australia and wondering what they were; they seemed important in some way that I couldn't define.⁷

In Chapter One of this thesis it was noted that when Norton was a child, her creative artistic expression included the production of various macabre drawings and that these drawings were deemed unacceptable at the Church of England girls' school she attended. At school Norton also developed a fondness for *Dracula*:

There was the time, for instance, when, having been taken to the play *Dracula* at the Theatre Royal, I became positively *Dracula*-happy for weeks afterwards. I had a crush on my sinister idol, rivalling anything felt by today's bobby soxers [note: this article was published in 1957] for Elvis the Pelvis or Marlon Brando. I had enlisted an unwilling cast of fourth-form actresses by bribes, threats and persuasion, to enact daily in the lunch hour and even more bloodily eerie version of the play, adapted by

myself. Our theatre was the large hall, situated just outside the boarders' dining-room. I played the title role, draped in blackboard cloths with two open umbrellas for wings, and very soon the rest of the cast were hurling themselves into their parts with equal abandon. The ensuing spirited performance was terminated on the third day by an irate headmistress declaring that the cries of 'Give me blood to drink', and the screaming, were putting the boarders off their food, and that furthermore this sort of thing was morbid and must cease.⁸

For Norton, Bram Stoker's fictional figure of Dracula, rooted in the folklore traditions of Transylvania, was dramatic and confronting and was an indicator, during her adolescence, of her increasing fascination with heathen or pagan imagery. A major transition in her religious orientation occurred, however, with her new found interest in the ancient Greek deity Pan, god of the wild, untamed forces of Nature.

From Christianity to Pan

In classical ancient Greek mythology Pan was variously considered to be the son of Hermes and the nymph Dryope, or the offspring of Zeus and Callisto.⁹ Pan was part man, part goat, and was represented with the horns, tail, hind legs and hoofs of a goat and also with a flat snub nose and beard. Sometimes he was also depicted with the ears of an ass, a symbol of acute perception.¹⁰ Fond of music and dancing, Pan was associated with shepherds and the woods and also possessed prophetic powers. Because the woods were considered a place of fear at night, and because Pan often frightened unwary travellers in the countryside, Pan's name gave rise to the idea of 'panic' or alarm, and Pan himself was considered unpredictable, lascivious and lecherous.¹¹ Pan's distinctive shepherd pipes or pan-pipes, his own invention, were fashioned from seven reeds and were referred to as a syrinx.¹² Pan's name literally means 'all', and the philosophical and religious concept of pantheism (which derives from a combination of the Greek *pan* = all, and *theos* = God) conveys the idea that the universe as a whole is divine and that there is no divinity other than the universe and Nature.¹³

The earliest published reference relating to Rosaleen Norton's concept of Pan is contained in an article titled 'Art Models Show Their Own Art', published in *Pix* magazine, Sydney, in July 1943.¹⁴ The article focused specifically on artworks by Norton and her friend and fellow artist Selina Muller, and included a photograph of Norton posing naked for Muller next to an easel (see Chapter One). Also featured in the article were three graphic artworks by Norton: *Lunacy*, a work which depicted a chaotic and



Plate 46: Norton's c.1949 painting *Pan*, exhibited at the Rowden White Library in Melbourne
(Plate 1 in the *Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton*)

sick mind, *Astral Scene*, an important work depicting Norton's trance technique and her encounter with a partially manifested mythic being,¹⁵ and the painting *Pan*, which would later be included in the 1949 exhibition at the Rowden White Library Gallery in Melbourne. This latter work depicts Pan in a markedly different aspect from the much-photographed mural of Pan that adorned her altar in the Brougham Street flat in Kings Cross.¹⁶ In the earlier, c.1943 depiction,¹⁷ Pan is facing us directly, his hands resting on the rim of a cauldron in which swirling humanoid forms are visible. Pan is leering at the viewer and has fanged teeth and a devilish demeanour. He has a robust, muscular torso and pointed ears, and also brandishes cat's whiskers – an unconventional flourish apparently related to Norton's love of cats. In the painting Pan is entwined by a snake which, according to Norton's accompanying description, represents wisdom.¹⁸ The figure of Pan, meanwhile, embodies 'the universal part of the self rising from the cauldron of the subconscious'.¹⁹

According to the article 'Inside Rosaleen Norton', based on an interview with Norton and published in *Squire* in April 1965, Norton's attraction to the ancient Greek god Pan is said to have coincided with her rejection of her family's Christian beliefs and specifically with her parents' wish that she should be 'confirmed' into the Anglican faith at the age of twelve.²⁰

Norton's interest in the mythic figure of Pan led in turn to improvised magical rituals:

She started to take more than a passing interest in Pan, the horned...half-man, half-goat Greek deity who spent most of his time rolling young nymphs in the Arcadian meadows. This interest, generated by the confusion which accompanies adolescence and fired by Ro's [sic] inherent rebellion, became a fetish. She devised worship rituals, using robes, Chinese joss sticks and wine she pinched from a stock hidden by her parents. At this stage she hadn't discovered the true meaning of the bright blue dots which had appeared mysteriously on her knee a few years before. She rejected Christianity entirely and embraced Pantheism...the identification of God with all that exists...Ro believes that everything is equally a manifestation of her God – rather Gods – because she has divided her divinity into several gods. These are Satanic spirits which manifest themselves to her in the classical satyric image. 'I often see them,' she told *Squire*.²¹

Norton had also provided an account of her belief in Pan in an autobiographical article published in *Australasian Post* in January 1957:

Some occult theories hold the stars and planets to be the bodies of great beings and so do I. I think the God Pan is the spirit whose body – or such of it as can be seen in these four dimensions (the fourth being time) – is the planet Earth, and who, therefore, in a very real sense, is the ruler and god of this world. Perhaps that is why he was given the name 'Pan', which in Greek means 'All', for he is the totality of lives, elements and forms of being – organic, 'inorganic' and otherwise, comprising the planet as a whole: much as an animal body is a totality of myriads of cells, bacteria etc, in which ordered whole these live and function, having their own forms of "intelligence" and perception, according to type. *Such a body would be the "world" to any of its micro-organisms* [italics in Norton's text], and the integrated consciousness of the body's owner would exist in another "world", and on a different plane from theirs.'²²

In this particular article Norton also speculated about the nature of this metaphysical being who, in her view, ruled the world:

If a man could communicate with any of his body cells on its own plane, it would perceive its 'god' in terms fitted to its understanding. To see him as he is to himself, ie. as a man, the cell consciousness would have to unite with and 'become' that of the man, in a world outside anything conceivable in its entire experience. Of course, this is only a parallel, and shouldn't be regarded as exact: a god, for one thing, is a very different form of life, involving other laws and dimensions, and could (as far as I know) manifest simultaneously in any number of places and shapes, to those who form part of him, or others, without disturbing any plane of his multiple consciousness and activities elsewhere.'²³



Plate 47: A more benign interpretation of Pan as spiritual ruler – Norton’s *The Blueprint*, a work exhibited in Melbourne in 1949. (Plate 5 in the *Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton*)

Norton’s cosmology is based on an understanding that Nature and the Cosmos are innately sacred. Divinity is ‘divided’ into a number of gods and goddesses and these ruling deities – headed by Pan – are able to exist and function in more than one dimension of reality. Her concept of a hierarchy of spirits headed by Pan (‘whose body is the earth’) is reminiscent of the ancient Gnostic *archons* who were thought to rule different regions of the heavens while also maintaining governance of the earth.²⁴ Archons were celestial rulers – ‘gate-keepers’ guarding entry to the higher spheres – and their powers transcended and encompassed all aspects of human activity. In Norton’s conception, Pan equated with the totality of human experience and existence – although she expanded his reach to embrace the totality, or ‘ground’, of all being. In a sense Pan, for her, embodied and represented the furthest reaches of the sacred universe – extending to infinity in all directions. It is all the more remarkable that Norton began to develop this concept of Pan while she was still an adolescent:

The onset of adolescence often awakens the religious as well as the sexual urge, and this was so for me. For some time previously I had been constantly aware of a world wherein moved vast and mysterious powers, the sense of gay daemonic [sic] presences and hauntingly familiar atmospheres, elusive yet powerful and

compelling, when everything round me seemed to change focus like patterns in a kaleidoscope.²⁵

For Norton this led to the development of an instinctual ritual desire, an emotive and worshipful response to the mysterious powers that seemed to surround her and which demanded that she should forsake her childish frivolities in favour of serious and respectful pagan worship:

If the Kingdom of Pan had always been with me, it had been mostly in the background, overlaid by what was called reality: *Now it had begun to emerge and pervade the latter* [Norton's italics]. Awareness grew stronger and stronger that the tedious world of childhood didn't really matter, because this held the essence of all that called to my inmost being: Night and wild things and mystery; storms; being by myself, free of other people. The sense of some deep hidden knowledge stirring at the back of consciousness; and all about me the feeling of secret sentient life, that was in alliance with me, but that others were unaware, or afraid of, because it was unhuman.

So my first act of ceremonial magic was in honour of the horned god, whose pipes are symbol of magic and mystery, and whose horns and hooves stand for natural energies and fleet-footed freedom: And this rite was also my oath of allegiance and my confirmation as a witch. I remember my feelings on that occasion well, and they are valid today: If Pan is the 'Devil' (and the joyous goat-god probably is from the orthodox viewpoint) then I am indeed a 'Devil' worshipper.'²⁶

Here Norton reveals herself as an instinctual, unconventional adolescent who is willing to trust her intuitive sensibilities because this awareness opens her spirit to the wild forces of Nature. Again in true Gnostic fashion – and perhaps in anticipation of her emerging allegiance to the heretical powers of magic – she also feels that she is stepping forth on a path of 'deep hidden knowledge'. Ahead she faces some sort of initiation into secrets and mysteries. And yet Norton knows – even as a teenager – that she is venturing well beyond the confines of conventional religion. She is ready to embrace Pan, who may very likely be seen by others – among them the more 'orthodox' Christian members of her family and community – as the Devil. We have here already a clear and early expression of the rebellious, *antinomian* spirit that would later align her with the Left-Hand Path in Western magic.

Hecate, Lilith and Lucifer

Pan was clearly the supreme deity in Norton's magical pantheon – she acknowledged very early on her allegiance to the 'Kingdom of Pan' and would later refer to herself as the 'High Priestess at the Altar of Pan'.²⁷ However other ancient deities and supernatural entities also provided



Plate 48: Hecate: Goddess of the Night

inspiration and guidance. Prominent among them were Hecate, Lilith and Lucifer, the latter in his role as ‘the Adversary’ (see below).

Hecate In classical Greek mythology, Hecate, or Hekate, was usually considered to be the daughter of the Titans Perses and Asteria, although in other accounts she is the daughter of Zeus and Asteria.²⁸ Hecate was goddess of the night and darkness, and ruler of the hidden aspects of Nature. As a goddess of transitions, Hecate was associated with birth and death, and from the fifth century BCE onwards, she is also specifically associated with ghosts; Hecate could also cause nightmares.²⁹ Accompanied by barking dogs³⁰ and hordes of spirits of the ‘restless dead’ – those people unable to find their way to Hades³¹ – Hecate was sometimes called *kleidophoros* (‘key-bearer’) and as a gate-keeper of Hades she was able to let spirits in and out of the Underworld.³² A triple goddess, Hecate revealed three different personae and from the Roman period onwards she was linked to the moon: as a moon goddess she was associated with Selene (Roman counterpart: Luna) and Artemis (Roman counterpart: Diana), and as a goddess of the Underworld she was also linked to Persephone (Roman counterpart: Proserpine).

Hecate was only worshipped at night; dogs and black lambs were offered to her as sacrifices.³³ Often shown entwined in coils of snakes, which in ancient Greece were associated with the dead, Hecate was a goddess also associated with the crossroads, especially three-way intersections – such crossroads being in turn considered supernatural places and associated with magic and spirits.³⁴

In an interview I conducted with Norton in Sydney in 1977, two years before her death, she told me that she regarded Hecate as a more imposing deity than Pan because Hecate was known to be a dealer in death and a purveyor of curses. Norton felt Hecate was often very frightening because

she was a shadowy goddess flanked by cohorts of ghouls and nightforms. However Norton maintained that Hecate could also be a protector. If ever Norton was required to curse people with her 'witch current' in order to redress what she believed to be an unfair 'balance of events', Norton called on Hecate's hexing powers and believed this was a legitimate use of the magical art.³⁵

Lilith Although Norton linked Hecate and Lilith in her pantheon of ancient female magical deities, Lilith's mythic origins are quite different to Hecate's. Lilith is an exotic she-devil who first appears in Sumerian mythology in the middle of the 3rd millennium BCE before entering the Jewish tradition during the Talmudic period (2nd-5th centuries CE) and then finally emerging as a queenly consort at God's side during the Kabbalistic era.³⁶ In the Sumerian tradition Lilith was acknowledged as a 'beautiful maiden' but she was also regarded as a harlot and vampire who would never willingly let her lover depart.³⁷ During the Talmudic period Lilith was known as Adam's first wife but their relationship was deeply troubled and when Lilith came to believe that Adam intended to overpower her, she uttered the magical name of God, rose into the air, and flew off to the Red Sea, a place believed to be full of lascivious demons. There she indulged herself in unbridled promiscuity giving rise to more than a hundred demonic offspring each day.³⁸

Norton discovered references to Lilith in Carl Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious* [1919] and quoted from Jung's text in the unpublished notes which accompanied her illustrations in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*:

...Adam, before Eve, already possessed a demon wife, by name Lilith, with whom he quarrelled for mastership. But Lilith raised herself into the air through the magic of the name of God and hid herself in the sea. Adam forced her back with the help of three angels. Lilith became a nightmare, a Lamia, who threatened those with child and who kidnapped the modern child...³⁹

For Norton, Lilith was 'Queen of Air and Darkness – symbol of Night'⁴⁰ Gavin Greenlees, whose poem on Lilith accompanied Norton's drawing in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, referred to Lilith as 'the Queen of Night and Sympathy' and writes that Lilith is an 'image of the Unconscious with its power to align images and draw together those spirits who have the true affinity – holding man by the soul image.'⁴¹ Lilith was also traditionally depicted as a Lamia who threatened children, and it is interesting to note in passing that Norton herself was totally opposed to ever having children of her own. For Norton the very notion of ever being a mother was repugnant. In 1964 she told an interviewer from the television station Channel Nine,

Sydney, that she had no wish to be a mother ⁴² and in her autobiographical article ‘Witches Want No Recruits’ (1957) she made a similar remark:

...nothing would ever induce me to have a baby; the very idea of it was always repugnant, chiefly because, I feel, it would detract from my own completeness... ⁴³

However, for Norton the defining quality of Lilith is that she is a *powerful symbol of the Night*. Lilith is the ‘Queen of Air and Darkness’ and mirrors Hecate’s chthonic role as Goddess of the Underworld and the secret forces of Nature. Norton acknowledges her attraction to the



Plate 49: *Lilith* – ‘Queen of Air and Darkness’ (Plate IV in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*)

potency of darkness, writing in the introductory essay in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* that her ‘vision... is one of Night’. ⁴⁴ Norton’s fascination with the powers of darkness is also evident in the powerful poem, written by Norton herself, which accompanies her controversial drawing *Black Magic* (Plate XVII) – a work that shows a naked woman (presumably Norton herself) in a passionate and intimate sexual embrace with a black panther. The poem reads like an invocation:

*Light’s Black Majesty: Midnight Sun: Lord of the wild
and living stars;
Soul of Magic and master of Death;*

*Panther of Night... enfold me.
Take me, dark Shining One; mingle my being with you,
Prowl in my spirit with deep purring joy,
Live in me, giver of terror and ecstasy,
Touch me with tongues of black fire...*⁴⁵

Norton's ecstatic vision of the night is powerful and deeply felt. She is fully at home enfolded by the 'luminous silence' of the Night,⁴⁶ and her poem ends triumphantly: 'You, Dark Spirit, are with me...' ⁴⁷ As a visionary magician, Norton has her mythic home in the realm of the Midnight Sun: this is the domain where her soul resonates with the primal pulse of the Universe itself.

Lucifer/ The Adversary

The figure of Lucifer/The Adversary completes the lesser triad in Norton's magical cosmology. For Norton, Lucifer was closely associated with the spirit of rebellion and the quest for secret knowledge. In her illuminating essay, *A Vision* (c.1940s, published in *The Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, 1984) Norton reminds her readers that '...we seek knowledge and truth and... "Lucifer" means "Light Bringer"...our greatest reward is in the eternal adventure of the search itself.'⁴⁸

At least two major artworks relating to Lucifer form part of Norton's *oeuvre*: the painting *Lucifer*, which was exhibited in the 1949 exhibition in Melbourne, and the drawing *The Adversary*, reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* in 1952.⁴⁹ In the Judaeo-Christian tradition Lucifer [Latin: 'light-bearer'] is another name for Satan. In Isaiah 14.12 the reference to Lucifer relates to the King of Babylon but was misunderstood to refer to a fallen angel and subsequently passed into Judaeo-Christian theology as a name for the Devil.⁵⁰ Isaiah 14.12 opens with a dramatic pronouncement: 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of morning! How are thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken the nations! [from the Authorised Version].' These words, said to predict the impending doom of the King of Babylon, were taken by St Augustine and other Christian theologians like Origen⁵¹ to refer to the fall of a mighty archangel who had rebelled against God in heaven and who had been cast out in punishment. In heaven this archangel had been known as Lucifer but on earth he would be known as Satan [Hebrew: 'the adversary']. In heaven Lucifer had sought to be sufficient unto himself, refusing to admit that he was dependent on God. His sin was therefore that of pride, his ensuing punishment on being cast headlong from heaven absolute and eternal. As a consequence of his fall from grace Lucifer was then filled with hatred for God.



Plate 50: *Lucifer* (Plate 33 in the *Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton*)

Since the time of Origen, when Lucifer and Satan were identified as one and the same, any distinction between fallen angels and demons had been removed in Christian theology.⁵² As historian Richard Cavendish observes:

In this tremendous vision most of the main threads of the later Christian conception of the Devil are drawn together – ‘the satan’ who accused men before God; the war in heaven, with the forces of God led by Michael; the expulsion of Lucifer from heaven; the fallen angels or stars who were his followers; the seven-headed dragon Leviathan; and the belief that the Devil’s vengeful fury has been let loose on earth...⁵³

Although they depict essentially the same supernatural being, Norton’s *Lucifer* and *The Adversary* are nevertheless quite distinctive as artworks. In *Lucifer*, we are shown the figure of the light-bearer, winged and resplendent, standing naked as he presides over his domain. Lucifer’s body shines with golden light but by way of contrast his wings are dark and in his left hand he holds a devilish mask that represents the other, demonic, side of his character. At Lucifer’s feet sit the horned figure of Pan, playing on a pipe, and a naked feline demon with clawed feet, based on the figure of Norton herself. Other humanoid forms are also depicted at the periphery and in the background of this complex composition, including a mysterious bare-breasted snake-creature and a number of supernatural beings who seem caught up in the vortex of a nightmare. *The Adversary* is a much

simpler, though nevertheless powerful, composition and depicts the fearsome encounter between a small and vulnerable, naked human being and a much larger and imposing winged entity – the Adversary, or Satan, also shown naked – whose head-cap is surmounted by a snake.⁵⁴

In both of these works the central figure is depicted as arrogant and aloof and clearly commands both authority and respect. In my 1977 interview with the artist, referred to earlier, Norton told me that although she considered Lucifer's role to be that of an adversary, this did not necessarily make him 'evil' As Norton noted at the time:

He binds and limits man when it appears that he is growing too big for his boots. He tries to trick man, not with malicious intent, so much as exposing the limitations of the ego and man's pride in his own existence.'⁵⁵



Plate 51: *The Adversary* (Plate XVI in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*)

Other magical entities in Norton's cosmology

In addition to Pan, Hecate, Lilith and Lucifer, who collectively represent the major figures in Norton's pantheon, a range of other magical and mythic entities are referred to her in her writings and in her art. Because Norton claimed an existential reality for several of these entities they

should also be considered as significant, contributing to both her artistic oeuvre and also to her personal magical cosmology.

In her glossary in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* the author makes reference to a number of magical beings from different cultural traditions, thus reflecting her own eclectic and idiosyncratic interests. They include Bucentauro, whom Norton describes as a ‘type of eidolon’ or phantasm; Eloï, the ‘phantasy spirit of Jupiter’⁵⁶; Makalath, the Laugher, described as ‘an archangel who expresses himself cosmically through the power that manifests itself in this world as humour’; Fohat, ‘the dynamic energy of cosmic ideation’ – an entity referred to in Theosophical literature⁵⁷; Erzulie, a ‘voodoo Priestess of Mamaloi’⁵⁸ and The Dubouros, whom Norton identifies as ‘a being representing Mind ...similar to the Egyptian god Thoth as the detached, enigmatic Recorder’.⁵⁹ Norton also lists Val, Kephena, Borzorygmus and Mwystingel as ‘imaginary beings of Twizzari’, the latter her name for the ‘Dreamworld...an aspect of the Astral Plane’, and she makes reference also to Trudgepig, whom she describes as ‘another imaginary creature ... [a] symbol of hypocritical gravity and gloom’.⁶⁰

In the glossary listings in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* the artist reveals her acquaintance with the Jewish Kabbalah and the ten spheres of consciousness, or *sephiroth*, on the Tree of Life (see Chapter Two). Drawing on Dion Fortune’s classic text, *The Mystical Qabalah* (1935), a work which heads the list of esoteric publications in her bibliography,⁶¹ Norton refers to Binah, representing the sphere of the ‘Supernal Mother’, and Geburah, the sphere of ‘Rightful Destruction’ on the Kabbalistic Tree.⁶² It is significant that Norton gives the spelling as Qabalah, rather than Kabbalah, which is the variant used by Fortune in her text. Whether the mystical qualities associated with Binah or Geburah were theoretical points of reference or experiential realities for Norton is impossible to determine. Norton’s personal knowledge of the historical origins of the Jewish Kabbalah, for example, is called into question by her reference to the Qabalah as ‘originally the ancient Chaldean secret doctrine which was known in Egypt under the name of the Book of Thoth...’ a summation that probably owes more to Madame H.P. Blavatsky’s Theosophical theories in *Isis Unveiled* – a book also listed in Norton’s bibliography – than to sound Jewish scholarship.⁶³

In addition to citing familiar references from the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, Norton also makes frequent allusions – both in her captions and also in her journal entries and imagery – to the ‘dark’ or negative aspects of the Tree. As noted earlier, these realms are known as the *Qliphoth*: Norton seems to

have had several experiences involving these ‘dark’ energies and draws on excerpts from her personal diary to provide a commentary in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*.⁶⁴ The Thelemic magician Kenneth Grant describes the *Qliphoth* – the plural form of the Hebrew *Qlipha*, meaning ‘harlot’ or ‘strange woman’ – as ‘shells’ and ‘shades’ of the dead.⁶⁵ According to Grant the *Qliphoth* signify ‘otherness’ and refer to ‘the shadowy world of shells or reflections... power zones [that] form the Tree of Death’.⁶⁶ It is within the magical domain of the *Qliphoth* that Norton claims to have encountered the threatening magical entity she calls the Werplon, a hostile humanoid insect-creature illustrated in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (Plate XV).⁶⁷ The Werplon⁶⁸ is by far the most hostile and confronting creature in



Plate 52: *Qlipha* (Plate XV in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*) – the artist’s depiction of the terrifying Werplon

Norton’s magical cosmology.⁶⁹ An entry from her magical journal describes her encounter with this terrifying entity:

...I realised that my consciousness was united with that of a totally different Order of Being. Temporarily I was experiencing the sensations of one of those great – and to this world terrible – entities called Werplons. ...Sensation was intense; swift vibrant power and precision, and awareness below the surface, of some constant danger... Deep purple predominated with overtones of black, lit by splashes of vari-coloured [sic] light at certain of the power points... Suddenly a shock of apprehension electrified the Werplon. That needle-keen precision of operation seemed to waver, to become slightly clumsy. A wave of fright and disgust swept me as one of the Werplon’s senses registered the loathsome human vibration... I knew terror... Waves of pain invaded my aetheric body. My mind screamed...⁷⁰

As several art-works in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* clearly indicate,⁷¹ Norton was fascinated by these ‘dark’ polarities of magical Consciousness. What is especially significant about Norton’s magical encounter with the Werplon is that she says it occurred while she was utilising her ‘aetheric body’ [sic], a reference to her out-of-the-body exploration of the ‘astral planes’ accessed through trance and self-hypnosis. Fortunately, a detailed transcript survives from Norton’s interview with psychologist L.J. Murphy at the University of Melbourne in 1949 which relate to the artist’s use of self-hypnosis (See Appendix A). This document provides valuable insights into Norton’s inner-plane encounters with powerful magical entities and archetypal forces – encounters which subsequently provided the conceptual and metaphysical basis for many of her most dramatic artistic images.

Norton’s exploration of self-hypnosis and trance

Norton’s interest in ‘multiple consciousness’ and ‘other planes or dimensions of being’, led her to experiment with self-hypnosis in 1940, when she was twenty-three years old.⁷² Norton was already familiar with the psychoanalytic works of Jung and Freud and after taking up residence in the Ship and Mermaid Inn had begun reading widely in the field of witchcraft, occultism, demonology and mythology. According to an article published in *People* in March 1950 Norton believed that hypnotic trance states offered practical experiential access to a vast realm of heightened inner awareness that she wanted to explore first-hand.⁷³

Norton began her experiments by meditating in a darkened room,⁷⁴ restricting her normal consciousness in an effort to induce automatic drawing and allowing an ‘abnormal mode of consciousness’⁷⁵ to take over. According to Norton this produced ‘a number of peculiar and unexpected results and some drawings which were later exhibited’.⁷⁶ Norton’s experiments in states of consciousness culminated in what she referred to as ‘a period of extra-sensory perception, together with a prolonged series of symbolic visions’.⁷⁷ In commenting on this process, Norton noted: ‘As for drawings done in a state of trance, I use the word “trance” roughly to cover any abnormal mode of consciousness’.⁷⁸

As noted earlier, Norton provided psychologist L.J. Murphy with an extensive statement of her experiments with self-hypnosis in 1949. Several sections from this lengthy personal statement relate to Norton’s magical cosmology and her notions of the metaphysical structure of the universe with its various ‘Realms of Being’. Other aspects of Norton’s statement

which relate more specifically to her visionary art-making process will be discussed in Chapter Six.⁷⁹ Because of the significance of this primary source document, lengthy quotations are included in the following section. The complete document is reproduced in Appendix A.

Norton's trance method

Norton records her trance method in quite explicit terms, combining ritual elements and meditative techniques in order to facilitate an altered state of consciousness.

... I decided to experiment in self-induced trance; the idea being to induce an abnormal state of consciousness and manifest the results, if any, in drawing. My aim was to delve down into the subconscious and, if possible, through and beyond it.

I had a feeling (intuitional rather than intellectual) that somewhere in the depths of the unconscious, the individual would contain, in essence, the accumulated knowledge of mankind: just as his physical body manifests the aggregate of racial experience in the form of instinct or automatic reaction to stimulus.

In order to contact this hypothetical source, I decided to apply psychic stimulus to the subconscious : stimulus that the conscious reasoning mind might reject, yet which would appeal to the buried instincts as old as man, and would (I hoped) cause psychic 'automatic reflexes' (Religious cults use ritual, incense etc. for the same reason). Consequently, I collected together a variety of things such as aromatic leaves, wine, a lighted fire, a mummified hoof, etc... all potent stimuli to the part of the subconscious that I wished to invoke. I darkened the room, and focusing my eyes upon the hoof I crushed the pungent leaves, drank some wine, and tried to clear my mind of all conscious thought. This was the beginning (and I made many other experiments which were progressively successful).⁸⁰

Norton's initial foray into self-induced trance reveals what I have referred to in Chapter Three as the *chthonic* nature of her spiritual and magical quest. Norton already senses that her first hypnotic journey will take her far into the depths of the subconscious psyche – almost as if she is about to explore the mysteries of the Underworld – and her ritual response is pagan to the core. Like a true follower of Pan or Dionysus she gathers aromatic leaves, lights a fire and drinks some wine – and focuses on a mummified hoof which provides an atavistic component to her ritual. Already she is establishing the innately pagan context for her trance journeys onto the inner planes.


Norton writes that over a period of around five months spent exploring self-hypnosis, her consciousness became 'extremely exalted' and her

dissociative states of mind gave rise to increased perceptual acuity and feelings of enhanced personal power:

I seemed, while experiencing a great intensification of intellectual, creative and intuitional faculties, to have become detached in a curiously timeless fashion from the world around me, and yet to be seeing things with a greater clarity and awareness than normally. I was working day and night, having very little sleep or rest, yet a supply of inexhaustible power seemed to flow through me.⁸¹

As we have seen in Chapter Three, in Dr J.W. Brodie-Innes' (*Frater Sub Spe's*) account of the transition from waking consciousness to inner-plane awareness, Norton experienced a sense of detachment accompanied by a feeling of clarity and potency. She now began to combine magical techniques of invocation⁸² with her trance method of self-hypnosis, resulting in the spontaneous creation of a magical symbol, or *sigil*, which she associated with the ancient Egyptian figure of Thoth. Norton's concept of magic as 'the science and art of causing supernormal change to occur in conformity with will' appears to derive from the published works of Aleister Crowley who described the techniques of magic in almost exactly those terms.⁸³

It is also significant that in the following statement Norton uses the word 'invocation' rather than 'evocation' in defining her magical purpose. Invocation has been defined by the noted magical practitioner W.E. Butler – a colleague of Dion Fortune in the Fraternity of the Inner Light – as a means of 'attract[ing] the attention of some Being of a superior nature to our own, or some cosmic force of a higher order' and differs from magical *evocation* which is traditionally associated with medieval grimoires and the summoning of spirits.⁸⁴ Norton's use of the word 'invocation' suggests that she was seeking metaphysical inspiration or guidance from a 'higher' magical source:

One night I felt impelled, quite apart from conscious volition, to perform a kind of ritual of invocation; after which I executed a peculiar waking 'automatic' drawing, the composition of which assumed the form of the symbol .

The upper figure is the sign of Thoth – impersonality and balanced force – while the lunar crescent can represent several things, but chiefly (as applied to the individual) receptivity to occult powers; the personality; and, according to the Kabbalists, an emblem of the sphere of magic. I once read of magic defined as 'The science and art of causing supernormal change to occur in conformity with will', which seems a fairly comprehensive description.⁸⁵

Norton's magical method is consistent with magical procedures both within the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and also within Crowleyian *Thelema*. As outlined in Chapters Two and Three, application of the will is crucial to the magical undertaking because *will* can effect changes both within the physical world and also in the imaginal or mythic realms of the astral plane. We will encounter the use of magical sigils – personalised symbols of the magical will – in the work of trance artist and magician Austin Osman Spare, whose occult method is compared with Norton's in Chapter Six.

According to Norton's account, two years after her initial experiments with hypnosis she decided to utilise the trance-based spiritualistic technique of automatic writing⁸⁶ in an effort to determine whether life continued after death. This exploratory episode is significant because Norton came to believe that she could access other planes of existence through her soul-consciousness or 'astral body'. This in turn had implications for the way in which she would subsequently conceptualise the actual nature and structure of the magical universe:

Two years later, I decided to attempt some more investigations, this time with the object of discovering whether life continues after bodily death and, if so, in what form. To this end, I began by attempting to communicate with a dead friend by means of automatic writing. After several unsuccessful attempts, the pencil began to move quite freely, although for some days I obtained only subconscious ramblings and symbolism.

Unexpectedly, however, a great change took place: there was a strong awareness of another presence, and the sensation of the writing altered completely, as though someone apart from myself were guiding my hand. The writing became clear, concise, and altered completely. It altered, in fact, into the handwriting of the friend with whom I was attempting to communicate. Moreover, the answers to my questions became definite and coherent. Soon, and during the following nine or ten months, I gained the rough outlines of a philosophical and metaphysical conception of the Universe and life beyond death which by no stretch of the imagination could I attribute to my normal self, since it embodied knowledge of a type which my studies had never encountered, such as those which dealt with highly abstract propositions entering the realms of higher mathematics.⁸⁷

For Norton, this new-found knowledge of the after-death realm appeared to offer opportunities for self-exploration that she had not anticipated:

I should make it clear that my previous reading in occult lore had dealt almost exclusively with medieval demonology and witchcraft, this being the side of such matters which chiefly interested me. Inspired by the previous occurrences, I had also studied a certain amount of symbolism, but I had never touched upon either physics, philosophy, or metaphysics, as such. Oddly enough, while actually receiving super-

normal information I quite easily comprehended theories which when reviewed later were often difficult to grasp (heightening of faculties).

In this way I also learned something of various other subjects, including the structure of the subconscious mind, comparative symbolism, etc. Meanwhile, without realising it, I was becoming highly sensitised psychically, and soon could communicate almost at will, without any effort of concentration. Much of the data was, of course, fragmentary and incomplete owing to the crude method of communication. Other information, particularly that dealing with life on other planes of Being, was misinterpreted owing to lack of standards of comparison on my part: since one can only visualise any image in relation to something in one's own experience, my understanding was necessarily limited. Now, however, I am able to correlate and apply the missing factors to things that were merely hinted at during this period.'⁸⁸

Norton became interested in the possibility of transferring her 'soul-consciousness' or 'astral body' into the post-mortem domain because here she could explore metaphysical realms not normally accessible in everyday experience. Again Norton's quest reflects a desire to gain hidden or secret knowledge, a quest for *gnosis* in relation to the world beyond death:

...one subject had become paramount in my mind. I had heard that it was possible to achieve transition to a different Realm of existence and live consciously the type of life that is generally experienced after physical death. This became my supreme desire, for a number of reasons. The idea, above all, appealed to me as a type of adventure and exploration more fascinating than any other. There were, too, things that I wished to know which I realised would be impossible without first-hand experience; for I felt that entities who had had the experience of death would have passed into a different and perhaps more advanced state of being, entailing conditions of life which would be almost incomprehensible according to our concepts. As soon as communication was firmly established, therefore, I asked if such a thing were actually possible. The reply was in the affirmative. It seemed that co-operation of will from two planes of Being was necessary for safe accomplishment of the process. I was told, also, that I would have to wait for a few months, presumably to gain the necessary psychic training.⁸⁹

Norton's experiments finally resulted in the attainment of an altered state of awareness involving mental dissociation or 'out-of-the-body' consciousness, a method popularly referred to by occultists as 'astral travel' or 'travel on the astral planes'. Many occultists associated with the Western esoteric tradition believe (like Golden Dawn magician Dr J.W. Brodie-Innes, mentioned earlier) that when they engage in astral travel they transfer their conscious faculties from the physical body to a soul-body or 'etheric' vehicle that allows them to venture consciously on the inner or 'astral' planes.⁹⁰

My excitement can be imagined; and during the following months becoming impatient and often sceptical of ever accomplishing any such thing, I made several attempts at separating myself from my body. My conception of the process was a hazy one and very different from actuality, since I imagined that my physical body would temporarily have to die, later to be re-animated on my return.

Once during one of these attempts I succeeded in inducing a type of cataleptic trance. Gradually over the space of about an hour my heart beat became slower and slower – I was very aware of this in a detached fashion – and I could feel my breathing lessening until both heart-beat and breath had practically ceased; and then an extraordinary sensation ran over my entire body, which I can describe only as ‘cessation’. There was an inward hush as though my body’s mechanism had come to a pause – and then a light frothing bubbling sensation spread through my veins as though my body were dissolving into foam. I do not know what the result would have been had I not been disturbed. However, at this moment my husband ⁹¹ entered the room. Thinking I was ill, he felt my pulse and exclaimed in alarm. The dissolving stopped, there was a sense of shock, and with a slight jerk my breathing started again very slowly. I tried to reassure him, but could not speak at first, as my lips and vocal organs seemed extraneous and difficult to control. It took me another hour to resume normal functioning, after which he told me that my skin had felt icy and slightly damp (I had not been aware of this). ⁹²

Reference was made in Chapter Three to the classic Hermetic notion of the separation of soul and body and also to the Golden Dawn concept of ‘rising in the planes’. In both contexts the key element is *dissociation* – the separation of conscious awareness from the confines or restrictions of the physical body. Norton’s exploration of trance describes the same essential processes: during a state of gradual dissociation her sense of mental acuity is heightened while her body ‘dissolves into foam’. Having experienced partial dissociation Norton notes that she is now able to expand the range of her paranormal faculties:

The next step of importance was clairaudience – a clear and coherent form of thought transference which eliminated the cruder medium of automatic writing. The first indication of this occurred under the very prosaic circumstances of washing clothes one afternoon. Possibly for the very reason of lack of conscious concentration my brain was in a receptive condition. I suddenly became strongly aware of another presence. I realised that it was C. (the person with whom I had been communicating) and then unexpectedly, as though my brain were a tuned-in wireless set, I could hear her speaking; which so thrilled me that mentally I positively shouted at her.

‘Yes, it really is me,’ came the reply. ‘I am able to communicate with you directly now.’ I was told later that there are numerous cells in the brain which do not normally function. During this conversation I was told, amongst other things, that inter-Plane transition would occur for me in about a month: and so it did, almost to the day.

I doubt if any impression of the actual initial experience could be conveyed in words, so I shall not attempt to describe it, beyond saying that there was a sensation of ecstasy, during which my entire being seemed to dissolve and disintegrate, then gradually re-form into a new whole. The experience was so overwhelming that at first it was difficult to realise what had happened; for simultaneously with this an entire change of consciousness and focus had been effected. My body felt as though it were formed of warm golden light; the physical body had become merely an appendage, and all my sensations were centred in the plasmic body. I had gained new and different senses – and here I must comment upon something concerning which the popular conception of ‘discarnate life’ is the absolute reverse of reality. Far from being devoid of sense enjoyment, a plasmic body of this type contains the very essence of sensuousness to a degree that renders the physical sensory organs utterly negligible by comparison. As a rough and very inadequate parallel, compare the difference between touching something of delicate texture with naked hands, and with hands encased in heavy leather gloves. ‘There’ the body is completely a reflection of the mind, so that any type of pleasure, whether emotional or intellectual, engenders as a part of itself a corresponding sensuous enjoyment. (This also applies in the opposite direction so that misery of any description is accompanied by excruciating pain.).⁹³

Norton’s reference to a ‘plasmic body’ – a body which ‘felt as though it were formed of warm golden light’ – is reminiscent of numerous accounts found in the parapsychological and transpersonal literature relating to ‘out-of-the-body’ experiences (OOBEs) and ‘near-death experiences’ (NDEs) in research that continues to the present day.⁹⁴ This branch of parapsychology is sometimes referred to as thanatology⁹⁵ and, although subject to widespread dismissal from many sceptics, has also attracted serious attention from a number of respected transpersonal psychologists and neuroscientists intent on fully comprehending the relationship between human consciousness and the brain (Grof 1976; Goleman & Davidson 1979; Pribram 1986; Van Lommel 2004; Kelly et al. 2006 – see Bibliography). For some of these scientists the issue of whether human consciousness can exist beyond, or outside, the brain is a key concern because it would determine whether the living brain is the actual source of human consciousness or more specifically the vehicle through which consciousness operates. In the latter instance, in a metaphorical sense, the relationship between brain and consciousness could be likened to the electrical impulses received through a television set from an external source of transmission; here the hardware (= brain) is not the actual source of the programme.⁹⁶ This scientific dilemma has still not been resolved⁹⁷ but the issue itself nevertheless has profound implications for religious concepts of life after death. If the existence of disembodied human consciousness could be scientifically proven it would lend considerable credence to the theoretical possibility of an afterlife, although the actual

nature of that afterlife would probably remain a matter of far-ranging religious and metaphysical speculation.⁹⁸

The noted cardiologist Dr Pim van Lommel, a leading researcher specialising in the medical study of near-death experiences (NDEs), draws on quantum theory to distinguish between what he calls ‘phase-space’ – ‘invisible, non-local, higher-dimensional space...where every past and future event is available as a possibility’⁹⁹ – and ‘real-space’ which is associated with ‘body-linked waking consciousness’ and the material, manifest world. Van Lommel believes that in the same way that waves and particles mirror each other in quantum dynamics,

...life creates the transition from phase-space into our manifest real-space...life creates the possibility to receive the fields of consciousness (waves) into the waking consciousness which belongs to our physical body (particles)...there is a permanent interaction between these two aspects of consciousness... When we die, our consciousness will no longer have an aspect of particles, but only the eternal aspect of waves¹⁰⁰

According to Van Lommel the evidence from scientific NDE research suggests that human consciousness is independent of brain function: conscious awareness is received like a wave-transmission by the living brain but does not actually originate within the physical organism itself. Van Lommel believes that consciousness is best understood as being

based on fields of information, consisting of waves and... originates in the phase space...[At] the time of physical death consciousness will continue to be experienced in another dimension, in an invisible and immaterial world, the phase-space, in which all past, present and future is enclosed.¹⁰¹

Van Lommel’s medical model of life, death and consciousness is pertinent to Norton’s experiences of altered states of consciousness because, according to her account, Norton discovered she was able to contact a *discarnate* human being while in a state of self-induced trance. Norton’s cosmology and magical practice similarly depend on her ability to access inner planes of conscious awareness which extend beyond familiar waking consciousness. Like the traditional shaman, who similarly accesses mythic realms of awareness while in a state of consciously willed dissociation,¹⁰² Norton seeks to transcend the apparent barrier of physical death through her inner-plane explorations and in turn describes her trance experiences by using such terms as ‘ecstasy’, ‘golden light’ and ‘inner-plane transition’. Norton also notes that in the realm of awareness accessed through trance-dissociation, ‘the body is completely a reflection of the mind’. Further, her consciousness appears to be no longer constrained by physical limitations:

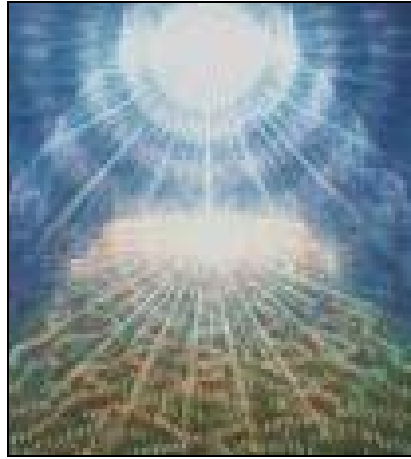


Plate 53: According to Van Lommel, ‘phase-space’ consciousness transcends form and is experienced as waves

‘My body felt as though it were formed of warm golden light; the physical body had become merely an appendage...’ ¹⁰³

Referring back to the Hermetically-based Golden Dawn concept of mystical ascent known as ‘rising in the planes’ (see Chapter Three) the visionary branch of modern Western magic can be seen as being specifically associated with the quest to transcend the limitations of physical form and awareness (exemplified by the Gnostic concept of the human body as a prison that ‘traps’ and encloses the divine spark of consciousness). Having induced an altered state of consciousness the visionary magician ‘journeys’ upwards through the planes – through an act of consciously willed spiritual ascent – towards the sacred source of Life itself (perceived variously as the Godhead, Infinite Formlessness etc.). Essentially this process parallels what Van Lommel has described as the return to ‘phase-space’, where consciousness is experienced as waves (plasmic energy) and the world of particles (physical form) no longer applies. Seen in this context, visionary magicians operating within the Western esoteric tradition appear to be employing archetypal images and symbolic metaphors like the Kabbalistic Tree of Life as *mapping devices* that help them delineate higher planes of reality: they do this in order to structure the transition from conscious awareness at the level of physical reality (‘particles’) through to divine transcendence (‘waves’) – expressed in Kabbalistic terms as the mystical ascent from *Malkuth*, via *Tiphareth* to *Kether* on the Tree of Life.

Norton's account clearly indicates that it was through attaining a state of out-of-the-body consciousness that she was able to explore these metaphysical realms of existence. As noted in Chapter Three, this claim is not without precedent in the esoteric literature but in Norton's case it led to the formulation of an operative model of the universe in which different mythic entities and sentient beings could reveal their presence on different planes of existence.

Norton's concept of the magical universe

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

... 'thought' in those realms is very different from that which is normally understood by the word. There, 'thought' – or rather the energy generated by such – is felt as a tangible thing, a current of living force which assumes palpable and visual form. I had been told, earlier, that 'entities in the Plane assumed form at will'. This is literally true; one actually changes shape very frequently, since the new 'sense' referred to is that which could be described as 'being'. Just as one can see, feel, hear a thing, state or person; and when this occurs one realises and is the very essence of its nature. This sense, if one can call it that, covers a vastly wider field than anything comparable to human life; for in addition to becoming the essence of male, female, or neither, and beings of other orders of Existence, one can 'become' a living embodiment of abstract Ideas of all descriptions.¹⁰⁴

During a state of trance Norton sometimes experienced sensations of metaphysical abstraction. On these occasions her perceptions were related more to 'essence' than to form:

One of the strangest experiences I had was 'becoming' an embodiment of an Idea of the Universe. This Idea was not anthropomorphised into Entity, as is usually the case with such embodiments. Consequently, although my consciousness existed, there was no consciousness of entity at all. I am not referring to the personal 'I' consciousness, for naturally that alters completely with each form assumed; I have used a capital letter to differentiate between personal ideas and Ideas, which are representations to the consciousness of Group interpretations of Universal facts, according to order of Existence and sub-divisions therein. (By 'other orders of Existence' I mean different classes of Being from Man; highly evolved unhuman intelligences)....

Orthodox occultists occasionally describe the Plane of 'dense' matter as the 'Realm of Form', which to my mind is a complete misnomer. The name should be applied

to the realm of which I speak, since things There are seen in their archetypal essence. There, all forms whether abstract or actual appear in their real perfection as part of the very essence of Form itself, which is omnipresent. In speaking of abstract form I refer to System and the pattern of things in general, which interblend in all directions into infinity. As I have remarked elsewhere, the fact of chaos anywhere appears to be only a part of form and system, and as such purely relative.

The realisation of the essential Form of things occurs in various ways... one sees things such as the pattern of a life, for instance, as a complete and perfect thing in itself, yet forming against relationship to other lives part of another wider pattern; which again forms part of another yet larger... and so, ad infinitum. Similarly, with things such as Dimension – Time, Plane and Space – one literally sees the perfect interblending of their relationship to one another and to the Universe as a whole. Here again, the vehicle of realisation of this type of knowledge is greater and more comprehensive than intellectual understanding, although it includes the latter. Many of these Abstract forms appeared as vast animated patterns blending in a kind of geometrical harmony which we felt as well as observed, and into which the consciousness merged. The shapes and manifestations were not those of Euclidean geometry; cosmic mathematics manifesting as an immense art-form is the best analogy I can find.¹⁰⁵

Here, once again, Norton reveals her Gnostic tendencies. Norton perceives herself ‘becoming an embodiment of an Idea of the Universe’. In Gnostic cosmological systems the transcendent Godhead emanates ideas (or archetypes) which in turn manifest gradually into more specific material forms. Norton similarly comes to believe that her trance experiences provide experiential proof that thoughts and emotions can have a tangible impact on the ‘plasmic body’:

Many of these things, of course, happened much later; however, these examples indicate the complete unity of mind and fluids in the plasmic body, also the sensory tangibility of the thought-force. The manipulation of the latter (to return to my previous statement) in any kind of abstract thinking, is also a sensory skill and actually feeling the keen precision of directed force. In the emotional sphere, there is a different type of awareness. When one feels wonder, serenity, etc., one does not exactly become a representation of these states; rather, there is a sensation of complete unity with that which is causing their manifestation, and yet another sense which is a blending of the familiar five senses into a super-intensified one, plus an indefinable essence.¹⁰⁶

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

'intelligences' themselves could not be constrained by the cultural forms imposed by mythological or religious traditions because these were only human constructs; that is to say, the gods were 'greater' than the 'god-forms' through which they manifested. In this regard Norton emphasized that many metaphysical entities perceived in the trance realm were projections from intelligences whose origins lay far beyond the sphere of human awareness: the terrifying Werplon that Norton encountered in the *Qliphotic* regions of the Kabbalistic Tree, mentioned earlier, is a classic example:

In the other Realm, the structure of phenomena is based on other lines. Intelligences are not confined to one form as here; also the consciousness pertaining to each type of form bears a far closer relationship to its material vehicle. The latter, as I have said, being fluid plasmic matter, can and does alter its form to any image appropriate to circumstances. Since, however, the form assumed is a direct reflection of the content or state of consciousness, it is an automatic result of the latter. So, in this Realm also 'form follows function', but in an utterly different way; as function in this sense is synonymous with 'being' or content....

The myth-making (and image) faculty of the unconscious mind forms a concept of life (relative to the self) which is often embodied as an idealisation — a Being, such as Nature, Phantasy, Power etc. — and which the unconscious mind conceives of as a 'God', or in other words, the motivating powers of Existence relative to himself, as they appear to him. The Symbolic Being is also Self, since it represents the sum of his own experiences and reactions to such; and being therefore a creation of his own Mind, reflects its creator. Yet it is also an embodiment of the forces which have spiritually created or moulded him, and is therefore a personification of God in relation to himself. Generally, the more primitive the mind, the more it anthropomorphizes the attributes of its God, since it is less capable of a detached survey.

So with the group: in fact the individual subconscious God-conception generally flows along the group thought channel most appropriate to it, hence all of the Gods of man. Hence also all the demons, spirits, and other representations of forces that have influenced him.

I have spoken of individual mind working upon and moulding plasmic material. Consider the power, then, of this unconscious mass-concentration of human beings, throughout the ages, upon certain idealisations of forms — the God-forms (a generic name for all such forms, including Demons, Faery creatures, 'angels' etc.). This unconscious creative thought concentration has built up images in the aether, moulding raw plasmic matter to the form of these images, and providing vehicles for other intelligences to manifest through, relative to humanity. I do not mean that these intelligences are either confined to any or all of these forms, or that they are the product of human thought, conscious or otherwise. The vehicles, or God-forms, yes, or largely so, but not the intelligences themselves. These vehicles,

however, form a useful medium of communication, but naturally their visual form is, to a certain extent, anthropomorphic...' ¹⁰⁷

According to Norton, the fluid nature of the astral realm ensured that metaphysical entities and intelligences from higher planes of existence could manifest themselves, or 'incarnate', at lower levels of the astral plane and at this time they would appear in anthropomorphic god-forms culturally appropriate to the consciousness of the beholder. Norton believed that the god-forms themselves provided a mediating link between different levels of reality – the metaphysical and the human – and that human beings could approach the gods by 'rising' through the astral planes towards the manifested god-forms while in a state of trance (see also references to 'rising in the planes' in Chapter Three).¹⁰⁸ Conversely, the gods could 'incarnate' or 'descend' into the astral realms by manifesting in an appropriate form:

Taking the abstract state of consciousness known as 'Humanity' or Human Consciousness (including all Uni-Planal [sic] variations) as belonging to one Realm of Being – and the next level of consciousness (ie. Deva consciousness, I have used a Sanskrit term, failing any English equivalent) as belonging to another Realm of Being, and as such, completely different from state one, the God-forms comprise a link, or half-way state between the two. Human consciousness, then, can move up into these God-forms during trance, or other exceptional conditions; likewise Deva consciousness can descend into the same form. The inhabiting, or temporary animation of these forms by entities can be likened to an ectoplasmic 'incarnation', during which the entity assumes both the form and the mode of intelligence and perception associated with that form.¹⁰⁹

The above extracts from Norton's interview with L.J. Murphy reveal that within a magical context Norton's came to regard the astral plane – the inner-directed altered state of consciousness accessed through trance – as a type of 'mediating domain' between the gods and goddesses on the one hand, and human consciousness (functioning through the vehicle of the plasmic body) on the other. Norton also formed the view – on the basis of her trance experiences in the plasmic body – that a number of inner-plane 'intelligences' pervaded all aspects of the known universe. These intelligences in turn confirmed the nature of their existence through a range of anthropomorphic images – manifesting as gods and goddesses, demons and archangels, as portrayed in the world's various religions and mythologies. This leads us in turn to explore several related issues: how did Norton respond to the various gods and goddesses within her personal magical pantheon, what was the nature of their relationship, and how was this relationship subsequently expressed in Norton's ritual practice?

Norton's relationship with the gods and goddesses

Norton's exploration of trance states provided access to a dimension of conscious awareness that was unfamiliar territory to most of her contemporaries in 1940s and 1950s Australia. Her ventures into trance states were essentially solitary affairs where her privacy was safeguarded by close family members like her husband, Beresford¹¹⁰ and her elder sister, Cecily.¹¹¹ Norton noted in various interviews that her trance journeys often took place during a period of three to five days.¹¹² This situation suggests that a substantial part of Norton's magical practice was private in nature, and that it was based on a series of personal trance encounters with the god-forms of Pan, Hecate, Lilith and Lucifer and other metaphysical entities, whose images then found their way into her paintings – a process that will be described in Chapter Six.

A key discovery made by Norton herself and which distinguishes her from many other occultists operating within the Western esoteric tradition – especially those espousing the philosophy that magic is based, essentially, on directing the will – was that Norton did not believe she was fully in control of the magical energies she was encountering. When I interviewed Norton in 1977 she emphasised that the archetypal gods and cosmic beings she had contacted in trance existed *in their own right*. In their own particular magical realms they held the upper hand – *not she*.¹¹³ To this extent Norton differed from thinkers like Carl Jung, who regarded the sacred archetypes as universal forces deep within the collective human psyche, and not as entities with their own separate existence beyond the mind. While Norton admitted to being influenced by Jung and refers to Jungian archetypes in the L.J. Murphy transcript, for Jung, the archetypes – the ancient gods and goddesses of religion and mythology – were ultimately sacred personifications of the self.¹¹⁴ On the basis of what she experienced during her trance explorations, Norton did not share this view. For her, magical deities such as Pan, Hecate, Lilith, and Lucifer, as well as other magical entities like Elohi, Fohat and the Werplon were not projections or extensions of her own spiritual consciousness but powerful (and occasionally terrifying) entities who would grace her with their presence *only if it pleased them*, and not as a consequence of her own personal will or intent.¹¹⁵ Norton believed she could only depict in her paintings and drawings those qualities and attributes that the god or goddess in question *chose to reveal*, and that those energies would then filter through her 'like a funnel'.¹¹⁶ Norton maintained that she did nothing other than transmit the magical current. If the gods and goddesses were alive *in her* and *through her*, their presence would manifest in her art and through her ceremonial magical practice.¹¹⁷

Summary of main points

a) The principal deities in Norton's pantheon are Pan, Hecate, Lilith and Lucifer. Norton considered Pan to be the spirit of the Earth and the ruler of the World. In one sense Pan is perceived as infinite and formless – his sacred power radiating in all directions as the very essence of the universe. However as an embodiment of the wild and untamed forces in Nature Norton also associated him on a more local level with 'natural energies and fleet-footed freedom'. She was similarly attracted to Hecate as a goddess of the night and the hidden aspects of Nature. Norton regarded Hecate as a protector and, when required, as a purveyor of curses. Like Hecate, Lilith had similar appeal as a creature of the night. Norton refers to Lilith as the 'Queen of Air and Darkness'. A chthonic she-devil depicted by Norton with writhing snakes in her hair, Lilith is also a symbol of sexual potency and is associated with 'unbridled promiscuity'. The figure of Lucifer completes the pantheon of major deities in Norton's cosmology. Lucifer's main appeal, for Norton, is his spirit of rebellion – she refers to him as the Adversary. Lucifer represents the quest for secret knowledge but, according to Norton, he also exposes the limitations of the human ego and man's pride in his own existence.

b) In addition to the pagan deities referred to above, Norton is also strongly attracted to the *Qlipha*, the so-called 'dark' or 'negative' energy centres associated with the reverse face of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. Amidst these 'shades of the dead' Norton encounters such metaphysical entities as the Werplon – a terrifying humanoid insect creature that is both confrontational and chthonic. Norton is awed by his 'swift vibrant power and precision' and by 'an associated sense of *awareness below the surface*, of some constant danger...' [my emphasis in italics]

c) Norton's personal encounters with the pagan deities and *Qliphotic* entities mentioned above are achieved through self-induced hypnotic trance. Norton's exploration of trance states begins in 1940. She comes to believe that she can contact these deities experientially on the inner, or 'astral', planes of the psyche. Her chthonic astral journeys take her into the 'Underworld' of the subconscious where she encounters the various 'god-forms' associated with these deities – their perceived 'god-forms' are the various *outer veneers* that these metaphysical entities choose to present to human consciousness.

d) Each of Norton's trance episodes spans a period of 3-5 days, during which time her privacy is safeguarded by a close family member, like her husband (Beresford Conroy) or her sister (Cecily Boothman).

e) Norton's trance encounters occur while she is in her 'plasmic body' – an 'etheric' or 'astral' counterpart to her physical body to which consciousness has been transferred through an act of will. The astral plane itself is similarly governed and directed by thought and intentionality. As mentioned above, the god-images Norton perceives there are not the deities themselves but only the dimensions of their being that *they choose to reveal*. These images are innately inspirational; they subsequently find their way into myths, legends and religious teachings around the world and, in Norton's case, provide the content for her visionary art.

f) The gods and goddesses exist in their own right; they are not projections of the human psyche. They grace Norton with their presence *only when it pleases them and at a time of their choosing*, and are not subject to her personal will or intent.

¹ D. Barnes, 'Rosaleen says she could be a Witch', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 9 October 1952; 'I am a Witch!' *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 20 December 1956, and 'Confessions of a Witch', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 15 June 1967.

² Barnes asked her: 'Would you say you were born a witch or just acquired the attitude of a witch through association or environment?' Norton replied: 'I was born a witch.' See D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch!' *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 20 December 1956: 8.

³ Ibid.

⁴ During the medieval witchcraft trials witches were searched for the 'Devil's mark', which was allegedly proof of a pact with the Devil. The Devil was said to mark the bodies of his followers with a claw or hot iron, thereby sealing their pledge of allegiance to him. Scars, natural blemishes and insensitive patches of skin that did not bleed were also believed to be 'Devil's marks'. See R.E. Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft*, Facts on File, New York and Oxford 1989:99.

⁵ R. Norton, 'I was born a Witch', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 3 January 1957: 4.

⁶ 'Rowie [sic] replied by wrenching off her sweater. A long sinew stretched from her underarm to below her waist... As if that wasn't enough, a pair of peculiarly pointed ears were presented for inspection.' See B. Walker and R. Neville, 'Deliver us to E-Ville', *Tharunka*, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 3 July 1962: 8.

⁷ R. Norton, 'I was born a Witch', loc cit: 4.

⁸ Ibid: 38.

⁹ See R.E. Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft*, loc cit: 262; and Pan', in P. Turner and C.R. Coulter, *A Dictionary of Ancient Deities*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2000: 371.

¹⁰ See 'Pan', in P. Turner and C.R. Coulter, *A Dictionary of Ancient Deities*, loc cit.

¹¹ See 'Pan' in J.E. Zimmerman, *Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, Harper and Row, New York, 1964: 190.

¹² See 'Pan' in M.S. Shapiro and R.A. Hendricks, *A Dictionary of Mythologies*, Granada, London 1981: 148.

¹³ P. Harrison, *The Elements of Pantheism*, Element, Shaftesbury, Dorset, 1999: 1.

¹⁴ 'Art Models Show their own Art', *Pix*, Sydney, 3 July 1943

¹⁵ For a commentary on the significance of this particular work see the section 'Norton's Concept of the Magical Universe' later in this chapter.

¹⁶ Articles featuring photographs of the more conventional, classical ancient Greek figure of Pan that featured as the backdrop to Norton's ritual altar are included in D.L. Thompson's 'Devil Worship Here!',

Australasian Post, 6 October 1955, and Norton's autobiographical 'I Was Born a Witch', *Australasian Post*, 3 January 1957.

¹⁷ Norton rarely dated her paintings and drawings so it is not possible to establish exactly when this painting of Pan was produced.

¹⁸ 'Art Models Show Their Own Art', *Pix*, Sydney, 3 July 1943:26.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Anon. 'Inside Rosaleen Norton', *Squire*, Sydney, April 1965: 41,42.

²¹ Ibid: 42.

²² R. Norton, 'Witch Was No Class At School', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 24 January 1957:15.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Gnostic scholar Hans Jonas defines the Archons as planetary rulers and believes that they were originally Babylonian in origin. Jonas notes that in Gnostic cosmology the Archons 'collectively rule over the world, and each individually in his sphere is a warder of the cosmic prison...As guardian of his sphere, each Archon bars the passage of souls that seek to ascend after death, in order to prevent their escape from the world and their return to God.' See H. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, second edition, Beacon Press, Boston 1963: 43.

²⁵ R. Norton, 'Witches Want No Recruits', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 10 January 1957: 35

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ *The Bulletin*, Sydney, 27 January 1981.

²⁸ Hecate's origins appear to be in Asia Minor, specifically the Carian region of Anatolia in what is now southeastern Turkey. See J. Rabinowitz, *The Rotting Goddess: The Origin of the Witch in Classical Antiquity*, Autonomedia, New York 1998: 19. While Hecate was incorporated into the Greek pantheon from Anatolia, Rabinowitz notes that her sister goddess, Kybele 'had rites so frenzied the Greeks never let her into their pantheon'. Ibid: 63.

²⁹ See R. Von Rudloff, *Hekate in Ancient Greek Religion*, Horned Owl Publishing, Victoria, Canada 1999: 95 and 123. Patricia A. Marquardt notes that, prior to the 5th century BCE, Hecate was not especially chthonic in nature but that her identification with witchcraft and black magic in literature dates from Euripedes' *Medea*. Marquardt also notes that Hecate may have become identified around this time with the Thessalian goddess Einoda, who was similarly associated with witchcraft. See P. A. Marquardt, 'A Portrait of Hecate', *The American Journal of Philology*, 102,3, Autumn 1981: 252.

³⁰ R. Von Rudloff, loc.cit: 121.

³¹ Ibid: 123.

³² Ibid: 95-96.

³³ See 'Hecate', in P. Turner and C.R. Coulter, *A Dictionary of Ancient Deities*, loc. cit: 208. According to Rabinowitz, other offerings to Hecate included bread, eels and mullet. See J. Rabinowitz, *The Rotting Goddess: The Origin of the Witch in Classical Antiquity*, loc cit: 62.

³⁴ See R. Von Rudloff, *Hekate in Ancient Greek Religion*, loc cit.: 113 and 122.

³⁵ N. Drury, *The History of Magic in the Modern Age*, Constable, London 2000: 138.

³⁶ R. Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, third enlarged edition, Wayne State University Press, Detroit 1990: 221.

³⁷ Ibid: 222.

³⁸ Ibid: 223.

³⁹ C.G. Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, London 1919: 153-154

⁴⁰ From unpublished notes accompanying Norton's illustration *Lilith*, reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Sydney 1952.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Television documentary on the Kings Cross district in Sydney titled *The Glittering Mile*, Channel 9, Sydney, 1964.

⁴³ R. Norton, 'Witches Want No Recruits', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 10 January 1957:5.

⁴⁴ R. Norton, introduction to *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc cit: 13.

⁴⁵ Ibid: 48.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid, line 1.

⁴⁸ R. Norton, 'A Vision', included in the *Supplement to the Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Walter Glover, Sydney 1984.

⁴⁹ A painting of *The Adversary*, comparable in all major details, had also been exhibited at the Rowden White Gallery in Melbourne in 1949

⁵⁰ See 'Lucifer' in *The New Columbia Encyclopedia*, Columbia University Press, New York 1975: 1626.

⁵¹ See J.B. Russell, *Satan: the Early Christian Tradition*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca 1981:130.

⁵² Ibid: 132-133.

⁵³ R. Cavendish, *The Magical Arts*, Arkana, London 1984: 289.

⁵⁴ Both of these works are reproduced in N. Drury, *The Witch of Kings Cross*, Kingsclear, Sydney 2002: plate section between pp.64-65.

⁵⁵ See N. Drury, *Inner Visions: Explorations in Magical Consciousness*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1979:106.

⁵⁶ Despite its resemblance to a Jewish god-name, Elohi is not strictly Kabbalistic. The god-name of Chesed, the fourth sphere upon the Tree of Life associated with Jupiter in Dion Fortune's *Mystical Qabalah* [1935: 161], is given as El and not Elohi. It is likely that Norton derived the reference to Elohi from Madame H.P. Blavatsky who refers to the Elohi of Jupiter in *The Secret Doctrine* [1897] 1962, Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India: ii :301 and iv: 108. Blavatsky ascribes this reference to the planetary spirit of Jupiter to the early Christian theologian Origen, who in turn is said to have ascribed it to the Gnostics.

⁵⁷ See H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* [1897] 1962, Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India:.. Blavatsky refers specifically to Fohat as the 'dynamic energy of Cosmic Ideation' and 'the guiding power of all manifestation' (I:81) and later describes him as 'the personified electric vital power, the transcendental binding unity of all cosmic energies, on the unseen as on the manifested planes, the action of which resembles – on an immense scale – that of a living Force created by Will...Fohat is not only the living Symbol and Container of that Force, but is looked upon by the Occultists as an Entity; the forces he acts upon being cosmic, human and terrestrial, and exercising their influence on all these planes respectively.' (I:170-171. Capital letters in Blavatsky's text).

⁵⁸ In Haiti Erzulie is revered as the Voodoo goddess of love, beauty, flowers and jewellery. She also enjoys dancing and fine clothes. See Maya Deren, *Divine Horsemen: the Voodoo Gods of Haiti*, Thames and Hudson, London 1953; 62 (second edition 1970). During her lifetime Norton could have had access to this well-known book, a classic study of voodoo, although it was first published a year after *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*. It is likely that Norton drew at least part of her enthusiasm for voodoo from William B. Seabrook's *Magic Island* (New York, 1929) which she lists in the bibliography in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (1952:79) as a reference under the heading 'witchcraft and demonology'. Norton lists its title incorrectly as *The Magic Isle* in her bibliography.

⁵⁹ For all of these metaphysical beings see Norton, 1952:78

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, 1952: 79

⁶² Because the Kabbalah is a central element in the magic of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn it is described in detail in the section of this thesis which deals with the major strands of the Western esoteric tradition. See Chapter Two.

⁶³ Traditionally the Kabbalah is regarded as a mystical commentary on the Pentateuch – the written Torah, or 'five books of Moses'. The Hebrew word 'Kabbalah' itself means 'that which has been received' and refers to an oral mystical tradition. Even though the Kabbalah did not exist in written form until the Middle Ages, it is thought that the *Sefer Yetzirah*, or *Book of Creation*, was composed in Palestine between the third and sixth centuries CE. Another early Kabbalistic text, *Sefer ha-Bahir*, emerged in Provence, where there was a Jewish community between 1150 and 1200 CE. Around 1280 a Spanish Jewish mystic named Moses de León (1238-1305) began circulating booklets among his fellow Kabbalists. These texts were written in Aramaic and de León claimed that he had transcribed them from an ancient book of wisdom composed in the circle of Rabbi Shim'on bar Yohai, a famous disciple of Rabbi Akiba, who lived and taught in Israel in the second century CE. These booklets gradually formed the text known as Ha-Zohar ha-Qadosh, usually referred to as the *Zohar* (*The Book of Splendour*). Although Moses de León may have drawn on early material received through the secret oral tradition, it is now thought that he himself was probably the author of the *Zohar*. Norton's assertion in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (1952:78) that the Kabbalah is an 'ancient Chaldean secret doctrine which was known in Egypt under the name of the Book of Thoth' is completely fanciful. For the origins of the Kabbalah see G. Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey 1990, and M. Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1988.

⁶⁴ See Plate XV, *Qlipha*, in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc cit: 1952:44 – which is accompanied by an extract from Norton's personal journal.

⁶⁵ K. Grant, *Outside the Circles of Time*, Muller, London 1980: 287.

⁶⁶ K. Grant, *Nightside of Eden*, Muller, London 1977; 275-276.

⁶⁷ *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, 1952: 44

⁶⁸ ‘Werplon’ appears to be a concocted term combining ‘were –’ as in werewolf, with *plon*, the Scandinavian term for a dragon.

⁶⁹ It is more confronting even than the Djinn, a being which it superficially resembles and which is depicted in the painting *The Djinn*, which is reproduced in *Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Sydney 1984:28. Both the Werplon and the Djinn are shown grabbing helpless human beings in their clawed fingers.

⁷⁰ *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, 1952:44

⁷¹ The most confronting examples from *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* include Plate V, *Panic*; Plate XIV, *Rites of Baron Samedi*; Plate XV, *Qlipha*; Plate XVII, *Black Magic*; Plate XIX, *Fohat*; Plate XXIV, *Symphony in 3 Movements*, Plate XXVIII, *Dinner Time* and Plate XXXI, *The Master*.

⁷² The date is confirmed in the Norton article ‘She hates Figleaf Morality’, *People*, Sydney, 29 March 1950: 30.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ See Norton’s personal statement to L.J.Murphy in Appendix A.

⁷⁵ R. Norton, ‘She hates Figleaf Morality’, *People*, Sydney, 29 March 1950: 30.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ The full text of the statement, or at least the sections of the transcript that have survived, is provided in Appendix A. These documents were sent to Walter Glover by Mrs R. Raphael-Oeser, widow of the late Professor Oeser, who was Head of the Department of Psychology at the University of Melbourne at the time of the Rowden White exhibition in 1949.

⁸⁰ Extract from Norton’s personal statement to L.J.Murphy. See Appendix A.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² It is important to distinguish between magical invocation and evocation. In *Magic : Its Ritual Power and Purpose* [1952: 41] Dion Fortune’s colleague W.E. Butler writes: ‘In invocation we act in such a way as to attract the attention of some Being of a superior nature to our own, or some cosmic force of a higher order. In evocation we impose our will upon beings of a lesser order of existence and compel them to execute our wishes. In both cases the actual contact takes place through our mental channel...’

⁸³ Crowley writes: ‘Magick is the Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will.’ .See A. Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice*, Castle Books, New York, n.d:[1929]: xii. Norton had read this book and includes it in her bibliography in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (1952:79).

⁸⁴ See W.E. Butler, *Magic : Its Ritual Power and Purpose* [1952: 41. Medieval source-books detailing the nature of magical spirits include the *Goetia* or *Lesser Key of Solomon* , which has recently been reissued (Weiser, Boston 1995) and such works as *The Greater Key of Solomon* (trans. S.L. MacGregor Mathers, De Laurence Co., Chicago 1914) and *The Grimoire of Armadel* (trans.S.L. MacGregor Mathers, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1980).

⁸⁵ Extract from Norton’s personal statement to L.J. Murphy. See Appendix A.

⁸⁶ Automatic writing, like automatic drawing and painting, is performed during a state of trance in which the individual is unaware of what is being produced. The writing is sometimes produced at great speed and always without the conscious awareness of the seer. Handwriting produced in this way is sometimes assumed to be that of a deceased person, especially if the writing itself is in an unfamiliar style.

⁸⁷ Extract from Norton’s personal statement to L.J. Murphy. See Appendix A.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ See section on ‘astral travel’ in the ‘soul body’ in Chapter Three.

⁹¹ Norton was still married to Beresford Conroy at this time. See Chapter One.

⁹² Extract from Norton’s personal statement to L.J. Murphy. See Appendix A..

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Prominent researchers currently committed to the study of the spiritual implications of the near-death experience and other related phenomena include Dr Kenneth Ring, Dr Michael Sabom and Dr Bruce Greyson in the United States, and Dr Peter Fenwick, Dr Sam Parnia and Dr Pim van Lommel in Europe. See Bibliography.

⁹⁵ Thanatology is literally the study of death, but within a scientific and transpersonal context it also includes the study of altered states of consciousness associated with the death (and near-death) process – including the personal transition through death itself.

⁹⁶ See P. Van Lommel, 'About the Continuity of our Consciousness', in C. Machado and D.A. Shewmon (ed.), *Brain Death and Disorders of Consciousness*, Kluwer Academic/ Plenum, New York 2004: 115-132.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Scientists specializing in the study of altered states of consciousness occasionally work with gifted subjects in an effort to test the validity of perceptions experienced during willed out-of-the-body experiences (see C. Tart, ed., *Altered States of Consciousness*, Wiley, New York 1969; D. Goleman and R.J. Davidson, ed., *Consciousness: Brain, States of Awareness and Mysticism*, Harper & Row, New York 1979). Paranormal researcher Robert A. Monroe (1915-1995), author of three books on out-of-the-body consciousness (*Journeys Out of the Body*, Doubleday, New York 1971; *Far Journeys*, Doubleday, New York 1985 and *Ultimate Journey*, Doubleday, New York 1984), maintained that religious imagery would be experienced by devout believers as an experiential reality in the after-death state but he also claimed that it was possible to transcend the limitations of religious belief in this state of post-mortem awareness. See N. Drury, *The New Age: the History of a Movement*, Thames & Hudson, New York 2004: 196-200.

⁹⁹ P. Van Lommel, 'About the Continuity of our Consciousness', in C. Machado and D.A. Shewmon (ed.), loc cit: 115-132.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² See M. Eliade, *Shamanism*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey 1972 and I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: an Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, UK 1971.

¹⁰³ This phenomenon of the human body becoming less central as a vehicle of conscious awareness is also reported in scientific near-death studies. See K. Ring, *Life at Death*, Coward McCann & Geoghegan, New York 1980 and K. Ring, *Heading Toward Omega*, Morrow, New York 1984.

¹⁰⁴ Extract from Norton's personal statement to L.J. Murphy. See Appendix A.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ See references to 'rising in the planes' in Chapter Three.

¹⁰⁹ Extract from Norton's personal statement to L.J. Murphy. See Appendix A.

¹¹⁰ Norton was married to Conroy from 1940-1951. See Chapter One.

¹¹¹ Boothman remained Norton's closest family member and friend, throughout her life, and ensured Norton's privacy during the trance sessions: personal communication from Boothman to the author, 1982.

¹¹² See also 'Trance journeys' in Chapter Five.

¹¹³ Interview with Norton at Roslyn Gardens, Kings Cross, Sydney 1977.

¹¹⁴ See C.G. Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, London 1919; *The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1959; *Symbols of Transformation*, Bollingen Foundation / Princeton University Press, New Jersey 1956, and *Man and his Symbols*, Dell, New York 1968.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Norton at Roslyn Gardens, Kings Cross, Sydney 1977, loc cit.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

Chapter Five

ROSALEEN NORTON'S MAGICAL PRACTICE

Details of Norton's approach to ritual magic can be gleaned from a range of magazine articles published, for the most part, during the 1950s and 1960s, several of them autobiographical, others written by journalists fascinated by Norton's persona as 'the Witch of Kings Cross'.¹ There is also data from court hearings and police interviews associated with controversial photographs seized by NSW Vice Squad police in 1955 which showed Norton and Greenlees engaged in what were claimed to be ceremonial rites dedicated to Pan. In addition, there is a small amount of television documentary material² and photographic documentation (both published and unpublished) to supplement the data provided by Norton herself, both in interviews and autobiographical articles.³ Finally, and not insignificantly, copies of extant unpublished letters written by the distinguished musician Eugene Goossens to Rosaleen Norton describe their shared interest in sex magic and paganism and provide important insights into the activities of Norton's inner magical circle.

The various aspects of Norton's magical practice can be summarised as follows:

- a) Individual trance-magic episodes during which Norton sought to venture forth on the 'astral planes' in a state of mental dissociation induced by self-hypnosis. It was while on these trance journeys that Norton claimed to encounter the 'god-forms' of the principal deities in her magical pantheon.
- b) Sex magic activities with members of her magical coven, based substantially on practices derived from the magical writings of Aleister Crowley.
- c) Ritual magic invocations and other ceremonial activities which included improvised elements from Kundalini Yoga, Left-Hand Path Tantra and voodoo. These ritual activities were undertaken by Norton in her role as 'High Priestess at the Altar of Pan', together with members of her inner magical circle.

d) Miscellaneous magical activities, including attempted ‘magical flights’ seeking to simulate the ‘aerial’ journeys allegedly undertaken by medieval witches when they ‘rode’ to the Witches’ Sabbath, and also magical hexings and improvised ritual magical workings using various drugs and mind-altering stimulants.

Trance journeys

As noted in the previous chapter, magical trance journeys became a central feature of Norton’s magical practice after she began exploring self-hypnosis when she was 23 years old.⁴ Norton’s exploration of trance states was also central to her creative process as an artist, and this aspect of her work will be described in Chapter Six. However it is pertinent to note here that several of Norton’s artworks from the 1940s, including such drawings as *Astral Scene*⁵ and *The Sphinx*⁶, specifically show her naked body in a comatose horizontal position with magical ‘thought-forms’ issuing from her head.⁷ In *Astral Scene* a stream of white energy zig-zags into space from Norton’s mouth, culminating in a magical *sigil* which seems to split into two magical ‘horns’ and apparently results in the successful invocation of a horned deity. This deity is described in the accompanying caption as the ‘cryptic-faced Aegypan [who] represents Being’ [Norton’s capitals]. The caption beneath



Plate 54: *Astral Scene* – a pencil drawing from the early 1940s showing ectoplasm issuing from Norton’s mouth as she projects a magical sigil

this image, published in *Pix* magazine in July 1943 and evidently written with Norton's input,⁸ identifies the zig-zag energy as 'ectoplasm issuing from [Norton's] mouth' and states that this is the 'astral body' – a clear indication that Norton had been influenced by modern spiritualism as well as other aspects of the western esoteric tradition.⁹ Ectoplasm is an ethereal substance which is said to emanate from the bodies of spirit mediums while they are in a state of trance, thereby allowing deceased spirits to manifest themselves visually to the audience assembled in the seance.¹⁰ However, the fact that the mythic figure of the 'cryptic-faced Aegypan' appeared to Norton during this trance journey rather than the spirit-form of an actual, deceased person (which would be the normal expectation during a spiritualistic seance) indicates that Norton was using trance states to 'project her astral body'¹¹ with magical intent, rather than taking the passive role of a spiritualistic trance medium. In *Sphinx and Her Secrets* the magical intent associated with the act of astral projection is even clearer. The picture is dominated by a central female head adorned with ancient Egyptian head-gear: this figure clearly embodies Norton's conception of a 'female' Sphinx.¹² Two other mythic beings are shown rising up behind her. One is a naked male figure with circular horns – possibly a depiction of Pan; the other is a bare-breasted ancient Goddess wearing a ceremonial robe. The head-gear worn by the central female Sphinx-figure is surmounted by a serpent rising up from a coil – a likely reference to the *Kundalini* serpent – while immediately behind this serpent a solar orb radiates wispy filaments of energy, an allusion to the serpent's 'fiery' nature.¹³

In his 1948 critique of Norton's art-works, 'The Art of Rosaleen Norton', published in *Arna*, Owen M. Broughton writes that the figure of the Sphinx 'has become synonymous with Mystery and is the Guardian of Secrets'.¹⁴ Broughton also draws attention to the fact that the naked figure of Norton, who is shown horizontal in a state of trance, is depicted as lying within the form of a *yonis*, or vulva – a symbol not only of Norton's 'Receptivity to Forces from other planes and Dimensions of Being', as Broughton puts it, but also an indication of Norton's interest in Tantra and Kundalini Yoga.¹⁵ Broughton also notes that 'The central face is the Spirit of the Sphinx which embodies the mystery of Being – which can be applied both to Being in general and to the Self. The two figures behind and merging into the Sphinx represent the ... active and passive principles in Nature and the Male and Female Principles in the Self.'¹⁶



Plate 55: *Sphinx and her Secrets* (Plate 11 in the *Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton*). Norton's comatose body is clearly visible – a visual reference to her magical trance technique

If Norton believed that she was able to contact the 'active and passive principles in Nature' as god-forms on the astral planes – an ability she emphasised in her statements to psychologist L.J. Murphy¹⁷ – she also believed that she had encountered the entity she referred to as the Adversary (Lucifer / Satan) as an embodied, tangible presence. In an interview I conducted with Norton in her Roslyn Gardens, Kings Cross, apartment in 1977 she told me that she regarded Lucifer not as 'evil', but as humanity's natural adversary. In Norton's words:

He binds and limits man when it appears that he is growing too big for his boots. He tries to trick man, not with malicious intent, so much as exposing the limitations of the ego and man's pride in his own existence.¹⁸

Norton's concept of Lucifer is also referred to in Broughton's 1948 article, mentioned above. Here Broughton writes that Norton's portrait, *The Adversary*, 'represents the "Opposition Principle" operating throughout Nature – the large figure being the personification of this principle and the small figure depicting Man attempting to challenge an indestructible power.'¹⁹

Norton told me during the 1977 interview that she invoked the gods 'inwardly' and 'intuitively'. When I asked Norton whether the 'gods' and the magical universe generally could be regarded as a projection of humanity's own existential reality Norton rejected this approach emphatically. Norton made it clear to me that, for her, the gods existed *in their own right* and not simply as projections of the psyche, and she believed that it was a 'very egotistical and self-centred approach which places man on a pedestal in creation'.²⁰ Norton also emphasized that she knew such magical entities as Hecate, Lucifer and Pan 'not as extensions of her own consciousness, but as beings who [would] grace her with their presence if it pleased *them* [Norton's emphasis] and not subject to her will'.²¹ My notes from the 1977 interview with Norton read as follows:

She says that she has discovered certain of the qualities of these gods in her own temperament and this is a natural catalyst which makes their invocation much easier and more effective. But she does not contain them in the manner of the occult practice of 'assuming the god form',²² for example. She goes to be with them on the astral planes, and on different occasions it may be that they show different aspects, or facets, of their own magical potency.²³

Norton's magical trance journeys invariably took place in a secure location. According to Norton's older sister, Cecily Boothman, Norton used to come across from Kings Cross to Kirribilli on the lower North Shore near the Sydney Harbour Bridge, to undertake some of these trance journeys. Boothman lived in an old block of flats in Kirribilli Avenue with large windows overlooking the harbour. According to Boothman, Norton regarded this apartment as her second home and would often spend time there.²⁴ There was a special tree in a park nearby and 'Roie used to meditate near it, go into trance, and communicate with the spirit of the tree'.²⁵ According to my notes from an interview conducted in August 1986, Boothman was well aware that her sister had a natural ability to enter trance states and other dissociated forms of consciousness, and was willing to assist her in this process. On one occasion, Boothman was present when Norton went into trance states continuously over a five-day period. Boothman left water and understood that her sister's body 'mustn't be disturbed'.²⁶

Norton also confirmed in her autobiographical article 'Witches Want No Recruits', published in January 1957,²⁷ that her trance journeys could last as long as five days:

...some years ago I underwent a deep trance lasting five days. Shortly after this I met a Buddhist monk from Burma, who was an expert on such things. He seemed astounded when I described the contents of this trance, and after questioning me closely on the subject, said that it had undoubtedly been what some Buddhist schools call the 'Trance of Annihilation'.²⁸

While any interpretation of Norton's experience of the 'Trance of Annihilation' must necessarily remain speculative²⁹ it seems clear that she was capable of entering deep trance states in which she had metaphysical experiences involving encounters with such mythic and magical entities as Pan, Hecate, The Adversary (Lucifer/ Satan), Lilith and the Werplon, referred to earlier. Reproducing the 'god-forms' associated with these magical beings became a central feature of Norton's creative art-making process during the 1940 and 1950s – a process discussed further in Chapter Six.

An additional point of interest concerns Norton's depiction of herself as naked while in a state of trance. According to Cecily Boothman this was a symbolic device indicating that a 'voyage of the spirit' was taking place. Boothman maintained that Norton believed it would be less effective depicting herself wearing clothing.³⁰

Norton's magical coven

For most of her adult life Norton lived in squalid, dimly lit apartments and frequently her ritual practice often took place within a relatively confined space, in what otherwise served as her living quarters. 179 Brougham Street, Darlington was in a very run-down condition when Rosaleen Norton and Gavin Greenlees lived there in the 1950s.³¹ When Norton and Greenlees first moved in, having returned to Sydney after the Rowden White Gallery exhibition in Melbourne, the paint on the terrace house was flaking badly, the slate roof was in a state of disrepair, and the house was occupied by an assortment of vagrants and bohemians.³² At the beginning of their tenancy, Norton, Greenlees and a number of pet cats shared the basement flat, which was actually a converted laundry and a sign which read *The Female Vagrant* was pinned to the door.³³ As mentioned earlier, at this time the attic was occupied by a one-handed man named Mick who emerged periodically amidst piles of assorted newspapers. Later Greenlees and Norton shared the attic as a living space. They also constructed their ritual altars in this room. At one end of the attic a huge painted mural of Pan served as a backdrop to one of the altars; a second, smaller, altar was located in the opposite corner of the

room.³⁴ The attic also contained what journalist Dave Barnes described as a 'long low couch'³⁵ as well as other items of domestic furniture.

Several journalists who visited Norton during the 1950s and 1960s to interview her have provided detailed descriptions of the Brougham Street flat and its embellishments. In *Sydney Observed* (1968) Gavin Souter describes the ambience of Kings Cross during the 1950s and goes on to provide fascinating details of his personal visit to the Norton apartment in Brougham Street:

From...the top of William Street, King's Cross has projected its identity up Victoria Street as far as the Slamet Makan Indonesian restaurant, and down as far as the Swiss Inn; up Darlinghurst Road as far as the Tabou near Elizabeth Bay Road; down Macleay Street to the Chevron-Hilton; down Bayswater Road to the All Nations Club; and down William Street to Brougham Street, where Rosaleen Norton used to burn her incense to Pan and Hecate. Perhaps she still does. It is a few years now since I visited Miss Norton's terrace house, but I recall the occasion clearly; it was about 11 a.m. and although bright sunlight was slanting through the leaves of the plane-trees downstairs, the Norton living-room was kept dark with heavy drapes. Against one wall stood an altar decorated with a painting of Pan, a set of stag's antlers, a red cactus flower in a brass urn, a cobra's head candlestick holder, and a few blobs of candle grease from the last ritual. The name *Uriel* had been chalked in several places on the wall. 'I must take those off,' said Miss Norton apologetically. 'They were put up for a particular operation – an invocation.'

Before I left, Miss Norton jokingly put on a rubber lizard's head mask. 'A friend of mine wore this to the Kashmir one night,' she said. 'It had all the *tapuls* quite worried. A tapul, in case you are not familiar with the word, is a dummy mask made for occult purposes by a Tibetan sorcerer.... Miss Norton, her eyebrows pencilled upwards in mephistophelean curves and a talisman around her neck, may sometimes be observed sitting among the tapuls at the Kashmir coffee-lounge – an object of timid curiosity, like a lovebird among sparrows.'³⁶

A later [1962] visit to the same Norton apartment is described by Bob Walker and Richard Neville in 'Deliver us to E-ville', an article written for the University of New South Wales student newspaper, *Tharunka*:

Timorously, 'Tharunka' entered the King's Cross coffee shop which exhibits those of her paintings not condemned by the Vice Squad, and were given a variety of directions to follow. Finally they found themselves outside a dingy tenement house in a locale of dubious reputation. The windows were boarded up, paint had long since peeled from its walls. The time, midnight, when Cinderellas go to bed and witches rise.

They knocked at the door, and waited. They knocked again. Finally, as one went to ring a bell suddenly noticed high up on the door, it creaked open and a dark figure said ‘Yes?’

In the flickering light of a brass lamp they caught glimpses of a narrow face, prominent nose and teeth, with eyebrows angled sharply upwards. In fact, somewhat like the mask-like paintings in the coffee-shop.

They were led into a cramped basement room. The low ceiling was of bare boards, cobwebs hanging like stalactites. A red covered bed was along one wall; opposite there was an altar draped with blue cloth, on top of which were gilded antlers, porcelains of entwined snakes, panthers and a variety of lamps and candles. Masks grinned from the walls; four mirrors glinted in the half-light, and shelves of grey-old books were variously placed in what space remained.

Rowie [sic] was dressed in black tights and a red sweater. The room was heated by a makeshift gas ring [on] the floor, illuminated by a red lamp whose shade was decorated with daemonic faces. There was no source of ventilation.³⁷

The lack of ventilation in Norton’s apartment was something that Dave Barnes had also noticed in 1956 when he interviewed her for a second time, accompanied by a staff photographer.³⁸ At this stage Norton and Greenlees had moved upstairs from the basement to the attic. ‘For the first time the



Plate 56: The Pan altar at 179 Brougham Street, photographed by Vice Squad detective Bert Trevenar in October 1955

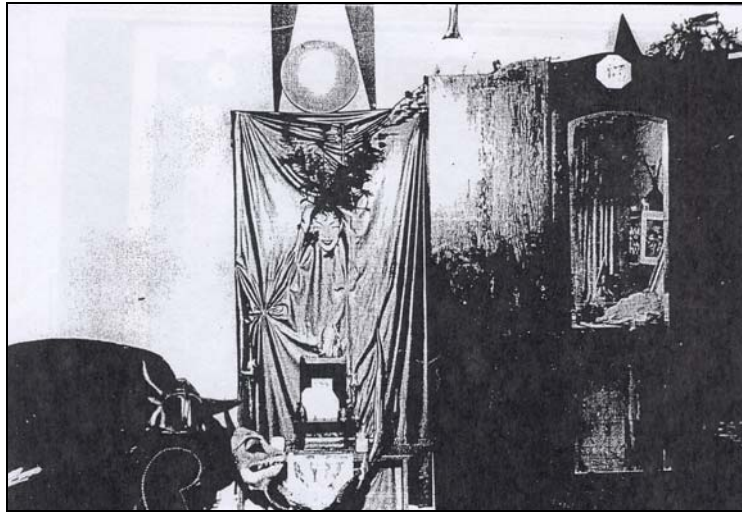


Plate 57: The smaller Hecate altar, also photographed by Bert Trevenar in October 1955

room seemed oppressive,' Barnes wrote. 'We noticed that the black curtains seemed to keep out nearly all the sunlight. And air. The attic seemed suddenly nearly as dark and damp as that four-years-ago basement.'³⁹

The confined ritual working space in the Brougham Street attic suggests that the number of magical practitioners working closely with Norton was very restricted. When journalist D.L. Thompson visited Brougham Street in 1955 to interview Norton and also to meet other coven practitioners he was told that Norton's immediate magical group consisted of seven members.⁴⁰ And yet Norton herself later gave widely varying responses to different interviewers who asked the same question about her coven membership. When Bob Walker and Richard Neville asked Norton in 1962 how many people belonged to her cult she gave the figure as 'roughly 300',⁴¹ and in the Channel Nine television documentary on Kings Cross, *The Glittering Mile* (1964), in which Norton was interviewed, Norton at first claimed 'thousands' of followers and then admitted to exaggerating before revising the figure down to 'hundreds'. In 1972, when Norton was asked the same question by *Sunday Telegraph* journalist Kerry McGlynn, she claimed she had 'at least 200 followers in Sydney and hundreds more throughout the country'.⁴² However the wildly varying figures may conceal a different issue. If Norton had begun to think of herself at this time as the titular head of all the witchcraft covens in Australia – a situation suggested in a by-line in Dave Barnes' 1967 article 'Confessions of a Witch',⁴³ – the larger numbers may be approximately correct.⁴⁴ However,



Plate 58: Norton with her ritual masks, photographed in 1955

in this case the estimates of coven membership numbers would not be referring specifically to Norton's inner group of close magical associates, which would have been very small – around seven, as the Thompson article suggests. It is interesting to note, in this context, that Norton's sister and confidante, Cecily Boothman, denied that Norton's Brougham Street coven actually existed, in terms of the usual meaning of the expression 'witches' coven' – which generally means a group of up to thirteen initiated members.⁴⁵ My handwritten notes from my first interview with Boothman (c.1982) say that according to her, 'Roie didn't have a coven as such – Roie had a group of "occult friends".'

Whether or not they were simply 'friends' or 'coven members', however, two close magical associates of Norton's were nevertheless included in D.L. Thompson's interview at the Brougham Street flat in 1955. They were not identified by their real names but were referred to in the article according to the ritual masks they were wearing. One of the coven members – described as 'plump, dark, and middle-aged, with a face like a successful dentist' – was initially introduced to Thompson as 'Mr Abrahams' but later conceded that this was not his real name. He did claim, however, to be an electrical engineer,⁴⁶ which provides us with a clue to his possible identity.⁴⁷ Mr Abrahams later donned a green Toad mask and is subsequently referred to in

the article as the Toad. Norton changed into her ritual clothing, emerging in a loosely hung 'witch's apron' and a black shawl. She was also wearing a Cat mask that had an opening allowing her to continue smoking a cigarette through her long cigarette-holder. Thompson refers to her as the Cat. The other group member present at the interview was the Rat, whom Thompson describes as a 'taciturn, squarely built type'.⁴⁸ Thompson's interview took place in the Brougham Street attic through a haze of incense smoke, in front of the large painting of Pan – a figure Thompson mistook for the Devil:

To the left, in the shadow was an old settee; above it a nude and rather shy-making [sic] picture painted by Miss Norton. Further left was what was clearly the coven's place of worship – an altar, with a man-sized picture (painted by Miss Norton) of a particularly toothy devil. To the left and right of Lucifer two candles burned, while in front a spirit lamp added its quota of smoke to the generally murky atmosphere. Odd horns, devil's potions, and other black magic bric-a-brac stood around... Behind us, almost lost in gloom, was a deep easy chair, and beside it a smaller altar with a sea-shell full of bat's blood or something of the sort...⁴⁹



Plate 59: Norton at her Pan altar, photographed in 1955

Thompson began his interview by asking how many members were in the coven and the Cat's response was: 'Seven.'⁵⁰ Thompson now asked whether this was the only coven in Sydney, to which the Toad replied: 'No, this is only one of half a dozen.... As you see, we are quite well equipped, although perhaps a little restricted for space. There is one coven which I visit which is much better equipped. However, this serves our purpose admirably, and we are all indebted to Miss Norton for accommodating and decorating it.'⁵¹ Thompson now asked whether the coven practised 'certain cruelties' as part of its rites, to which the Toad responded: 'That is completely false. Cruelties have been only too common in all the so-called religions since history began, but the followers of Lucifer⁵² practise no cruelty to man or animal.'⁵³

Thompson turned again to Norton who was now sitting topless in her skimpy witch's apron, having discarded her shawl,⁵⁴ and asked her somewhat ingenuously: 'But what do you get out of witchcraft? If you don't do it for the dressing up or for the ritualistic posing, which we have just photographed, why on earth do you do it all?' Thompson records her response:

'What do I get out of it?' said Miss Norton. She pushed the cat mask to the back of her head and lit another cigarette. The cool air from the window chilled her bare body and she reached for her shawl again. 'I get a life that holds infinite possibilities and is entirely satisfying to me in all planes of consciousness.'⁵⁵

The Thompson article is a significant document because in addition to providing details from the interviews it also contains details of the group's magical activities written by Norton herself – details acknowledged as such in the text. Norton confirms that she was 'self-initiated'⁵⁶ and that she 'took the Oath of Allegiance to the Horned God when [she] was 13...' ⁵⁷ Norton also writes: 'I had not been taught any ceremonial magic, nor had I read anything technical on the subject – it just "came through" instinctively.'⁵⁸ Norton then goes on to provide important information relating to the group's structure and ritual practice:

Sorcerers or witches (the term applies to either sex, although males are generally known as warlocks, and the more advanced as wizards) are not confined to any age, class, professional or social sphere. The youngest I have encountered (apart from myself) was a male of 17, the oldest a witch of 65.

As I said, this coven has seven members. The oldest is 51 and the youngest 25. There are also several associate or honorary members of both sexes, and our last meeting was held in my own studio temple here. Other meeting places have included two North

Shore suburbs and an eastern suburb. In summer we meet anywhere out of doors that is suitable.

Initiation rites differ somewhat according to the coven, but are broadly, the same. The neophyte, after a period of probation, is asked certain questions. After that he or she assumes a ceremonial posture (one hand on the crown of the head, the other under the sole of one foot) to take the oath of allegiance to the presiding deities of the covens, male and female, sometimes called Pan and Hecate. A ritual to the four Elemental Powers, either before or during the initiation, is also necessary.⁵⁹

After initiation comes a form of baptism, when a new name is given to the initiate. It is usual for him to be presented with a magnetised talisman⁶⁰ and a piece of cord known as the Witches' Garter.⁶¹ Ceremonial attire ranges from nakedness to full regalia – robes, hood, sandals, and accessories. Different types of incense are used, according to the nature of the rites in progress, and special herbs are sometimes infused and drunk.⁶²

Norton concluded her interview with Thompson by commenting that she was 'proud of being a witch, sorceress, or what you will' and that she had provided this information to counteract the tone of a number of articles published previously by *Australasian Post*, which may have conveyed a quite different impression of the 'Witch Cult'.⁶³

Doreen Valiente's account of the Norton coven

Information about Norton's coven is also included in a book titled *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*⁶⁴ by the noted British witch Doreen Valiente (1922-1999), who was at one time High Priestess in Gerald Gardner's coven and helped develop key ritual procedures in the modern witchcraft revival (see Chapter Two). Valiente had gained this information about Norton and her ritual activities from a British journalist, Leslie Roberts, who also worked as a waiter on the ocean-liner *S.S. Orcades* which covered the sea-route between Britain and Australia in the late 1950s. Valiente had earlier told Roberts about Norton and he in turn became interested in the possibility of meeting her. Norton had sent Gerald Gardner a copy of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, and this is how Valiente herself had first heard of the Australian witch and artist.⁶⁵

According to Valiente, Roberts located Norton shortly after the *Orcades* docked in Sydney in 1959, and they got on well together. Valiente writes about Roberts:

It was not long before he was initiated into her coven. I have his scribbled notes of the events, autographed by Rosaleen Norton herself. He also recorded a good deal of personal information about Rosaleen.⁶⁶

According to Roberts' notes, Norton's tradition of witchcraft was known as 'The Goat Fold' and this branch of the Old Religion had been brought to Australia by some of the people who were deported from Britain as convicts during the colonial era.⁶⁷ Valiente says there was a Welsh flavour to some of the names associated with Norton's coven and this may have arisen because 'Rosaleen's family was of Welsh extraction':

The first degree of initiation is called 'Consurier', which is a form of an old Welsh word meaning 'wise woman' or 'cunning man'. A phrase from the ritual says: 'Walking on the heath, I met some friends. I have been in the cauldron and out again. They told me I am one of the green shoots of Pryderie.' This word is evidently a version of the name Pryderi, one of the heroes of the old Welsh romance called the *Mabinogion*, which is full of magic and mystery. Its heroes and heroines are probably the ancient gods under a medieval guise, as they were sung about by the Welsh bards after Wales became Christianized. Pryderie seems to have been the miraculous child of Queen Rhiannon, who is the version of the mother goddess herself.

It was perhaps because of his Welsh connection that Rosaleen accepted Leslie so readily as a member of her coven. His full name was Leslie Tudor Roberts, and he believed himself to be descended from a Welshman called Tudor Roberts who was a chamberlain at the court of Henry VIII.⁶⁸

With regard to magical tools and ritual nudity, according to the notes Valiente received from Roberts the following ritual practices were a feature of Norton's coven:

Some of Rosaleen's rituals were conducted in a state of ritual nudity, but often she preferred to dress in robes and she and her coven made much use of ritual masks in the form of heads of animals and birds....

The Sabbats were the same as those observed by European witches, though of course in Australia midsummer and midwinter would be at the opposite times of the year from those in Europe, so the witches' year had to be adjusted accordingly...

Like Gardnerian witches, Rosaleen and her coven used 'working tools', though not so many as are enumerated in Gardner's rituals. They had only five, namely the athame (air), the cup (water), the censer (fire), the pentacle (earth) and the cord (spirit). They made much use of consecrated cords in their workings. They also had a ritual meal of wine and cakes, the latter being specially made of wholemeal flour, olive oil and honey. The wine was drunk from a horn, which was passed round the circle deosil (clockwise).⁶⁹

Valiente also provides details of a text address from the initiation ritual which Roberts says he received from Norton. This was called *The First Knowledge* and, according to Valiente, ‘Leslie let me copy this down’.⁷⁰

The text reads as follows:

The Craft is only part of the Way and must not be mistaken for all of it. But in itself it is important, for it can be used to lighten burdens and to help in the Great Work. It is not for the weak. Had you been such, you would not be here. Therefore, know this: some have the power, most have it not. If you have it, it springs from within you, from the will, the mind and the spirit; and it can be joined to external symbols. It must grow through practice, as you gain knowledge and skill. The implements, words, symbols and spells are your working tools. You must be guided by the Gods who dwell in the mind and body. The Officers of the coven will tell you of the Gods, for this knowledge is too secret to be written. Always remember that you must be stronger than the powers you evoke. Knowing how this is done is one of the signs of mastery. Therefore to the Work, and to the knowledge that is joy and strength and light and life everlasting.⁷¹

Valiente admits to slightly amending the grammar of the original and writes: ‘I think it gives a good idea of Rosaleen’s attitude to witchcraft.’⁷² However it is highly doubtful that Norton would have written this text herself. Norton was never one to lapse into a pontificating, formal style of writing and the contrived seriousness of such phrases as ‘Therefore, know this: some have the power, most have it not’ and the almost Christian tone of ‘Therefore to the Work, and to the knowledge that is joy and strength and light and life everlasting’ are most unlikely to have come from Norton’s lips or pen. She was, after all, a creature of the night and had said so on numerous occasions in the past. Norton does not refer to her magical procedures as ‘the Work’ in any of her earlier articles or interviews so we must infer that, if it is authentic, *The First Knowledge* was a document that Norton had acquired from another source. It was most likely of British origin, where ritual formality was more valued in occult circles. It is possible that around the time Roberts met her in Sydney, Norton may have incorporated *The First Knowledge* into the activities of her local magical group although it is not referred to in the 1955 Thompson interview referred to earlier, which includes ritual details provided by Norton herself.

It is possible that by 1959 – three years after the departure of Sir Eugene Goossens – the act of asserting a sense of ‘occult lineage’ may have become important to Norton, or one of her close magical associates,⁷³ as had also been the cases with witches in Britain who were keen to demonstrate that they were

restoring the forgotten lineage of the Old Religion (see Chapter Two). The allegedly Welsh orientation of Norton's personal witchcraft lineage is also very much open to question. Her father was English and her mother a New Zealander of Jewish extraction.⁷⁴ Even more significantly, from the beginning, Norton had made it clear – and this is supported by her autobiographical articles in the *Australasian Post* in 1956 and 1957 as well as by references in the 1955 Thompson interview – her central deity was Pan and not one of the Welsh Celtic deities, and the other central deities in both her art and her personal magical cosmology were Hecate, Lilith and The Adversary (Lucifer). Other elements of Norton's ritual practice – as is clear both from textual evidence that links some of her thinking and ritual practice to the writings of Aleister Crowley⁷⁵ and photographs, already referred to, that show she invoked Jewish archangels like Uriel – indicate that she was more influenced by the magic of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and *Thelema* than by Celtic tradition.

There is one additional, somewhat surprising statement in Valiente's account. Valiente writes that

members of Rosaleen Norton's coven had a special handshake which they used between themselves. Leslie was taught this handshake and he always used it from then onwards among his closest friends. I do not know of any other coven which uses a sign like this. Perhaps it may have been derived from Masonic sources.⁷⁶

The founding members of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn were all Freemasons, and if this handshake was indeed part of Norton's coven procedure in the late 1950s it too seems to have been a practice introduced for effect to reinforce the notion of a secret occult lineage – an idea that may have been suggested by one of Norton's magical associates but which is unlikely to have come from Norton herself. Nowhere in Norton's own writings or in her lengthy interview with L.J. Murphy at the University of Melbourne, which was very probing, is there any mention of a Masonic component to Norton's magical practice.

However other statements made by Valiente are definitely supported by corroborating data. Valiente writes that 'The deities invoked by Rosaleen and her coven were called Pan and Hecate, though other names were also used.'⁷⁷ This assertion is certainly supported by statements from Norton as well as by photographs taken in 1955 by Vice Squad detective Bert Trevenar which confirm D.L. Thompson's observation, namely that there were two altars in

Norton's Brougham Street flat – one dedicated to Pan and the smaller one to Hecate.⁷⁸ Dave Barnes' interview with Norton in 1956 similarly alluded to a ritual altar in both North and South.⁷⁹ There is also supporting evidence for Valiente's statement that Norton's coven made much use of ritual masks in the form of heads of animals and birds: photographs of masked coven members, including Norton herself, were published in the *Australasian Post* in October 1955.⁸⁰

Valiente was aware that several aspects of Norton's ritual practice were improvised and spontaneous, a point reinforced recently by magical practitioner Dave Robinson (aka Wayland the Smith), who was a friend of Norton's and a regular visitor to the Brougham Street flat in the early 1960s.⁸¹ Valiente was also aware that Norton had taken a private oath of allegiance to Pan for she writes: '...she had never read of this ritual anywhere. It just "came through" instinctively...',⁸² a statement which is clearly at odds with the notion that Norton was continuing a Welsh Celtic witchcraft lineage dating back to convict days. It is therefore apparent that while some details in Valiente's account can be substantiated by reference to other sources, including Norton's own statements, other details supplied by Leslie Roberts remained contradictory and unresolved.

Nevertheless, despite the contradictory elements in the Norton coven material that Leslie Roberts shared with Doreen Valiente one point is indisputable: the name of Leslie Roberts is one of the few that can be definitively linked to Norton's magical group in the 1950s – we know this because Valiente was able to witness documents from the Australian coven that bore Norton's own signature.

Who else is known by name as an early member of Norton's magical coven? One of Norton's long-standing 'occult friends', to use Cecily Boothman's somewhat quaint expression, was Bill Turnbull, to whom Norton bequeathed her *athame* [her magical dagger] and other magical equipment in her will.⁸³ The fact that Turnbull was bequeathed personal ritual equipment that had belonged to Norton herself, including her prized ceremonial dagger, strongly suggests that he was a long-standing member of her inner magical circle, although for how long is unknown.⁸⁴ Norton's publisher, Walter Glover, claimed to know of three other individuals who were rumoured to be members of Norton's inner magic circle: he named them as Jack Davey, the prominent radio announcer; George Nathan, a wealthy Jewish bookmaker, and Henry

Foster, an engineer who specialised in oven maintenance and who worked at a bakery in Bondi Junction.⁸⁵ Glover understood that Foster was the ‘high priest’ in Norton’s coven and the circumstantial evidence provided earlier suggests he may have been the coven member who referred to himself first as Mr Abrahams and then as the Toad, in D.L. Thompson’s interview.⁸⁶ More recently, in June 1999, Sydney-based crime writer Ned McCann was told by Detective Bert Trevenar that there were ‘malicious rumours’ circulating around the time of Sir Eugene Goossens’ departure claiming that Sir Charles Moses, General Manager of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, and his assistant, A.N. (Huck) Finlay were also members of the coven, but this assertion had not been proven.⁸⁷ Aside from these possible connections – several of which are speculative and unsubstantiated – further information on Norton’s inner circle of magical associates has not been forthcoming. There is, however, one close associate of Rosaleen Norton whose magical activity in her inner circle has been documented in some detail. This figure is Sir Eugene Goossens, and the ritual practices he and Norton were engaged in included various forms of sex magic based largely on the *Thelemic* teachings and practices of Aleister Crowley.

Norton and Crowleyian sex magic

As described in detail in Chapter Three, the modern practice of sex magic derives substantially from the magical philosophy and ritual activities of Aleister Crowley. Other leading esoteric practitioners of sex magic, as noted earlier, include Paschal Beverly Randolph, Theodor Reuss and Kenneth Grant,⁸⁸ but their writings are not acknowledged by Rosaleen Norton in her bibliography and it is unlikely that she was aware of them. Very few of Grant’s major works were available in Norton’s lifetime, Reuss was known primarily in Germany and died when Norton was only six, and an accessible English-language version of Paschal Beverly Randolph’s 19th century text *Sexual Magic* was published only as recently as 1988, nine years after Norton’s death.⁸⁹ On the other hand, Crowley’s *Magick in Theory and Practice* is listed in Norton’s bibliography⁹⁰ and there are several references to Crowley in the private correspondence between Norton and Goossens.⁹¹ *Magick in Theory and Practice*, first published in 1929, was an extremely rare item during Norton’s lifetime – the undated pirated edition released in New York during the 1960s was not available when *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* was published. However we now know that Norton collected rare and relatively obscure volumes on magic and erotic verse issued by Crowley. This latter point is demonstrated by the fact that a limited edition volume titled

Konx Om Pax,⁹² which was self-published by Crowley in London in 1907 – restricted to 500 numbered copies and printed on handmade paper – was part of Norton’s estate following her death: it was listed for sale in 1996, along with several of Norton’s original etchings and drawings.⁹³

In addition to drawing on the ceremonial sex magic practices of Aleister Crowley, which were described at length in Chapter Three, Norton’s sex magic approach also involved the practice of arousing *Kundalini* energy. Norton had alluded to the Kundalini in the symbolism of her controversial drawing *Fohat*, which was reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*: this was one of the two offending images that had to be blacked out from the original edition before it could be legally released for sale in Australia.⁹⁴ According to Norton the image of *Fohat* – which depicted him as a goat-headed deity with a large serpentine phallus – was intended to convey ‘the dynamic energy of cosmic ideation’.⁹⁵ As Norton wrote in a personal commentary on *Fohat* which she later passed to her publisher, Walter Glover, ‘The goat is a symbol of energy and creativity: the serpent of elemental force and eternity.’ Norton went on to link her drawing to the power of the Kundalini, which is unleashed through Tantric sex practices in order to facilitate the release of cosmic consciousness. The following details are previously unpublished notes relating to the *Kundalini* and the image of *Fohat* which Norton prepared while she was selecting artworks for inclusion in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*:⁹⁶

Kundalini – the undifferentiated elemental and potential creative power of the Self (collective unconscious, personal and impersonal or racial), generally symbolised as the serpent and traditionally associated with the spinal cord. When latent it manifests itself only sporadically and partially in the sex force and sometimes in artistic creativity. Active, it confers supernormal powers in various directions. Kundalini is generally represented as a serpent: the serpent penis of Fohat is the same symbol used here to denote macrocosmic creativity. The phoenix is an emblem of immortality.

A third aspect of Norton’s interest in sex magic relates to her own individual sexual preferences, which were candidly discussed during a lengthy interview with the University of Melbourne psychologist, L.J. Murphy, in August 1949 – an interview which has already been mentioned in relation to the data it yielded about Norton’s magical cosmology.

When Murphy and Norton discussed the latter’s sexual history she revealed that she had her first sexual experience at the age of 12 with a boy of her own age: ‘I found it very painful and did not try again.’ She had her next sexual

experience at the age of 17 and Murphy records that from this time onwards her sex life was 'continuous'. In the beginning Norton's sexual preferences were conventionally heterosexual but by the age of 23 she had become more interested in male homosexuals: Murphy wrote in his interview record

...she still prefers S.I. [sexual intercourse] with male homosexuals because she can take a more active role – 'These men are soft and rounded and they let me do what I like with them. I enjoy most of all their hands running up and down my back. Sometimes they use pencils and leaves.'⁹⁷

Sex magic and homage to Pan

Norton's practice of sex magic reflects her own sexual preferences, which were recorded in the sessions with L.J. Murphy. As previously mentioned, Norton was originally heterosexual but around the age of 23 she became more interested in male homosexuals.⁹⁸ She favoured sexual intercourse with male homosexuals because she could take a more active role,⁹⁹ although she also stated that after around three months of sexual activities with male homosexuals she also liked to participate in manual and oral manipulation with female homosexuals.¹⁰⁰ The Melbourne transcript also notes that she [ie. Norton] 'likes very much to be tied up, beaten, [and] then have S.I. [sexual intercourse] when her partner hurts her by forcing her back against the pole to which she is tied'.¹⁰¹ The transcripts continue with a first-person statement from Norton herself: 'I enjoy very much beating men with a strap and then having S.I. I think all-in-all my most complete pleasure is through the active role I can play.'¹⁰² Murphy then appends the following notes:

...[There has also] been a considerable amount of fellatio; the main pleasure there is in giving the man pleasure. I feel this is in part the basis of her Lesbian role too – giving pleasure to the partner, stroking and being stroked, kissing and being kissed but all the time taking the dominant role. She did say that during Lesbian S.I. she often felt that she would like to have a penis of her own to insert into the woman.¹⁰³

The Melbourne transcript also makes reference to the fact that [Norton] 'likes very much to be tied up, beaten, [and] then have S.I. [sexual intercourse] when her partner hurts her by forcing her back against the pole to which she is tied'. This particular aspect of Norton's sexual behaviour is reflected in a controversial and far-reaching incident that occurred in October 1955, when Norton and her lover, Gavin Greenlees, were charged by N.S.W. Vice Squad police with engaging in 'an unnatural sexual act'.

As mentioned briefly in Chapter One, on 3 October 1955 two members of the NSW Vice Squad, Detective A.H. 'Bert' Trevenar and Detective N. Hayes, raided Norton's Brougham Street flat and laid charges against Norton and Greenlees.¹⁰⁴ The police raid had taken place because two men, Francis Honer and Raymond Ager, had earlier offered the Sydney-based *Sun* newspaper a series of allegedly obscene film negatives and photographs which purported to show evidence of a Kings Cross witchcraft cult. Honer had stolen the film negatives from Norton's flat and, with Ager acting as an accomplice, had attempted to sell them to the *Sun* newspaper for £200.¹⁰⁵ Honer and Ager had been apprehended by police and two naked figures had been identified in the photographs: Norton and her lover, Gavin Greenlees. Later, in ensuing court proceedings, Norton maintained that she and Greenlees had been engaged in a sexual ritual dedicated to Pan.¹⁰⁶ The offending photographs would not be available for public viewing for many years.¹⁰⁷ A few of the photographs¹⁰⁸ were screened on the ABC television programme *Rewind* on 5 September 2004 and showed Norton naked and tied by her wrists and ankles to a pedestal in a staged act of sex-bondage, while Greenlees performed acts of flagellation on her. Greenlees had also been photographed engaging in cunnilingus and anal sex.¹⁰⁹

During the first court session¹¹⁰ Norton adopted a defiant attitude to the charges of alleged obscenity brought against her. Dressed flamboyantly in a red skirt, black top and leopard-skin shoes, she defended her belief in pantheism, which she described as the heathen worship of ancient Greek gods.¹¹¹ At the end of the court hearings Honer and Ager were jailed for four months, while Norton and Greenlees were eventually acquitted.¹¹² Somewhat predictably, the court case against Norton and Greenlees attracted extensive coverage in the popular press.¹¹³

The Honer/Ager incident suggests that Norton and Greenlees had begun to formulate the rudiments of a sustained practice of sex magic by the mid-1950s: Norton specifically claimed during the court proceedings that the controversial sex-bondage photographs 'depicted aspects of ceremonial'¹¹⁴ and that they had been taken 'during a ceremony of worship of the Greek mythological [figure] of Pan and not during a witchcraft ritual'.¹¹⁵ Detective Trevenar confirmed that Greenlees was 'dressed in ceremonial garb' in several of the photographs.¹¹⁶ He also confirmed that he had been advised that Greenlees and Norton had lived together in the Brougham Street studio since 1949 and had committed similar sexual acts 'quite often'.¹¹⁷ However, there is

other data which connects the Honer/Ager photographs to a more far-reaching practice of sex magic. This data concerns the unique sexual relationship between Rosaleen Norton, Gavin Greenlees and the resident chief conductor of the ABC's Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Eugene Goossens.

Norton, Greenlees and Goossens – and the influence of Aleister Crowley

As noted in Chapter One, Norton and Greenlees had formed an unlikely friendship with Eugene Goossens, the English-born musician who had come to Australia in 1947 and who had been installed as the first permanent conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and director of the NSW State Conservatorium. Goossens had come to Australia with his American-born wife, Marjorie Fetter-Foulkrod, and they had established themselves in a stylish home in Wahroonga, on Sydney's upper North Shore. Mrs Goossens, who was nineteen years younger than her husband and strikingly attractive, soon began to make an impact on the Sydney social scene and her views on fashion were eagerly sought by the women's magazines.¹¹⁸ However, by the early 1950s, after several years of working with musicians at the Conservatorium, Goossens had become increasingly autocratic and was becoming bored by his work routines.¹¹⁹ Some time in late 1952 or early 1953 he discovered a copy of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* in a gallery bookshop,¹²⁰ and it immediately rekindled his earlier interest in paganism and magic.



Plate 60: Goossens already had an international reputation as a conductor and composer when he first met Norton and Greenlees – but his professional image would be irrevocably damaged by his magical explorations in the Kings Cross coven

Before coming to Australia, Goossens had been friendly with the pianist and composer Cyril Scott (1879-1970), who had Theosophical interests and was the author of *An Outline of Modern Occultism*. Goossens was also friendly with the composer, critic and editor Philip Heseltine (1894-1930), who had a

strong interest in black magic and paganism. Heseltine had met Crowley around 1914,¹²¹ was a member of Crowley's O.T.O.,¹²² and was known in artistic and musical circles by his *nom de plume*, Peter Warlock.¹²³ On one occasion Heseltine used magic squares from the *Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* in order to get his estranged wife to return to him: his ritual method included the act of engraving one of the *Abramelin* magic squares 'neatly on his arm'.¹²⁴ In the posthumously published *Magick Without Tears* (1982) Crowley notes: 'I don't know how he proceeded to set to work; but his wife came back all right, and a very short time afterwards he killed himself.'¹²⁵ As mentioned in Chapter One, according to Goossens' younger sister, Dame Sidonie Goossens-Millar, it was Heseltine's involvement with magic that first attracted her brother to the occult,¹²⁶ and it is also of interest, in this context, that Heseltine was a friend of the poet Victor Neuburg, who had been involved with Crowley in sex-magic ritual activities in the Algerian desert in 1909.¹²⁷ As an O.T.O. member, Heseltine provides the key link between Crowley's sex magic practices on the one hand, and the *Goetic* sex magic techniques that Eugene Goossens offered to teach Rosaleen Norton (see below).

Goossens told Vice Squad detective Bert Trevenar in 1956 that the discovery of Norton's book in a Sydney bookshop reawakened his fascination with western magic – he subsequently wrote to Norton, expressing admiration for both the book and her artistic work.¹²⁸ Goossens also told Trevenar that Norton had subsequently invited him to her Brougham Street flat for an introductory discussion over a cup of tea.¹²⁹ Goossens was fascinated by Norton and her seemingly authentic approach to paganism, and soon a friendship began to develop. Goossens had been working regularly in rehearsal rooms at the Australian Broadcasting Commission, just a few minutes walk away from Brougham Street, so it was easy for him to maintain close contact. Goossens became a frequent visitor to Norton's flat and a member of the small magical group that would meet periodically to discuss magical ideas and perform rituals sacred to Pan. In addition to their shared interest in the pagan traditions, Goossens, Norton and Greenlees also shared a love of classical music. Norton's favourite composers included Mozart, Beethoven and Sibelius and she was also very fond of Baroque music.¹³⁰ Soon there was talk of all three working together on a musical rendition of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Greenlees would write the libretto, Norton would paint the backdrops, and Goossens would compose the music. This project, unfortunately, did not proceed. Nevertheless, according to

a recent article by David Salter,¹³¹ Goossens' relationship with Norton quickly acquired a 'sexual intensity' that expressed itself both through magical ritual and also erotic photography. 'We have many rituals and indulgences to undertake,' he wrote in one of his letters to Norton, '...and I want to take more photos.'¹³²

Goossens' sex magic activities with Norton and Greenlees are discussed below. However his personal relationship with the couple came to a sudden end on 9 March 1956 when he returned to Mascot Airport, Sydney, on a flight from London. He was now officially Sir Eugene Goossens, having received his knighthood a few months earlier,¹³³ and was apparently unaware that a group of detectives and Customs officers had gathered at Mascot Airport to apprehend him. Alerted by Vice Squad detective Bert Trevenar, the Customs officials at the airport anticipated that Goossens would be carrying with him a large amount of allegedly pornographic material, and when they searched his luggage they discovered over 800 erotic photographs, a spool of film, and also some ritual masks and incense sticks.¹³⁴ Goossens was subsequently officially charged under Section 233 of the Customs Act, which prohibited the possession or importation of 'blasphemous, indecent or obscene works or articles'.¹³⁵

As mentioned in Chapter One, Goossens' case was brought before Mr J.M.McCauley, SM in the Martin Place Court of Petty Sessions, and Goossens was fined the maximum penalty of £100.¹³⁶ Four days after issuing his guilty plea Goossens submitted formal letters of resignation to the Australian Broadcasting Commission and the NSW State Conservatorium, his professional career as an internationally renowned conductor effectively over. On 26 May 1956 Goossens boarded a flight to Rome, travelling incognito as Mr E.Gray, never to return to Australia again.¹³⁷ Soon afterwards Goossens separated from his wife and then tried to reinstate his professional life as a musician by working occasionally for the BBC in London. However as David Salter has noted, 'Goossens was now in decline. News of his antipodean disgrace had undermined the maestro's standing in the British music world. He lived in a succession of London flats and hotel rooms and struggled against failing health...'¹³⁸ Goossens died in England from a ruptured ulcer in June 1962, at the age of 69, shortly after returning from a trip to Switzerland where he had visited one of his daughters by an earlier marriage.

It has been established that Goossens' unusually close relationship with Norton and Greenlees had already been noted by Detective Trevenar of the Vice Squad *prior* to the police raid on the Brougham Street apartment on 3 October 1955.¹³⁹ At this stage Trevenar had in his possession a collection of intimate and personal letters Goossens had sent to Norton – he had obtained them from Joe Morris, one-time senior crime roundsman for the Sydney *Sun*, who had infiltrated Norton's coven and secretly removed them.¹⁴⁰ Salter notes that when Norton and Greenlees were charged with engaging in 'an unnatural sexual act' following discovery of the Honer/Ager photographs, Goossens feared implication and hurriedly destroyed his private collection of pornography and black magic paraphernalia, 'probably by burning it in the backyard of his Wahroonga home'.¹⁴¹ Not to be outdone, Trevenar swiftly obtained approval from Detective Inspector Ron Walden, head of the Vice Squad, to monitor the relationship between Norton, Greenlees, and Goossens – specifically with a view to securing evidence of sex perversion – and this included tracking Goossens during his visits to Europe with assistance from connections provided by the Sydney *Sun* newspaper.¹⁴² In London Goossens was observed making 'unorthodox purchases in grubby newsagencies and bookshops in Soho and around Leicester Square'.¹⁴³ It is significant that a leading occult bookshop, Watkins, was located close to Leicester Square in Cecil Court; Goossens could easily have acquired rare works by Aleister Crowley at this specialist outlet for *esoterica* – Watkins is well known in London as a source of rare magical texts.

Following the arrest of Goossens at Mascot Airport, Sydney, on 9 March 1956, Trevenar had a unique opportunity to interrogate Goossens in relation to his sex magic interests. A section of Trevenar's record of interview reads as follows:

'I said: "How is that Rite [ie. sex magic] conducted?" '

'He said: "We undressed and sat on the floor in a circle. Miss Norton conducted the verbal part of the Rite. I then performed the sex stimulation on her." '

'I said: "How did you do that?" '

'He said: "I placed my tongue in her sexual organ and kept moving it until I stimulated her." ',¹⁴⁴

This interview between Trevenar and Goossens establishes that cunnilingus was part of Norton's approach to ritual sex magic. Further allusions to sex magic rituals are also found within Goossens' personal correspondence to Norton, copies of which Trevenar had secured through his informant, Joe

Morris.¹⁴⁵ When Trevenar interviewed Goossens he showed the conductor photocopies of the letters taken by Morris from the Brougham Street flat and Goossens in turn confirmed that he had written them.¹⁴⁶ Some were signed ‘*Djinn*’, which was a magical name used by Goossens when he corresponded with Norton. ‘*Djinn*’ may also have been a ritual name associated with membership of the Norton ‘coven’, if indeed such a magical structure operated at Brougham Street at this time.¹⁴⁷

In her research paper ‘The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia’,¹⁴⁸ Dr Marguerite Johnson notes that there are at least eleven extant letters written by Goossens to Norton and Greenlees, one them incomplete and another a set of instructions possibly related to another piece of correspondence, probably lost.¹⁴⁹ Johnson writes:

Each of the letters extends to two-and-a-half handwritten pages approximately; they had been composed in Australia and overseas; seven open with a greeting to Norton; four either refer to and/or send greetings to Greenlees (one is actually a postcard from Lord Howe Island addressed to Greenlees); three are signed with Goossens’ magical name, *Djinn*; five include references to caution and anonymity; six contain small sketches, two of which are sex magic images. The letters are not dated, although one has an intact envelope stamped 4 June 1953 with a Canberra postmark. Another includes a series of potential meeting times which suggest four possible dates: March 1952 (too early), August 1953, May 1954 or January 1955. Each letter deals with magic and sex magic is expressly mentioned in all of them...¹⁵⁰

Because the letters refer to different types of magical activity their contents will be discussed below under different headings. However, as Johnson has indicated, there are several references to sex magic in the correspondence. These magical references are clearly associated with a specific type of ritual practice: the Thelemic sex magic of Aleister Crowley.



Plate 61: A portrait of Thelemic magician Aleister Crowley by Austin Osman Spare.

‘A.C.’ is referred to specifically in four of the letters. In one, which begins ‘For Roie, to whom secret greetings...’ Goossens writes: ‘Thanks too for that quite needless assurance regarding the inviolability of my MSS and notes...also for retaining the A.C. writings’ – a clear reference to the published works of Crowley. In another, which begins ‘Roie – the savoury witch...,’ Goossens makes a passing reference to the well known libertarian attributes of Aleister Crowley when he writes: ‘And how I agree with you about all that normality “pap”! Let’s “piss it out” of existence as A.C. used to say...’ However in a third letter, which is of considerable interest from a magical point of view, Goossens provides Norton with travel details of how to get to his cottage near Mount Victoria in the Blue Mountains, so she can come and visit him. In this letter there is also a key reference to Crowley. Goossens writes: ‘Obviously a pied-à-terre is necessary, hidden and private...’ He then continues: ‘*Yes, I’ll instruct you in the grimoire.* The diagrams are necessarily crude but none the less effective, being all from unimpeachable sources. *You will be my best – and only – pupil* [my emphasis in italics], and I shall appoint you keeper of the seals (You nearly ¹⁵¹ hit the nail on the head in your bit about A.C. and self in June letter!). Unfortunately, I didn’t bring the book, but shall bring it to you next week for lesson one.’

It is interesting that Gavin Greenlees was not involved in this secret meeting in the Blue Mountains: Goossens refers to Norton as his ‘only’ pupil in matters relating to the grimoire. The last two sentences provide us with a useful insight: here Goossens is offering to instruct Norton in an area of the magical arts relatively unfamiliar to her: *namely how to make use of the magical seals, or sigils, contained within a medieval grimoire.* This is an important point because here we see Goossens offering knowledge of specific magical techniques to Norton and not the other way around. This clearly contradicts the statement issued by Goossens’ solicitors issued after Goossens’ departure for Europe in May 1956 to the effect that the conductor believed he was responding [in a ritual context] to ‘persistent menaces...involving others’. ¹⁵² Here is a case of Goossens ‘luring’ Norton into the magical practice of *Goetia* and not the other way around. In addition, there is a clear inference that Norton appreciates the magical connection between Crowley and Goossens, for the letter makes reference to something previously noted in relation to ‘A.C. and self’ [ie. Crowley and Goossens].

Magical grimoires – spell-books containing the magical sigils or ‘seals’ assigned to various demonic spirits – were largely unknown in the West until

the 13th century.¹⁵³ Crowley had himself financed publication of an edition of the *Goetia, or Lesser Key of Solomon the King* in 1904, a 16th century work which contained the magical seals used to evoke 72 ‘evil spirits’.¹⁵⁴ In the *Goetia* these spirit-entities are described as the ‘72 Mighty Kings and Princes which King Solomon commanded into a Vessel of Brass, together with their Legions... Of whom Belial, Bileth, Asmoday and Gaap were chief.’¹⁵⁵

The *Goetia* is very likely to be the book Goossens is referring to above, because A.C. (Aleister Crowley) was not only directly involved with its publication but also supplemented MacGregor Mathers’ presentation of the actual grimoire text with an essay titled ‘The Initiated Interpretation of Ceremonial Magic’ which was included as a separate chapter in the same volume when it was published in 1904.¹⁵⁶ During the mid-1950s, when Goossens’ letter was written, the *Goetia* was probably the most accessible magical grimoire and source of magical seals for occultists seeking this sort of information.¹⁵⁷ A further indicator that the *Goetia* was very probably the text in question is provided by the fact that in the same letter, referred to above, Goossens makes reference to ‘Ashtaroth cream’ which was intended for Norton alone, ‘and no-one else’. This was probably a magical unguent that Norton was to rub into various parts of her body – we know that Goossens had purchased such ‘unguents’ for Norton in Paris (see below).

In relation to the use of seals from magical grimoires, Astaroth [also known as Ashtaroth] is listed as the 29th spirit in the *Goetia*; the following text describes his specific attributes:

He is a Mighty, Strong Duke, and appeareth in the form of a hurtful Angel riding on an Infernal Beast like a Dragon, and carrying in his right hand a Viper. Thou must in no wise let him approach too near unto thee, lest he do thee damage by his Noisome Breath. Wherefore the Magician must hold the Magical Ring near his face, and that will defend him. He giveth true answers of things Past, Present and to Come, and can discover all Secrets. He will declare wittingly how the Spirits fell, if desired, and the reason of his own fall. He can make men wonderfully knowing in all Liberal Sciences. He ruleth 40 Legions of Spirits.¹⁵⁸

After describing the particular attributes of each of the 72 evil spirits, including Astaroth, the text of the *Goetia* includes the following commentary on what happened when the legendary King Solomon ‘commanded’ these spirits ‘into a Vessel of Brass’:

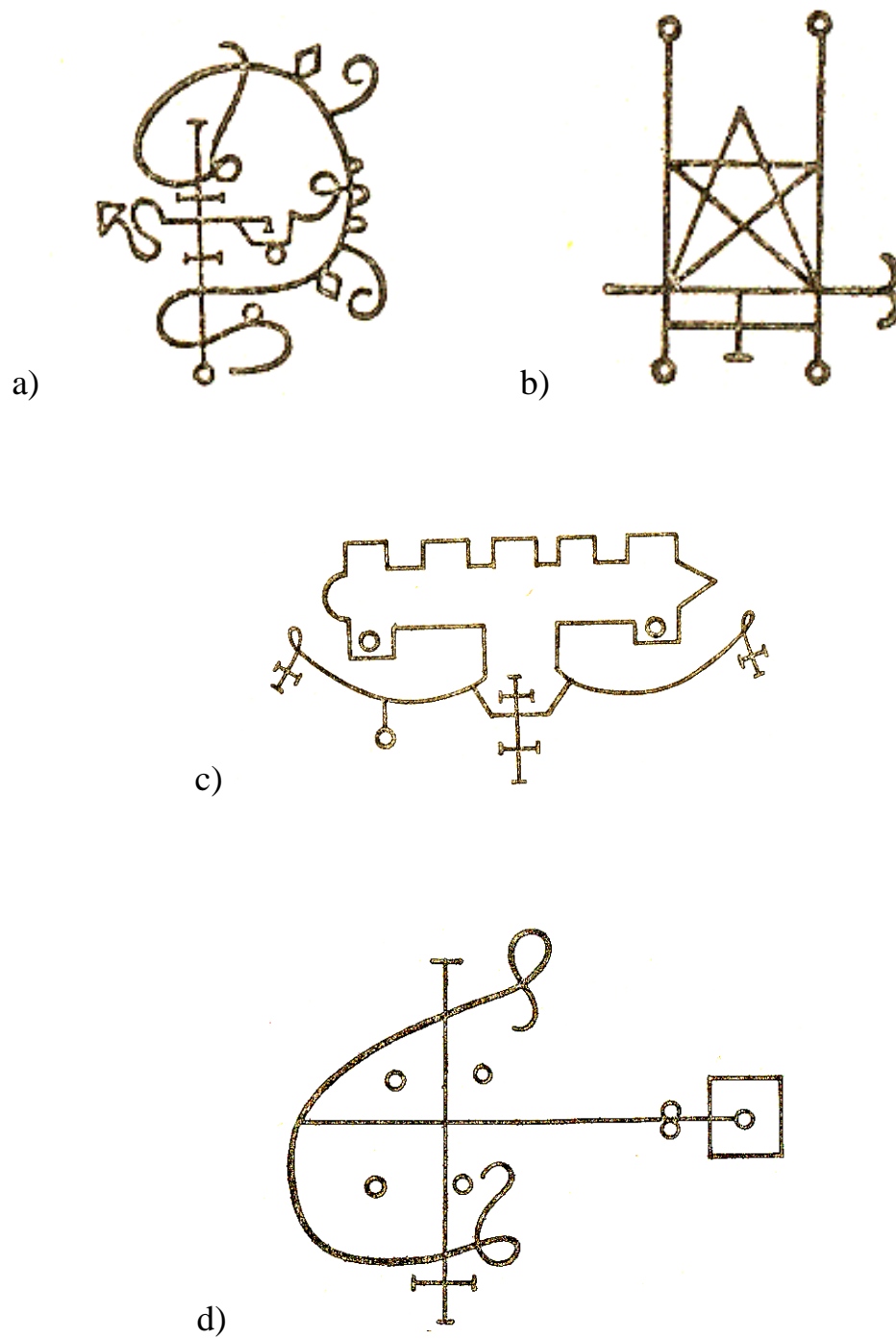


Plate 62: Demonic magical seals (sigils) from the *Lesser Key of Solomon (Goetia)*:
a) Asmoday b) Astaroth c) Belial d) Gaap

(Source: I.Shah, *The Secret Lore of Magic* [1957], Abacus, London 1972: 190, 191, 193, 199)

And it is to be noted that Solomon did this because of their pride [ie. the pride of the evil spirits], for he never declared other reason why he thus bound them. And when he had thus bound them up and sealed the Vessel, he by Divine Power did chase them all into a deep Lake or Hole in Babylon. And they of Babylon, wondering to see such a thing, they did then go wholly to into the Lake, to break the Vessel open, expecting to find great store of Treasure therein. But when they had broken it open, out flew the Chief Spirits immediately, with their legions following them; and they were all restored to their former places except Belial, who entered into a certain Image, and thence gave answers unto those who did offer Sacrifices unto him, and did worship the Image as their God.¹⁵⁹

When we consider that the spirits described in the *Goetia* had such a specific connection with King Solomon it is perhaps not surprising that Goossens decided to use '*Djinn*' as his magical name. One can also speculate on how Goossens himself would have made use of the magical sigils contained in the grimoire. In a fourth letter, headed '*Salaam Roie*', Goossens mentions that he has just located a second-hand copy of 'G.B' and is leaving it propped up against Norton's door awaiting her return. In all probability the initials 'G.B' refer to a major biography of Crowley, *The Great Beast*, by John Symonds, published in London in 1951.¹⁶⁰ Goossens goes on to explain that he had 'since read it and [it] confirms all I knew of A.C. though [it] exaggerates certain things overmuch...' In the same letter Goossens also mentions that he has been experimenting with 'cakes of light' and he adds a note of encouragement to Norton: 'I hope you will have better luck with the unguent...' As noted earlier, the reference to 'cakes of light' is a specifically Crowleyian allusion to sex-magick ritual offerings made from meal, honey, menstrual blood and sexual secretions. Given Goossens' Crowleyian orientation, one can assume that Goossens would have employed magical seals, or sigils, in the same way that Crowley did: by activating them with semen. It is possible that Goossens wanted to be alone with Norton in the Blue Mountains to simulate the Great Beast / Scarlet Woman sex-magic partnership advocated by Crowley and this could explain why Greenlees was not invited on this particular occasion. Also, as mentioned earlier, it was part of Crowley's Thelemic approach to sex magic to masturbate and ejaculate onto magical sigils like those contained in grimoires like the *Goetia*. As O.T.O. historian P-R. Koenig has noted:

... masturbating on a sigil of a demon or meditating upon the image of a phallus would bring power or communication with a (or one's own) divine being...In the IXth degree,

one identifies oneself with an ejaculating penis. The blood (or excrements) from anal intercourse attract the spirits/demons while the sperm keeps them alive.¹⁶¹

Altars, ritual paraphernalia, and Voodoo-inspired performances at Brougham Street

Mention has already been made of the fact that Rosaleen Norton's Brougham Street attic apartment was small, and that when she and Gavin Greenlees resided there during the 1950s and early 1960s this space had to double as a living area and a ritual working area. Detective Trevenar's photographs of the attic studio at 179 Brougham Street are of interest because they reveal details of the ritual aspect of the room. It is also useful to compare the Trevenar photographs with details reported in Dave Barnes' profile article on Norton, 'I am a Witch!' published a little over a year later,¹⁶² and also with photographs reproduced in Norton's autobiographical article 'Hitch-hiking Witch', published in February 1957.¹⁶³ The latter suggest that some elements of Norton's ritual practice were improvised or flexible, particular items from the main Pan altar being moved to other locations within the apartment. According to Barnes (1956), Norton's Pan altar was located 'at the end of the room'.¹⁶⁴ A large figure of Pan had been painted directly onto the wall, and the large, opening photograph in the Barnes article shows Norton sitting next to various ritual implements and assorted bric-a-brac, including stag antlers, a candle-holder, dishes and pine-cones. The word 'Pan' is visible on the wall beneath a circular mirror on the left-hand side.¹⁶⁵ Taking into consideration details from D.L. Thompson's 1955 interview, referred to earlier, it can be established with regard to the position of the windows facing Brougham Street, that the altar dedicated to Pan was located at the northern end of the attic, the northern quarter being the traditional position for a witch's altar.¹⁶⁶ Trevenar's photographs, taken in the same year, indicate that there were two altars in the Brougham Street attic. We know from other sources that the second altar was dedicated to Hecate.¹⁶⁷ The Hecate altar, which was located at the southern end of the attic, was squeezed in between an armchair and a wooden wardrobe whereas the Pan altar stood alone and effectively occupied the full width of the room, with heavy curtains draped on both sides.

A photograph taken of Norton in the Brougham Street apartment in 1957¹⁶⁸ shows that the stag antlers had been moved from the Pan altar to a different location and were now part of an improvised altar in the corner of the room. The mounted stag antlers which in the Barnes article had been photographed on the floor in front of the Pan altar had now been lifted up and placed on top

of an item of furniture that is not clearly visible but which is waist-high. In the 1957 photograph Norton stands beside the antlers pointing a curvy snake implement which seems to be some form of magical wand. A solitary candle is also placed centrally on the altar in front of the antlers. Behind the candle and the antlers a medium-size, heavily framed mirror has been mounted so that the mirror-glass is visible between the V-shape of the antlers. Although one could surmise that Norton may have moved some of her ritual paraphernalia around the room to pose for photographs, there are some indications that the altar arrangement in the February 1957 photograph had some degree of permanency. The name *Uriel* has been painted on the wall. In the Golden Dawn magical tradition (to which Crowley also belonged prior to 1904 – see Chapters Two and Three), Uriel is the archangel of Earth and his



Plate 63: Norton photographed beside her altar in 1957. The archangel-name Uriel is clearly visible, painted on the wall behind the altar. Uriel is assigned to the North, and the Element Earth.

assigned ‘sphere’ or ‘quarter’ is in the North. The words ‘Of the Air’ are also visible in the photograph and have been painted on the wall behind Norton. This would locate the element Air in the West. In the Golden Dawn tradition the element Air is associated with the archangel Raphael and is traditionally located in the East as part of the well-known Banishing Ritual of the Lesser Pentagram.¹⁶⁹ Golden Dawn magicians used this Banishing Ritual to ‘purify’ the ritual space by ‘banishing’ negative influences and establishing the sacred protection of the four archangels of the Apocalypse over the ritual space.¹⁷⁰ West is the symbolic domain of Gabriel, the archangel of Water, but this

photograph indicates that Norton has located Air in the West. This suggests that Norton did not follow the Golden Dawn system exactly although the very presence of a reference to the archangel Uriel behind her ritual altar suggests that part of her magical practice was based on familiar Golden Dawn procedures. Since Uriel is traditionally associated with the North and is a symbol of Earth it was appropriate that her main ritual altar, dedicated to Pan in his role as the ancient Greek God of Nature, was located symbolically in the North.

Norton's Hecate altar, however, appears to have been at least partially improvised. In the photograph introducing Barnes' article 'I am a Witch!' (December 1956), in which Norton posed in front of the mural of Pan, a small female mask has been mounted on the wall; here it has become part of



Plate 64: Norton photographed in December 1956 during her interview with Dave Barnes. The small female mask is clearly visible, mounted on the mural

the altar backdrop, nestling between Pan's outstretched hand and his chin.¹⁷¹ In Detective Trevenar's photographs of the Pan altar, taken approximately a year earlier, the female mask is missing. However this same female mask occupies a central position in Trevenar's photograph of the second altar, which Norton confirmed to D.L. Thompson was dedicated to Hecate.¹⁷² Barnes remarked in his 1956 article that this particular female mask had a surprising resemblance to Norton herself,¹⁷³ and she may have used it to reinforce her sense of symbolic and personal connection with both Pan and Hecate, on different ceremonial occasions.

Norton confirms in the Thompson article [1955] that the ritual initiations which took place at Brougham Street were dedicated to 'the presiding deities' of the coven, Pan and Hecate, and that neophytes were required to take an oath of allegiance to these deities.¹⁷⁴ Norton also confirmed in an interview with *Sun* journalist Nan Javes that she commenced all magical rituals by burning incense to each of the deities involved, and that she placed a 'protective magical circle'¹⁷⁵ around the ritual area where she was working.¹⁷⁶ Countering charges made by Anna Hoffmann and others, that Norton had conducted the Black Mass in her Kings Cross apartment,¹⁷⁷ Norton told Dave Barnes in her December 1956 interview that she had never attended ceremonies at which there had been blood sacrifices.¹⁷⁸ She then added, no doubt in jest, '...And I've never drunk bat's blood either...'¹⁷⁹

An insight into what a ritual gathering at Brougham Street may have been like, at least on some occasions, is provided by a short section of film footage in the 1964 television documentary on Kings Cross, *The Glittering Mile*, and by reference to one of the drawings in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (1952) titled *Rites of Baron Samedi* [Plate XIV]. In *The Glittering Mile*, a robed Rosaleen Norton performs a banishing ritual by inscribing a pentagram in the air with her ceremonial *athame*, or dagger, thereby purifying and defining the 'sacred space' associated with the ritual. However we know that Norton was not always robed during her ceremonial performances because she confirmed in her interview with D.L. Thompson that 'ceremonial attire ranges from nakedness to full regalia – robes, hood, sandals and accessories...' ¹⁸⁰ Norton appeared during her interview with Thompson clad only in her dark leather 'witch's apron', naked from the waist up, although she later posed for a photograph wearing a cat's mask in addition to her apron. During Norton's interview with Thompson her fellow coven members wore ritual animal masks to disguise their identity and referred to each other by using code names like

the Rat and the Toad, thereby remaining effectively anonymous.¹⁸¹ It has since been established that the exotic masks brought back into Australia by Sir Eugene Goossens were intended for ritual use in the coven.¹⁸²

Unpublished manuscript notes by Rosaleen Norton accompanying the draft manuscript for her book *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, state that *Rites of Baron Samedi* is an 'impression of a personal experience... a ritual invocation'.¹⁸³ Gavin Greenlees' accompanying poem describes the scene as a 'saturnalia'. Norton acknowledges the influence of Voodoo in the ritual performance and confirms that 'the mantelpiece, the bison's skull, the candlelight, cats etc are part of the artist's living quarters'.¹⁸⁴ In *Rites of Baron Samedi* we are shown a ritual performance where an exotic dark-skinned woman is dancing naked in a



Plate 65: *Rites of Baron Samedi* (Plate XIV in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*) – a work which reflects Norton's keen interest in Voodoo. The figures in the lower right-hand corner may be Norton and Greenlees

state of frenzy in the centre of a small room while a small gathering of ritual devotees look on admiringly.¹⁸⁵ Some of these onlookers are wearing masks: one of them, who may be Norton herself, sits cross-legged wearing sandals and smoking a cigarette in a long cigarette-holder. Behind her sits a young man wearing a simple unadorned mask: this figure resembles Greenlees. A candle has been mounted atop the bison's skull and magical forces throng through the room. The winged face of Baron Samedi and a coiled snake rise up around the dancer, suggesting that the ritual combines elements from Voodoo, Tantra and sex magic. The dancer meanwhile thrusts her naked body into full view as she embodies the frenzied lust of Erzulie. Erzulie is a Voodoo goddess known for her love and passion, an archetypal figure associated with the sensual magic of the left-hand path, and here the dancer has become her Priestess as she is 'possessed' by the Voodoo deity's inspirational magical energies.¹⁸⁶

Miscellaneous magical activities

As described above, Norton's magical practices included individual trance journeys involving 'astral plane' encounters with the principal deities in her magical pantheon; sex magic rituals (for example, with Gavin Greenlees and Eugene Goossens) based on the Thelemic (ie. post 1904) writings and practices of Aleister Crowley; ceremonial activities (ie. both within her inner magical circle and also with Greenlees and Goossens) involving homage to Pan and Hecate as the 'principal deities of the coven', and improvised magical practices involving elements of Tantra and Voodoo. However Norton pursued other magical activities as well. They included attempted 'aerial' or 'out-of-the-body' journeys comparable to the flights which medieval witches claimed to undertake en route to the 'Witches Sabbath', occasional magical hexings, and the sporadic use of mind-altering drugs to facilitate an altered state of consciousness.

During the Middle Ages there was a common belief in Europe that witches could fly through the air,¹⁸⁷ transporting themselves by means of a broomstick, pitchfork or shovel. During the medieval witch-trials many witches were also accused of paying homage to the Devil by kissing his posterior. Rosemary E. Guiley, author of a major source-work on witchcraft, notes that the so-called *osculum infame* or 'kiss of shame' was mentioned in 'virtually every recorded account of a witches' sabbat, most confessions of which were extracted under torture'.¹⁸⁸



Plate 66: A witch riding on a goat to the Sabbath. Etching by Albrecht Durer c.1501

Some medieval witches were believed to ‘ride’ in the company of demons who were able to transform themselves magically into such animals as goats, cows, horses or wolves.¹⁸⁹ The noted historian of medieval witchcraft, Jeffrey B. Russell, describes a characteristic case from Simmenthal, near Bern, reported during the witch trials held there between 1395 and 1405, in which a number of people were convicted of witchcraft and subsequently burnt at the stake:

The witches at Simmenthal were accused of constituting a sect that met at Church on Sunday morning, not for mass, but to worship Satan. There they performed rites including homage to the Devil. They stole children, killed them, and then cooked and ate them, or else they drained them of juice in order to make ointments. With the ointment, they changed themselves into animals, rendered themselves invisible, or rubbed their bodies in order to obtain the power of flying through the air.¹⁹⁰

In another case, which occurred in 1587, Walpurga Hausmannin, a midwife, was tried and burnt at the stake in Dillingen:

Arrested and tortured, she admitted to having intercourse with the Devil and making [a] pact with him, riding out at night on a pitchfork, trampling on the consecrated host, keeping a familiar named Federlin as a lover, manufacturing hailstorms, and committing a long list of *maleficia*...¹⁹¹

The notorious text *Malleus Maleficarum* (*The Hammer of the Witches*), compiled as an instructional manual by the Inquisitors Jacob Sprenger (1436-1495) and Heinrich Kramer (1450-1505) and first published in Germany in 1486, also includes a chapter on witches' flight titled 'How they are transported from place to place'.¹⁹² Sprenger and Kramer write:

Now the following is their method of being transported. They take the unguent ['flying ointment'] which...they make at the Devil's instruction from the limbs of children, particularly of those whom they have killed before baptism, and anoint with a chair or broomstick; whereupon they are immediately carried up into the air, either by day or by night, and either visibly or, if they wish, invisibly... at times [the Devil] transports the witches on animals, which are not true animals but devils in that form; and sometimes even without any exterior help they are visibly carried solely by the operation of the Devil's power.¹⁹³

However, during the Renaissance some observers began to suspect that, at least in some cases, the phenomenon of 'aerial flight' ascribed to the witches was an internal perception rather than an external reality. The 16th century scientist Giambattista della Porta (c.1535-1615), a colleague of Galileo, was one who entertained such doubts:

...An old woman came to my notice, [one of those] whom they call screech-owls [*striges*], from the resemblance between the night-owl [*strix*] and the witches [*strigae*], and who suck the blood of tiny children in their cradles; who promised of her own accord to bring me answers in a short while. She ordered all of us who were gathered there with me as witnesses to go outside. Then she stripped off all her rags and rubbed herself very thoroughly and heartily with some ointment (she was visible to us through the cracks in the door). Then she sank down from the force of the soporific juices and fell into a deep sleep. We then opened the doors and gave her quite a flogging; the force of her stupor was so great that it had taken away her senses. We returned to our place outside. Then the powers of the drug grew weak and feeble and she, called from her sleep, began to babble that she had crossed seas and mountains to fetch these false answers. We denied; she insisted; we showed her the black-and-blue marks; she insisted more tenaciously than before.¹⁹⁴

Della Porta proposed a physiological explanation of the witches' ointment, noting that after the witches had concocted a brew which included such ingredients as aconite and 'sleep-inducing nightshade' [*Solanum somniferum*]

and after they had anointed 'parts of the body, having rubbed them very thoroughly before' so that the 'flesh may be loose and the pores open', they then experienced a drug-induced aerial sensation which also included strong elements of fantasy:

Thus, on some moonlit night they think that they are carried off to banquets, music, dances, and coupling with young men, which they desire most of all. So great is the force of the imagination and the appearance of the images, that the part of the brain called memory is almost full of this sort of thing; and since they themselves, by inclination of nature, are extremely prone to belief, they take hold of the images in such a way that the mind itself is changed and thinks of nothing else day or night.¹⁹⁵

The contemporary American anthropologist Dr Michael J. Harner, has noted recently, however, that it could be the potency of the psychotropic herbal ingredients within the witches' ointments, rather than 'the force of the imagination' referred to by Della Porta, that produced the aerial sensation reported by the medieval witches. Harner notes that when the German scholar Karl Kiesewetter, who had himself been inspired by the insights of Della Porta, created a witches' ointment and rubbed himself with it, he experienced a dream in which he felt he was flying in spirals.¹⁹⁶ And when Professor W.E. Peukert of Göttingen, Germany, employed a 17th century witches' formula and created a 'flying ointment' containing belladonna, henbane and datura, he too experienced a bizarre altered state of consciousness. Peukert and some of his colleagues rubbed the ointment onto their foreheads and into their armpits, and the result was dramatic: 'They fell into a twenty-four hour sleep in which they dreamed of wild rides, frenzied dancing, and other weird adventures of the type associated with medieval orgies.'¹⁹⁷ Jeffrey B. Russell similarly supports the view that the sensations of flight and ecstasy induced by the medieval witches' ointments could be induced by the innate chemical properties of herbal ingredients like aconite and nightshade [belladonna]: '...aconite depresses the cardiovascular system and produces sensory semi-paralysis, while...nightshade induces delirium, excitement, and sometimes unconsciousness.'¹⁹⁸

In his correspondence with Rosaleen Norton, Eugene Goossens makes reference to astral encounters with mythic beings, to magical unguents, and also to the notorious *osculum infame*, or 'kiss of shame'. There are also references to 'familiar', or magical helper-spirits, and to the idea of



Plate 67: Medieval witches concocting a ‘flying ointment’. Etching by Hans Baldung Grien, 1514

transforming into animal forms. Collectively these references indicate a strong interest in, and acquaintance with, the medieval witchcraft tradition. Based on the level of detail provided in the correspondence, it would appear that Goossens and Norton were seeking to validate aspects of medieval witchcraft practices in a personal, experiential way.

In an undated letter which opens ‘*Roiewitch*’, Goossens writes that

contemplating your hermaphroditic organs in the pictures nearly made me desert my evening’s work and fly to you by first aerial coven. But, as promised, you came to me early this morning (about 1.45) and when a suddenly flapping window blind announced your arrival, I realised by a delicious orificial tingling that you were about to make your presence felt in a very real sense! ¹⁹⁹

Quite apart from the erotic content of this letter, which is intriguing, Goossens and Norton clearly had a prior arrangement for an ‘astral’ rendezvous because at the time this letter was written they were physically separated by a substantial distance: other details in the same letter suggest that Goossens posted this letter to Norton either from an interstate location or from Europe.²⁰⁰ Goossens’ letter continues:

Seriously, you were very definitely here, and you were doubtlessly enjoyably aware of what took place. I was in the middle of a rite to A and he had just asked for the ‘osculum infame’ (which I was about to administer) when you took advantage of my position and administered same to me. A strange hoofed creature was in the room with us – upper and middle parts female, lower centaur, and a pretty crustacean creature with milky breasts also appeared. I will draw it for you when I see you. All night I was in sheer s.m. [sex magic] delight and my offerings were, by results, most acceptable to the beings... More of this later.²⁰¹

Goossens goes on to remark that ‘Your description of the triple S.M. Rite (you, G and me) was curious because I was aware of you both as female (G always comes to me as a female) and I was fully present, also in changing form.’ This section of the correspondence shows Goossens comparing astral visions with Norton, almost like two enthusiasts comparing dreams, in order to confirm whether both parties (ie. Goossens and Norton) had experienced the same phenomena during the astral encounter. The figure identified as ‘A’ is clearly not a physical person but a metaphysical entity associated with the Devil because according to the correspondence, ‘A’ has requested the ‘*osculum infame*’, usually regarded as an act of demonic ritual homage, and Goossens has agreed to comply.²⁰²

We know that Goossens is referring to inner-plane encounters because he uses the expression ‘our astral meetings’ in another letter when describing similar activities.²⁰³ In that particular letter Goossens also makes reference to ‘Asmodeus’ and to ‘a succubus²⁰⁴ in the form of Astarte’. Given these references, the metaphysical being referred to simply as ‘A’ in the first letter could theoretically be either one of these magical entities. Of the two, Astarte is the less likely alternative because she is an Assyrian-Babylonian mother goddess associated with love, battle, war, sex and fertility and there is no cultural connection between her and the notorious ‘*osculum infame*’.²⁰⁵ On the other hand, Asmodeus was well known to the compilers of medieval grimoires as the demon of lust and lechery, and Goossens’ interest in such magical grimoires has already been established.²⁰⁶ Possibly derived from the

Persian Aeshma Daeva and otherwise known as a ‘fiend of the wounding spear’, and also as a storm spirit and the personification of rage, Asmodeus [sometimes known as Ashmedai] features in ancient Jewish literature as a demon who causes frustration in marriage.²⁰⁷ Goossens may have become interested in Asmodeus because of his fascination with medieval grimoires like the *Goetia*. An entity known as Asmoday [a variant on Asmodeus / Ashmedai] is listed in the *Goetia* as one of the 72 ‘evil spirits’ – here he is described as a three-headed demon with the tail of a serpent.²⁰⁸ As historian Richard Cavendish notes, Asmoday’s three heads are those of a ram, a bull and a man, ‘all traditionally lecherous creatures’, and in Jewish literature Asmodeus is a demon also associated with lechery: he has the feet of a cock, ‘a bird noted for indiscriminate sexual vigour’.²⁰⁹ Taking into consideration Goossens’ magical name, *Djinn*, referred to earlier, it is significant that Asmodeus also has a specific connection with the legendary King Solomon. According to Jewish tradition, Asmodeus was forced by King Solomon, along with other devils, to build his Temple in Jerusalem. However, in his characteristically lecherous manner, Asmodeus pursued one of King Solomon’s wives and it was not until the archangel Michael intervened by offering King Solomon a magic ring that this mighty demon could be conquered.²¹⁰

Goossens’ ‘*Roiewitch*’ letter is of interest for other reasons as well. Goossens clearly conceives of the astral magical encounter referred to above as being one where both he and Norton will be able to jointly observe what is occurring, because he writes: ‘...you were doubtless enjoyably aware of what took place.’ He also shares an implied understanding with Norton that the magical entities that appear in such visionary circumstances are both tangible and experientially real, even if they emanate from other planes of existence. Goossens writes in his letter that ‘A strange hoofed creature was in the room with us – upper and middle parts female, lower centaur...’ However, this is no fictional centaur from the literature of classical Greek legends but a magical ‘god-form’ experienced as real within the context of the visionary encounter. When Goossens writes that his offerings ‘were, by results, most acceptable to the beings’ he is acknowledging that these entities have their own, tangible reality, and that one can interact meaningfully with them, even if their presence can only be fully experienced on the ‘inner planes’. Finally, in the same letter there is a notable reference to a triple S.M.[sex magic] rite involving Goossens, Norton and Greenlees. Goossens writes that ‘G always comes to me as a female’ which in itself is an interesting remark, given that

Greenlees was openly bisexual.²¹¹ The letter confirms that on some occasions, at least, the Brougham Street sex magic ritual workings involved a *menage à trois*²¹² – a detail later confirmed by Bert Trevenar in an interview with Sydney crime writer Ned McCann in 1999.²¹³

Goossens' references to unguents similarly link his correspondence with Norton to the medieval magical tradition. In one of his letters,²¹⁴ as mentioned earlier, Goossens makes a passing reference to a substance called Ashtaroth cream which, he writes, is intended 'for you [ie Norton], and no-one else'. As previously noted, Ashtaroth is a demon referred to in the *Goetia* but, in addition, he is also listed by the ceremonial magician and grimoire enthusiast, S.L. MacGregor Mathers, as one of the *Qlipha*, or negative forces, on the obverse, evil face of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life.²¹⁵ Unfortunately, we are not told what was actually contained in the Ashtaroth cream, or why it received its distinctive name.

In Letter 3 in the Johnson sequence²¹⁶ Goossens tells Norton that she has begun 'to take almost concrete form' during their recent astral experiments and he says 'I will send you next week, on my return, a pleasant unguent, which applied to you, may perhaps be helpful in this matter' – that is to say, an unguent that would help produce the dissociative effects required for astral encounters. Once again we are not given details of what is contained in the unguent itself, but Goossens adds as an aside that he has been told about this unguent 'by one familiar with these things in Paris, where they are by no means uncommon...' However, Goossens does provide a much more detailed commentary on the use of a magical unguent in another letter – Number 7 in the Johnson sequence – which lists the specific procedures Norton should undertake in applying the ointment to her body. It reads: 'Use half level teaspoonful. Massage cream into skin over wide area on inner face of the thigh (between crotch and knee) or on abdomen. Use on unwashed skin. Don't bathe anointed area one hour before or three hours after. Don't use during menstrual period. No man must use this unguent. It would be more than dangerous.' Goossens signs the letter '*Djinn*' and then adds some further details: 'Base Cream d'Egypte prepared by Anna (Paris). Herb ointment – blood base. Apply once a day for 3, 4 or 5 days.'²¹⁷

Finally, one needs to ask whether Goossens really believed that he could transform into an animal form on the astral plane, for this aspect of magical practice is clearly connected to the medieval European witchcraft tradition. It

has to be conceded that sometimes Goossens adopts a light-hearted approach in referring to occult matters and this factor needs to be taken into consideration. In one letter to Norton, Goossens mentions jokingly that he sometimes refers to London's Covent Garden as Coven Garden.²¹⁸ In another he writes that a large package has arrived by 'daemonic angel carrier',²¹⁹ obviously a metaphor for speedy airfreight, and later in the same letter he writes that after being stimulated by Norton's erotic artwork he felt he wanted to fly to her 'by first aerial coven'.

In light of such remarks it is not easy to decide whether Goossens takes seriously the notion of magical animal transformation, or lycanthropy. Is Goossens expressing himself literally or metaphorically when he writes in one of his letters to Norton: 'Even now my bat-wings envelop and lift you, as yours often enfold me, into Arimanic²²⁰ spheres'?²²¹ Just prior to making this particular remark Goossens writes: 'You don't know what your long letter means to me; understanding and eloquent they are and happily satisfying to my nature, occult, obscene, and of other worlds and beings. *I am mastering many things; in all of which you figure and help.*' [my emphasis in italics] The latter sentence suggests that Goossens is taking his magical practice seriously, and on the previous page of the same letter he advises Norton that 'the Master, in Paris, passed on a few months back. So no more unguent...' ²²² Harner's investigation of witches' ointments, referred to earlier, strongly suggests that in medieval witchcraft it is the unguent that facilitates the perception of animal transformation so it is especially significant that in another letter, when Goossens refers to his 'astral meetings' with Norton, he then goes on to refer to unguents in terms of their specific effects: 'I am however working on an unguent (with the one you have as basis) ²²³ *to bring about our physical transportation.*' ²²⁴ [my emphasis in italics] Goossens seems to be suggesting here that the innate properties of the magical unguent, that is to say, its capacity to produce dissociative effects, could bring about a projection of the 'astral body' onto the inner planes allowing 'transportation' and an ability to engage in visionary encounters ('astral meetings'), as if they were tangible and real. Goossens would surely not have believed that his actual physical body was transported through the effects of the unguent, but given the potency of the unguent he would have had good reason to believe that his 'astral vehicle of awareness' ²²⁵ could be 'transported' by the flying ointment as it entered an altered state of consciousness. On balance, then, it seems reasonable to conclude that even though Goossens sometimes made whimsical remarks like 'daemonic angel carrier' and 'flying by first aerial coven' in his personal

correspondence, he nevertheless believed in the fundamental validity of his magical explorations and ‘astral meetings’ with Norton.

Drugs and hexings

Theoretically one might have expected that Norton would follow Aleister Crowley’s well known example of frequently using mind-altering drugs to induce ‘magical’ states of consciousness. However, it has not been confirmed in any extant documents that this was a substantial aspect of Norton’s magical practice. Crowley was a habitual drug-user and kept meticulous records of his experiences with laudanum, opium, cocaine, hashish, alcohol, ether and heroin.²²⁶ Furthermore, at the end of his life he was addicted to heroin and required regular injections to sustain him.²²⁷ Crowley was probably introduced to the magical use of drugs by his mentor Allan Bennett²²⁸ and in Paris during the 1920s he experimented with *Anhalonium lewinii*, otherwise known as the mescaline-yielding cactus, peyote.²²⁹ However, apart from the use of the dissociative unguents described by Eugene Goossens in his letters, drug-use seems to have been a comparatively minor feature of Rosaleen Norton’s magical practices and may indeed have been more specifically associated with her creative, art-making processes than her ritual activities. It would also appear that, although Norton sometimes liked to present herself to the tabloid press as the ‘wicked witch of Kings Cross’, spells and hexes did not play a major role in her magical practice.

According to publisher Walter Glover, when he first met Norton in late 1951,²³⁰ during the period ‘before Roie became known as a witch, [she] had little respect for so-called witches and fortune-tellers....In those days she was the girl who hypnotised herself to draw whilst in trance.’²³¹ Nevertheless, there are occasional references in the popular media to Norton’s use of mind-altering drugs as well as her ability to generate magical hexes and spells – so these elements are not entirely absent from her magical repertoire and must be acknowledged.

During legal hearings held at Sydney’s Central Court in October 1955 in relation to the charges associated with the controversial Honer/Ager photographs, a psychiatrist, Dr S.J.Minogue, submitted a medical certificate on Norton’s mental state. The certificate was dated 18 October 1955 and read as follows: ‘This is to certify I examined Miss Norton today. In my opinion she is still suffering from the after-effects of drugs, chiefly Dexedrine and Methedrine, and is incapable of sustained concentration. At the present time I

think that the court proceedings would impose too great a strain on her, but she should be much better in a month's time.'²³² Mr.A.Griffith, representing Norton, asked that his client be remanded to 2 December 1955. At the same time it was noted during court proceedings that the Lunacy Court had committed Gavin Greenlees to an institution and he was likely to be there 'for at least six months'.²³³

In addition to using Dexedrine and Methedrine, Norton had also been taking Benzydrene pills. In one of the letters that found their way into Detective Trevenar's possession, Eugene Goossens expresses concern about 'heart attack' symptoms that Norton has referred to in earlier correspondence: Goossens warns her that the Benzedrine tablets she has been consuming are likely to produce such symptoms, 'especially when you've eaten nothing'.²³⁴

Dexedrine, Methedrine and Benzedrine are all forms of amphetamine, chemical stimulants that produce temporary states of euphoria, confidence and mental alertness but which are also associated with insomnia and mild irritability. Dexedrine and Benzedrine are both forms of dextroamphetamine, marketed under different brand names and in different strengths.²³⁵ Methedrine is a generic name for methamphetamine,²³⁶ a form of amphetamine associated with heightened sexual awareness.²³⁷ According to the *High Times Encyclopedia of Recreational Drugs* (1978), as amphetamine use continues, or the dose increases or periods of sleep grow less frequent,

the adverse effects become more severe, the personality is definitely modified, most often afflicted with paranoia and delusions. Even though at first the user may view this development with a certain intellectual detachment, chronic heavy use typically destroys mental balance and the delusions become strikingly real.²³⁸

In addition to using various amphetamines, it was also reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in April 1972 that Norton had admitted to using LSD to gain inspiration for her art.²³⁹ Regarded as an amplifier of emotional states, aesthetic perceptions and sensory input from the subconscious mind, LSD²⁴⁰ remains one of the most potent psychoactive drugs ever discovered.²⁴¹ Derived from ergot (*Claviceps purpurea*) and classified as a 'psychedelic',²⁴² or 'mind-manifesting' drug, LSD was first synthesized by Dr Albert Hofmann at the Sandoz Laboratories in Basel, Switzerland in 1938 and became a hallmark of the American counter-culture during the late 1960s.²⁴³ LSD had some surprising and distinctive characteristics that would have made it especially attractive to Norton. In particular, she would have been aware that

the states of heightened awareness accessed through LSD were often reflected in greater artistic and mystical sensitivity. As psychiatrist Dr Stanislav Grof has noted in *Realms of the Human Unconscious: Observations from LSD Research*:

Many LSD subjects reported in their sessions unusual aesthetic experiences and insights into the nature of the creative process ...[and another] area in which the use of LSD appeared to be rather revolutionary was the psychology of religion....some LSD sessions had the form of profound religious and mystical experiences quite similar to those described in the holy scriptures of the great religions of the world...²⁴⁴

Norton's use of LSD may well be reflected in the intense and vibrant colours associated with some of Norton's artworks during the late 1960s and 1970s, (see Chapter Six) but no substantial documentation has so far emerged regarding her magical, inspirational or artistic use of LSD. At the present time, any perceived correlations between her magical practices and her use of mood-altering stimulants and psychedelic drugs remain purely speculative.

As with Norton's drug-taking, media references to Norton as a magical hexer, or black magician, are also comparatively rare. However, one such instance occurred when *Sun* journalist Nan Javes called on Norton in February 1969. Norton had left her Brougham Street apartment and was now living in a derelict inner-Sydney house in Bourke Street. During her interview with Javes, Norton referred to herself as a 'coven master' and depicted both herself and the unnamed members of her witchcraft cult as potentially hostile and dangerous:

It's ridiculous to say we never do harm. If we weren't capable of fighting people through hexes and charms we couldn't survive. But here we are in the twentieth century, stronger than ever. Of course, we sometimes do good turns too. The sort of people I might put a spell on are those who harm me or someone close to me. I mightn't do it immediately if the circumstances weren't propitious, but you can bet your life I'd get around to it in time – and it works!'²⁴⁵

During an interview with the noted journalist and writer Robert Drewe, published two years later in the *Australian* newspaper,²⁴⁶ Norton explained that as 'coven master of the Wicca branch of the witch cult' she was now presiding over major ritual meetings four times a year; Candlemas was the next ceremony that would be held in her coven.²⁴⁷ Perhaps sensing the drama of the occasion, Norton then went on to say:

We feast, dance and drink. The sexual side of things is very important. We invoke deities and spirits and set to work to formulate whatever we mutually want through spells, and also things that we each want for ourselves. Black magic is a very personal thing. It is an integral part of our lives.²⁴⁸

If Norton truly saw herself at this time as ‘coven master of the Wicca branch of the witch cult’, that is to say, as the Australian counterpart to the British ‘King of the Witches’, Gerald Gardner (to whom she had sent a copy of her book *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*), she would not have referred to herself as a practitioner of black magic. Gardner and his colleagues were adamant that the Wicca revival in Britain focused very much on fertility rites, the imagery of the Goddess, and the cycle of the seasons, and had nothing whatever to do with black magic, sorcery or Satanism (see Chapters Two, Three and Eight for key distinctions between these forms of magical practice). However, referring to her ritual practice as ‘black magic’ may have been part of Norton’s strategy to impress Drewe during her meeting with him. ‘Some of the things they [ie. the witches in Norton’s coven] may mutually or individually want,’ wrote Drewe in his article, ‘include zapping some enemy with a hex or spell, and at this Rosaleen professes to be quite proficient.’ Drewe then quotes Norton again: ‘I took care of two policemen who were foolish enough to tangle with me...One was soon afterwards forced to resign from the [police] force, and the other, a detective-sergeant, soon found himself pounding the beat again.’²⁴⁹ Apparently Norton did not provide Drewe with the details of her hexing spell against the policemen in question, and did not seek to validate the effectiveness, or otherwise, of her act of ‘black magic’.

There is, indeed, a genuine question-mark over Norton’s assertion that she was a practitioner of ‘black magic’. As noted in earlier chapters, Norton certainly oriented towards the ‘dark’ side of magic and felt attracted to the *Qlipha* or negative forces of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life.²⁵⁰ However, while she certainly practised Thelemic sex magic, and explored Left-Hand Path Tantra and Voodoo-oriented ceremonial practices in addition to various forms of witchcraft, there is little, if any, evidence that she used her magical practices to wreak harm and injury on others. In this context Norton’s remarks to Robert Drewe and Nan Javes seem somewhat exaggerated.

Norton appears to have been preoccupied at this time with her need to generate her media persona as a ‘witch’ – a fact alluded to by Norton’s publisher Walter Glover. As mentioned above, when Glover first met her Norton did not refer to herself as a witch: ‘She resented being called a witch,’

writes Glover. 'Later, I believe, she found it convenient for business to go along with the media and openly declare herself to be a witch.'²⁵¹ Declaring oneself to be a '*black*' witch may have seemed even more dramatic, and was apparently part of Norton's media strategy from the mid-1960s through to the early 1970s.

Approximately three years prior to her interview with Drewe, Norton had agreed to participate in a television programme titled *Seven Days*, screened on Channel Seven, Sydney, on 13 December 1967. Here she was shown in a pre-recorded filmed interview wearing a goat's head mask and casting a spell.²⁵² Norton had been interviewed at home by two journalists, Phil Crookes and Bryon Quigley, amidst 'all the paraphernalia of witchcraft, including an altar' and was attended by her pet cat, some salamanders, and a rat named Percy whom Norton said she was training to become a 'familiar'.²⁵³ Norton apparently sought to impress Crookes and Quigley by presenting the same 'witch-hexing' persona that she would emphasise in her media interview with Drewe three years later. Crookes describes what took place during the filmed interview at Norton's home:

We found Miss Norton to be a charming person. She offered us a cup of tea and told us quite frankly that these days she was engaged mostly in hexing various people by request. She said it was the work she most preferred and added – with a mild degree of pride – that she performed it with some notable success. During the casting of the spell, Miss Norton wore a goat's head mask and rang bells, poured water and burnt incense, all the time chanting to summon the forces of the earth god. After it was all over – it took about three and a half minutes – we asked Miss Norton what spell she had cast. She told us she had cast a spell to assure the production success. The next day our camera broke down...²⁵⁴

The facts associated with this particular media episode speak for themselves. Norton seems to have been far removed from being a master 'hexer' – a sorcerer renowned for casting dark and evil spells – but was clearly willing to oblige in projecting a particular media image when the television cameras were rolling.

Summary of main points

- a) Norton's magical practice involved a range of different ritual activities including trance magic (dissociative mental journeys on the 'astral

plane’); Thelemic sex magic, and rituals based on Voodoo, Kundalini Yoga and Left-Hand Path Tantra. During the late 1950s, after Sir Eugene Goossens’ departure, elements of Gardnerian Wicca may also have been introduced to Norton’s coven.

- b) Norton referred to herself as ‘High Priestess at the Altar of Pan’.
- c) Norton constructed ritual altars in her apartment at 179 Brougham Street, Kings Cross, dedicating them specifically to Pan and Hecate. Pan and Hecate were the principal deities in Norton’s coven.
- d) Norton’s coven, or inner magical circle, consisted of a few close friends and may have included only seven members.
- e) The initiatory structure in Norton’s coven, as described by British Wiccan high priestess Doreen Valiente (1989) and based on Leslie Roberts’ earlier (1959) account, may have been a late modification proposed by other coven members, rather than Norton herself. Emphasis on the ‘Old Religion’ – if accurate – suggests that a shift towards Gardnerian Wicca may have occurred within Norton’s coven some time after the departure of Sir Eugene Goossens. Valiente nevertheless confirms that even at this later stage Pan and Hecate remained the principal deities in Norton’s coven.
- f) Norton’s practice of sex magic involved cunnilingus and fellatio within a ritual setting. Norton, Greenlees and Goossens all engaged in bisexual behaviour and some of their rituals involved acts of ‘triple’ sex magic.
- g) Norton’s practice of Thelemic sex magic was influenced in part by Goossens, who offered to introduce Norton to Goetic sex magic techniques that he had apparently acquired from his close friend, Philip Heseltine, a one-time associate of Aleister Crowley’s, and a member of Crowley’s O.T.O. from c.1914 onwards (see Chapter Three). Goossens’ sister, Dame Sidonie Goossens-Millar, maintained that it was Goossens’ close friendship with Heseltine that drew Goossens into the occult in the first instance.
- h) The O.T.O. method of ‘activating’ Goetic demons involved the discharge of semen onto the sigils (or ‘seals’) of those demons. The

sigils themselves were included in the magical grimoires used by the practitioners as part of their magical practice.

- i) In addition to drawing on the *Goetia*, Goossens also confirms in his correspondence with Norton that he had been experimenting with ‘cakes of light’ – Thelemic ritual offerings containing sexual and vaginal fluids and prepared according to Crowley’s formula (see Chapter Three).
- j) Norton and Goossens believed they could contact each other magically on the ‘astral plane’, even when separated by large distances. Some of their ritual and ‘astral’ activities also include elements associated with medieval witchcraft, eg. perceptions of ‘flying through the air’; ritual homage to the Devil including the notorious ‘*osculum infame*’ (kissing the anus of the Devil); encounters with spirit-familiars and the use of magical unguents to induce ‘out-of-the-body experiences’ (dissociative trance states).

¹ For example, in D.L. Thompson, ‘Devil Worship Here’, *Australasian Post*, 6 October 1955; D. Barnes, ‘I am a Witch!’, *Australasian Post*, 30 December 1956; R. Norton, ‘Hitch-hiking Witch,’ *Australasian Post*, 7 February 1957 and D. Barnes, ‘Confessions of a Witch’, *Australasian Post*, 15 June 1967.

² Specifically *The Glittering Mile*, a one-hour television documentary on King Cross, screened by Channel Nine, Sydney, in 1964, which included a short interview with Norton and footage of her using her magical *athame* (ritual dagger) in a ceremonial context, and a more recent television documentary programme, *Rewind*, Channel Two, Sydney [screened 5 September 2004] which included details of Norton’s sex magic and also the controversial Honer/Agar photographs of Norton and Greenlees performing an ‘unnatural sexual act’.

³ This data includes Norton photographed in front of the altar she dedicated to Pan (D.L. Thompson, ‘Devil Worship Here’, loc cit, 6 October 1955: 3) ; Norton holding ritual antlers and wearing her ‘witch’s apron’ and cat mask (D.L. Thompson, ‘Devil Worship Here’, loc.cit, 6 October 1955: 4) ; Norton and members of her inner magical circle wearing masks (D.L. Thompson, ‘Devil Worship Here’, loc cit, 6 October 1955: 5): Norton holding a snake wand in front of a magical altar which included ritual antlers, a mirror and a centrally located candle, with the word ‘Uriel’ inscribed in large capital letters on the wall (R. Norton, ‘Hitch-hiking Witch’, loc cit. 7 February 1957: 11) and photographs taken by Vice Squad detective Bert Trevenar of the Brougham Street attic following the raid on 3 October 1955, which show both the main altar dedicated to Pan and a smaller altar or shrine, dedicated to Hecate.

⁴ That is, *circa* 1940 onwards.

⁵ Reproduced in the article ‘Art Models Show Their Own Art’, *Pix*, Sydney 3 July 1943: 26 and also in Owen M. Broughton, ‘The art of Rosaleen Norton’, *Arna*, Sydney 1948: 19 (where it is titled *The Self-portrait in Trance*).

⁶ Reproduced in O.M. Broughton’s article ‘The art of Rosaleen Norton’, *Arna*, Sydney 1948: 19.

⁷ In addition to *Astral Scene* and *The Sphinx*, other artworks which depict Norton in a state of comatose trance include *Nightmare*, a work from the mid-1940s, and *The Initiate*, reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (1952: plate XXII). A coloured rendition of the latter work, slightly different in composition but also showing Norton's head and shoulders, had been included in the Rowden White Gallery exhibition in Melbourne in 1949.

⁸ Norton obviously collaborated with an in-house journalist at *Pix* magazine in producing commentaries for each of the images reproduced in the 1943 article. The caption for *Astral Scene* begins: 'This Mediumistic Self-Portrait, a pencil drawing, Miss Norton says, 'depicts myself in a trance...' [capitals in text] See 'Art Models Show Their Own Art', *Pix*, Sydney, 3 July 1943: 26.

⁹ Spiritualism is the belief that the spirits of the dead can communicate with the living through a psychic medium. In modern times Spiritualism experienced a resurgence of interest during the late 19th century, and was closely associated with the rise of Theosophy and with the emerging scientific interest in 'psychical research', later known as parapsychology.

¹⁰ Derived from the Greek words *ektos* ('exteriorised') and *plasma* ('substance'), the term 'ectoplasm' was coined by Professor Charles Richet (1850-1935), the distinguished physiologist and one-time president of the Society for Psychical Research, to describe the mysterious substance said to issue forth from the bodies of psychic mediums during séances. Spiritualists regard ectoplasm as a materialization of the 'astral body'.

¹¹ 'Astral projection' is a term used by modern occultists and spiritualists to refer to the conscious separation of the 'astral body' from the physical body, resulting in an altered state of consciousness. See also Chapter Four.

¹² The sphinx was a composite mythic creature with a human head and breast; the body, feet and tail of a lion, and the wings of a bird. The Great Sphinx at Giza represents the Egyptian god Horus and has a king's head, but in ancient Greece the sphinx had a woman's head and breasts and was said to be the offspring of Typhon and Echidna.

¹³ For details of the relationship between the Kundalini and the 'fire serpent' see Chapter Three – specifically the section dealing with the form of Tantric sex magic practised by Kenneth Grant and his followers in the Typhonian O.T.O.

¹⁴ O.M. Broughton 'The art of Rosaleen Norton', loc cit: 18

¹⁵ In his article 'The art of Rosaleen Norton', loc.cit., Broughton refers specifically to 'the Yoni (in which the figure of the artist is reclining)...' and says that here the Yoni 'means Receptivity to Forces from other planes and Dimensions of Being'. In *Ecstasy Through Tantra* [Llewellyn, St Paul, Minnesota, 1988:96], Dr Jonn Mumford writes that 'in Yoga and Tantra...[the Yoni refers to] the female vulva or external genitalia [and is] likened to a lotus bud, soft and sweet smelling. Hindu Tantric sculpture is unique among the ancient civilizations as always clearly depicting the soft curves and slit of the vulva on female nudes...[the] naked Goddess arched backwards, knees apart, displaying her Yoni for Puja, worshipful veneration.'

¹⁶ O.M. Broughton 'The art of Rosaleen Norton', loc.cit.: 18. Broughton misspells the word as 'principals' but his point is well taken.

¹⁷ Norton writes: '... the God-forms comprise a link, or half-way state ...Human consciousness...can move up into these God-forms during trance, or other exceptional conditions; likewise Deva consciousness [Norton's term, taken from Sanskrit sources, for what she refers to as "the next level of consciousness", ie the astral realm] can descend into the same form.' See transcript of interview with L.J. Murphy, Department of Psychology, University of Melbourne, 27 August 1949 (Appendix A).

¹⁸ N. Drury, *Inner Visions: Explorations in Magical Consciousness*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1979: 106.

¹⁹ O. M. Broughton, loc.cit: 18

²⁰ N. Drury, *Inner Visions: Explorations in Magical Consciousness*, loc.cit.: 106.

²¹ Ibid.

²² The 'assumption of the god form' in modern ceremonial magic (see Chapter Four) is a practice whereby the magician imitates the posture, regalia and perceived qualities of a mythological deity with the intention of seeking to embody the essence of that deity through an act of ritual and symbolic identification.

²³ N. Drury, *Inner Visions: Explorations in Magical Consciousness*, loc.cit.: 106.

²⁴ Interview with Cecily Boothman, 19 August 1986.

- ²⁵ A painting of this tree, titled simply *The Tree*, showing spirit-entities clustered around a tree whose upper branches have assumed the form of Pan-horns, was acquired by Don Deaton and included in the 1982 exhibition at Exiles Bookshop, Darlinghurst, coinciding with the re-release of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (1982 facsimile edition). The painting is reproduced in *Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Walter Glover, Sydney 1984: 31. Boothman told me that this particular painting was 'especially dear' to her.
- ²⁶ Interview with Cecily Boothman, 19 August 1986. My notes from this interview are still in my possession.
- ²⁷ R. Norton, 'Witches Want No Recruits', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 10 January 1957.
- ²⁸ Ibid: 35.
- ²⁹ In Mahayana Buddhism the term *Sunyata* refers to the Void, or Supreme Reality, beyond manifested form. For Norton to truly enter Sunyata, she would necessarily have to surrender all vestiges of ego in an act of transcendental Union with the Absolute – hence the term 'trance of annihilation'.
- ³⁰ Personal interview with Cecily Boothman, 19 August 1986, loc.cit.
- ³¹ A photograph of the house is reproduced in N. Drury, *Pan's Daughter: The Strange World of Rosaleen Norton*, Collins Australia, Sydney 1988: 56. All three levels of the house, including the attic, which had two small recessed windows, are clearly visible in the photograph. Two of the windows facing the street on the second level were boarded up.
- ³² Details supplied to the author by Walter Glover, c.1981
- ³³ D. Barnes, 'Rosaleen says she could be a Witch', *Australasian Post*, 9 October 1952: 6
- ³⁴ Norton referred to these as the North and South altars respectively. It is not known what specific purpose the Southern altar served. In an interview with Dave Barnes in 1956, Norton said it 'used in certain rituals' but did not provide any details. It may possibly have been a shrine to Hecate. See D.Barnes, 'I am a Witch', *Australasian Post*, loc cit:8.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ G. Souter and G. Molnar, *Sydney Observed*, Angus & Robertson, 1968: 68-71. Molnar provided the illustrations for this book; Souter supplied the text.
- ³⁷ B. Walker and R. Neville, 'Deliver us to E-ville', *Tharunka*, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 3 July 1962: 8. This interview was apparently conducted in the basement of the Brougham Street house and there is no mention in this article of the Pan mural. This suggests that at this time Norton had access to both the attic and the basement flat. She seems to have taken her ritual stag antlers with her from one room to another because they appear in different locations in various photographs from the period.
- ³⁸ Barnes' first article on Norton, 'Rosaleen says she could be a Witch' was published in *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 9 October 1952. Barnes was also the editor of the magazine.
- ³⁹ D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch', loc.cit, 1956: 8.
- ⁴⁰ D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', loc cit: 5
- ⁴¹ B. Walker and R.Neville, 'Deliver us to E-ville', loc cit: 8.
- ⁴² K.McGlynn, 'Going to the Devil', *Sunday Telegraph*, Sydney, 16 July 1972.
- ⁴³ The byline reads: 'Rosaleen Norton has become accepted as head of all Australian covens.' Elsewhere in the same article Barnes writes: 'She [ie Norton] says Australia has about 300 witches'. This suggests that Norton may have begun to regard herself as Australia's counterpart to Gerald Gardner. He was clearly the King of the Witches in England, and she was his equivalent in Australia. See D.Barnes, 'Confessions of a Witch', *Australasian Post*, loc cit:3.
- ⁴⁴ Interestingly, when journalist Nan Javes interviewed Norton two years later, in February 1969, she referred to herself as a 'Coven Master' and claimed 200 Sydney-based devotees and 'hundreds more throughout the country', a clear indication that she was extending the definition of her magical following.. See N. Javes, 'Witches of Sydney', *The Sun*, Sydney, 7 February 1969.
- ⁴⁵ In the British Wiccan tradition (see Chapter Two) when membership of a witches' coven looks like exceeding 13 members, senior members may branch off and form a new coven.
- ⁴⁶ D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', loc.cit.: 5.
- ⁴⁷ Walter Glover advised me in 1981 (my written notes survive) that he had heard a rumour that one of the coven members was Henry Foster, who worked as an engineer in a bakery at Bondi Junction, where he was involved with oven maintenance. Glover had heard that Foster was High Priest of Norton's coven. In the Thompson article the Toad describes himself as '...a warlock...almost a wizard, although I am perhaps not fully qualified for that distinction'. This nevertheless suggests that the Toad and – if he was indeed Foster – was reasonably 'senior' in Norton's group.

⁴⁸ D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', loc. cit: 4.

⁴⁹ This, presumably, was Norton's South altar. Thompson notes that to the right of the Pan painting was another wall with a recessed window. D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', loc. cit.: 4. This window faced onto Brougham Street. Because the house itself faced east, this allows us to confirm that the Pan altar was the North altar.

⁵⁰ That is to say, Rosaleen Norton's response, for she was the Cat.

⁵¹ D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', loc. cit.: 5.

⁵² If Thompson's report is accurate, this indicates that for the Toad, at least, Pan and Lucifer were one and the same.'

⁵³ D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', loc. cit.:5.

⁵⁴ Thompson writes: 'Miss Norton has modelled in her time, and she was as unselfconscious with the shawl off as with it on.' See D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', loc. cit.:5.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Norton also confirmed that her first magical act was in homage to Pan in an autobiographical article published two years later: '...my first act of ceremonial magic was in honour of the horned god, whose pipes are a symbol of magic and mystery, and whose horns and hooves stand for the natural energies and fleet-footed freedom. And this rite was my oath of allegiance and my confirmation as a witch.' R.Norton, 'Witches Want No Recruits', *Australasian Post*, loc cit: 35.

⁵⁸ D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', loc. cit: 37.

⁵⁹ We know that Norton's rituals featured Uriel, the Jewish archangel associated in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn with the element Earth – a photograph taken of Norton at a ritual altar in 1957 shows the name Uriel clearly written in large letters on the wall behind the altar (See R.Norton, 'Hitch-hiking Witch', loc.cit, 1957: 11). This suggests that the other 'Elemental Powers' were Raphael (Air); Gabriel (Water) and Michael (Fire).

⁶⁰ A talisman is a magical object, like a charm, worn to attract good fortune. The talisman is often inscribed with a 'god-name' or the image of a supernatural power believed to bring luck to the person wearing it.

⁶¹ Norton may have derived this practice from British Wicca. Here it is considered both a ceremonial object and a badge of rank. In Wicca it is often worn only by the High Priestess of a Coven but here Norton implies that both men and women could wear it. Traditionally the Witches' Garter is made of green leather, buckled in silver, and lined with blue silk. For Norton to make it from cord was something of a departure.

⁶² R. Norton's text in D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', loc.cit.:37.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ D. Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, Hale, London 1989.

⁶⁵ In *The Rebirth of Witchcraft* Valiente says the contact between Gardner and Norton was 'limited' (1989:154). She also notes that Norton told Gardner she was working in Sydney as a witch and already had a coven, which indicates that Norton did not derive her coven structure from Gardner, if indeed she ever had her own 'coven' in the literal meaning of the word. According to Valiente, Norton had read about Gardner in the Australian press (1989:155) and then sent him her own book. Two articles featuring large photographs of Gardner appeared in the popular tabloids in the 1950s and it may have been one of these articles that prompted Norton to make contact with him. They were 'Witchmaster!' (subtitled: 'The Devil is on our Doorstep') published in *Australasian Post* 14 July 1955, an anonymous article which also contained pictures of Aleister Crowley and one of Crowley's lovers, the Australian-born violinist Leila Waddell, and 'Witches in the Nude' by Peter Lucas (subtitled: 'Boss Gardner Won't Allow Unpleasant Spells At All') published in *People*, Sydney 5 March 1958.

⁶⁶ D. Valiente, *The Rebirth of Magic*, loc.cit: 155.

⁶⁷ Loc. cit: 156.

⁶⁸ Loc. cit: 156-157.

⁶⁹ Loc. cit: 157.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Loc. cit: 158.

⁷³ There is a hint of mock seriousness and formality in the Toad's responses in the D.L. Thompson interview: when the Toad refers to his interviewer as 'sir' on 'brother' on several occasions. See D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here !', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 6 October 1955: 4.

⁷⁴ Norton's father, Albert Thomas Norton, was a native of London and Norton's mother, Beena Salek née Aschman was born in New Zealand (*Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol.15., Australian National University, Canberra 2000).

⁷⁵ Specifically, Crowley's *Magick in Theory and Practice* [1929], which is included in the bibliography of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Sydney 1952.

⁷⁶ D. Valiente, *The Rebirth of Magic*, loc.cit:159.

⁷⁷ Loc. cit: 158.

⁷⁸ D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here !', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 6 October 1955: 4.

⁷⁹ D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch!' loc. cit: 1956:8.

⁸⁰ D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here !', loc. cit: 3, 4, 5.

⁸¹ Personal communication to the author from D. Robinson, 10 October 2006.

⁸² Quoted in D. Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, loc. cit: 158.

⁸³ Personal communication to the author from Cecily Boothman, c.1986.

⁸⁴ According to Norton's sister, Cecily Boothman, Norton's will, which was 'written in scratchy handwriting' also specified that certain objects should pass to Cecily herself and to a close friend, Eve Finney. After Norton's death in 1979 Cecily received various books and drawings – one of them from Norton's classic 1940s period. A 'special cat art-work', Norton's last painting, was bequeathed to Eve Finney (notes supplied to the author by Cecily Boothman, c.1985).

⁸⁵ Notes by the author taken during an interview with Walter Glover, c.1986 during the writing of the first draft of *Pan's Daughter*.

⁸⁶ D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here !', loc. cit.

⁸⁷ N. McCann, interview with Detective Bert Trevenar, 19 June 1999, published on-line at <http://nedmccann.blogspot.com>

⁸⁸ Grant's major publications on sex magic and the western esoteric tradition (and which relate specifically to practices in the British branch of the Ordo Templi Orientis which he heads) date from 1972 and for this reason cannot be said to have substantially influenced Norton, especially with regard to Norton's relationship with Gavin Greenlees and Sir Eugene Goossens: indeed, it is not known whether she was familiar with any of Grant's writings during the last seven years of her life when they were available. In any case, Grant has been substantially influenced by Crowley and regards himself as a Thelemite – a follower and spiritual disciple of the Great Beast 666. Much of Grant's sex magic practice derives directly from Crowley although Grant has greatly expanded its scope and range. See also Chapter Three.

⁸⁹ P.B. Randolph, *Sexual Magic*, translated by Robert North, Magickal Childe, New York 1988.

⁹⁰ R. Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Walter Glover, Sydney 1952: 79.

⁹¹ See Appendix B: 'Selected personal correspondence between Eugene Goossens and Rosaleen Norton relating to magical ideas and processes'

⁹² Literally 'Light in extension', a reference to the alchemical light of consciousness projected into the darkness of matter – see J. Symonds, *The Great Beast: the Life and Magick of Aleister Crowley*, Mayflower/Granada, London 1973: 87 fn.

⁹³ Crowley's *Konx Om Pax* was Item 187 in the catalogue issued by The Antique Bookshop & Curios, McMahon's Point, Sydney, in October 1996. Items 188-193 were etchings and drawings by Norton. Two copies of the 1952 edition of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* were also listed for sale – for \$600 and \$550 respectively – both volumes listed as 'very scarce'.

⁹⁴ The image of *Fohat* (Plate XIX) was published in the 1982 facsimile reprint edition of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* without incurring any legal charges of alleged obscenity.

⁹⁵ During the obscenity hearings, which lasted from November 1952 - February 1953, the Crown prosecutor, Magistrate Solling, made it clear that he regarded the image of Fohat and another work titled *The Adversary*, a portrait of Lucifer, as 'obscene and an offence to chastity and delicacy'. Existing copies of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* had to have these images blacked out before the book could be released for sale.

⁹⁶ These notes were passed in manuscript form by Norton to the book's publisher, Walter Glover, who in turn passed them on to me c.1981, when we were working together on the re-release of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* as a facsimile edition. These unpublished notes remain in my possession.

⁹⁷ Transcript of interview record with Rosaleen Norton prepared by L.J. Murphy, University of Melbourne, 27 August 1949.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ The actual charge was 'making an obscene publication' and the 'abominable crime of buggery'. See D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', *Good Weekend/Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 3 July 1999:18.

¹⁰⁵ Reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 7 October 1955. Honer and Ager also tried unsuccessfully to sell the photographs to the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mirror*, after the *Sun* declined publication. See *Daily Mirror*, 7 October 1955.

¹⁰⁶ See 'Naked Revels in Art Studio', *Truth*, Sydney, 18 November 1956:9.

¹⁰⁷ During hearings at Central Court on 7 October 1955, Detective Trevenar advised Magistrate Halpin that police had retained the photographs but that the 'films had since been burnt'. See *Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 7 October 1955.

¹⁰⁸ When police raided Honer and Ager's room they seized 42 photographs and a roll of film. Only a small selection of photographs was shown on *Rewind* on 5 September 2004.

¹⁰⁹ One of the charges brought by the Vice Squad police against Norton and Greenlees was 'the abominable crime of buggery'. When Walter Glover met with Greenlees at the time of the re-publication of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* as a facsimile edition in 1982, Greenlees told Glover that his act of sodomy with Norton in the Honer/Ager photographs was 'pure make believe' (personal communication from Glover to the author, c. January 1984). However this statement is contradicted by Dave Robinson, who first met Norton, c. 1957, knew Greenlees and Norton well, and visited their Brougham Street apartment on several occasions during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Robinson was also interviewed in the Kings Cross documentary, *The Glittering Mile*, screened by Channel Nine, Sydney in 1964. According to Robinson, Greenlees was openly bisexual, and Greenlees and Norton participated in 'a lot of anal and oral sex'. Robinson also suspects there may have been some animal sex, 'with a goat'. Robinson also expressed his personal view that Norton's fondness for anal sex may have contributed to her death in 1979 from colon cancer. Personal communication to the author, 10 October 2006.

¹¹⁰ Reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 7 October 1955.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² See *Truth*, Sydney, 18 November 1956: 16.

¹¹³ According to Norton the photographs themselves had been taken in 1953 (reported in *Truth*, Sydney, 18 November 1956), nearly three years prior to the raid on Norton's home by members of the NSW Vice Squad on 3 October 1955. However during the hearings in Central Court Vice Squad detective Bert Trevenar gave evidence that Norton had told him that the photographs had been taken in June 1955 (see *Daily Mirror*, Sydney 1956). Evidence was also given in Central Court that Norton had refused to tell police who had taken the photographs because 'she did not want to get him into trouble' (*Daily Mirror*, Sydney 1956). It is highly likely that Norton had suggested the 1953 date as a ruse and that the photographer was Eugene Goossens. For major articles on the Honer/Agar trial and its aftermath see the *Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 31 May 1956; the *Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 12 November 1956 and *Truth*, Sydney, 18 November 1956: 9, 16.

¹¹⁴ *Truth*, Sydney, 18 November 1956: 9.

¹¹⁵ *Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 31 May 1956.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ *Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 1 June 1956.

¹¹⁸ According to David Salter, Mrs Goossens also modelled her continental wardrobe for a colour spread in *The Australian Women's Weekly*. See D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc cit: 17.

¹¹⁹ Australian conductor Richard Bonyng, studied under Goossens at the Conservatorium and recalls that Goossens was frequently 'very autocratic. A proud man. We were in awe of him - even frightened some of the time.' Quoted in D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc. cit.:17.

¹²⁰ This bookshop was identified by Dr Marguerite Johnson as the Notanda Gallery. See M. Johnson,

'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', conference presentation, University of Melbourne 2004.

¹²¹ See N. Heseltine, *Capriol for Mother, a Memoir of Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock)*, Thames Publishing, London 1992: 75. Nigel Heseltine was Philip Heseltine's son.

¹²² Philip Heseltine is included in a list of O.T.O. members provided by former O.T.O. practitioner Ithell Colquhoun in *Sword of Wisdom: MacGregor Mathers and the Golden Dawn*, Spearman, London 1975: 207-208.

¹²³ See Rowena Pearce, 'Cyril Scott', <http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/grainger/percy/cyril.html>

¹²⁴ See A. Crowley, Chapter 20: 'Talismans: The Lamen: The Pantacle' in *Magick without Tears*, New Falcon Publications, Tempe, Arizona 1982, also available on-line at www.hermetic.com.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ C. Rosen, *The Goossens: A Musical Century*, Andre Deutsch, London 1993:339.

¹²⁷ See J.O. Fuller, *The Magical Dilemma of Victor Neuburg*, W.H.Allen, London 1965: 227.

¹²⁸ Conversation between Goossens and Trevenar, 9 March 1956. See D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc. cit.:17.

¹²⁹ In a signed statement that Goossens made to Trevenar on 9 March 1956 after he was charged under Section 233 of the Customs Act with bringing a variety of prohibited items into the country, he confirmed how he had made contact with Norton: 'I wrote to Miss Norton expressing my admiration for the book and her work. She wrote thanking me for my letter as the result of which we met in her home in Brougham Street over tea.' Quoted in D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc. cit.:17.

¹³⁰ Personal communication to the author from Walter Glover, c.1986.

¹³¹ See D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc. cit.

¹³² Some form of sex magic was included in these 'rituals and indulgences'. Goossens confirmed in his interview with Detective Bert Trevenar in March 1956 that he performed acts of oral sex on Rosaleen Norton and that he had been involved in group sex rituals with Roie and Gavin 'four or five times'. It also seems likely that the 'unknown photographer' connected with the Honer and Ager obscenity charges, a person whom Norton was anxious to protect, was none other than Eugene Goossens himself.

¹³³ Goossens was knighted at Buckingham Place in June 1955.

¹³⁴ Gavin Greenlees confirmed to Wally Glover in 1982 that the ceremonial masks were for use in their magical rituals at Brougham Street. Personal communication from Glover to the author c.1986.

¹³⁵ D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc.cit.: 16.

¹³⁶ For further details of this case see the newspaper clippings held by the Australian Archives, Department of the Navy, SP551, Log Books of HMC, HMS, HMA ships, 1855-1957.

¹³⁷ D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc.cit.:21.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc.cit.:18.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Dr Marguerite Johnson obtained copies of these letters from film-maker Geoff Burton in 2003; he in turn had obtained them from Trevenar. See M. Johnson 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc cit.: fn.2.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid: 19.

¹⁴⁷ It is a common practice in Western magical groups for members to adopt ritual names relative to their initiatory grade. Such names only have significance to other members of the magical group and they are otherwise kept secret and certainly not revealed in public. The *djinn* or *genii* are daemons or spirits in the Islamic tradition and were traditionally considered to be a higher order of beings than humans, and composed of 'more subtle' matter. According to Islamic belief, the *genii* ruled the earth before the creation of Adam and were regarded as an intermediate race of spirit-beings between angels and humans. They were believed to have special architectural skills and, according to the *Qur'an*, were employed by King Solomon to assist in erecting his magnificent temple.

¹⁴⁸ University of Melbourne, 2004 (unpublished).

¹⁴⁹ Ibid: 14.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid: 14-15.

¹⁵¹ Or 'really' – Goossens' handwriting is unclear.

¹⁵² D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc.cit.:21.

¹⁵³ I. Shah, *The Secret Lore of Magic* [1957], Abacus, London 1972:11.

¹⁵⁴ There are several versions of the *Goetia* in the British Museum. The listing of spirits contained in the *Goetia* was first published by Johann Weyer, also known as Johannes Wier, or Wierius, (1515-1588) a German demonologist who chronicled the hierarchy of Hell in his *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum* (1577).

¹⁵⁵ *Goetia: the Lesser Key of Solomon. The Book of Evil Spirits*, trans. S.L.MacGregor Mathers with an introduction by Aleister Crowley, [1904] De Laurence, Scott & Co., Chicago 1916:45-46 (re-issued by Weiser, Boston 1995).

¹⁵⁶ Other than the *Goetia* (and putting aside Mathers' translation of *The Greater Key of Solomon* which contains the magical pentacles of planetary spirits but not 'seals') the only other publication of a similar nature, readily available to Goossens, would have been A.E. Waite's *The Book of Ceremonial Magic* (London: 1911) or its predecessor, *The Book of Black Magic and Pacts* (London 1898). *The Book of Ceremonial Magic*, which contains all the material from the earlier book, is a collection of grimoires and composite rituals rather than a single grimoire, and there was no connection between this publication and Aleister Crowley. Crowley was, in fact, very dismissive of Waite.

¹⁵⁷ The American pirated edition of the Mathers/Crowley *Goetia*, published in Chicago in 1916 in a small hardcover edition, removes all reference to the editorial input of Mathers and Crowley and implies that L.W.de Laurence was the editor. The title page information acknowledges that the text had been 'translated from ancient manuscripts in the British Museum, London' but does not reveal who the 'translator' is. This edition of the *Goetia* was still readily available during the 1950s when Eugene Goossens and his friend, Philip Heseltine, were seeking information on magical grimoires. In more recent times, other magical grimoires have been published in accessible English-language editions. They include the *Arbatel of Magick* (trans.Robert Turner, first published 1575), Heptangle Books, Gillette, New Jersey 1979; *The Grimoire of Armadel* (MS circa 1650-1700, trans. S.L.MacGregor Mathers with an introduction by Francis King), Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1980, and *The Secret Grimoire of Turiel* (trans Marius Malchus, first published 1518) Sure Fire Press, Edmonds, Washington 1994.

¹⁵⁸ *Goetia: the Lesser Key of Solomon. The Book of Evil Spirits*, trans. S.L.MacGregor Mathers with an introduction by Aleister Crowley, loc cit.1916:31.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid: 46.

¹⁶⁰ J. Symonds, *The Great Beast*, Rider, London 1951.

¹⁶¹ P-R. Koenig, 'Spermo-Gnostics and the O.T.O' , available at www.cyberlink.ch/~koenig/spermo.htm. According to Dave Robinson, a Wiccan practitioner who knew Norton well during the late 1950s and early 1960s and paid several visits to Brougham Street, Norton was very fond of anal sex – as was Gavin Greenlees. Robinson maintains that both Norton and Greenlees were bisexual and he also speculates that Norton's death from colon cancer in 1979 may have been either directly or indirectly connected with her practice of anal sex. Personal communication to the author, 10 October 2006.

¹⁶² D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch!', loc cit.:30 December 1956.

¹⁶³ R. Norton 'Hitch-hiking Witch', *Australasian Post*, 7 February 1957.

¹⁶⁴ D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch!', loc cit.: 8.

¹⁶⁵ See first photograph in the Barnes article, ibid: 6.

¹⁶⁶ See R.E. Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft*, Facts on File, New York 1989: 8. North is the traditional location for the Witch's altar, although occasionally practitioners locate it in the East.

¹⁶⁷ See D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!' loc cit. 6 October 1955: 4.

¹⁶⁸ See photograph in R. Norton 'Hitch-hiking Witch', *Australasian Post*, 7 February 1957: 11

¹⁶⁹ In Western Kabbalistic magic archangels are traditionally ascribed to the four quarters as follows: Uriel (North); Raphael (East); Michael (South) and Gabriel (West).

¹⁷⁰ In modern ceremonial magic, as practised in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the so-called Banishing Ritual of the Lesser Pentagram is used to ward off negative or evil influences. The ritual is performed in a magical circle and commences in the East. The magician uses a sword to inscribe pentagrams in the air and invokes the archangels Raphael, Gabriel, Michael and Uriel at the four quarters. The banishing also includes a ritual prayer known as the Kabbalistic Cross.

¹⁷¹ D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch!', loc.cit.: 6.

- ¹⁷² See D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!' loc cit. 37.
- ¹⁷³ 'She laughed and swung a long cigarette holder into her mouth, and we recognised the smile on her face to be exactly the same as the expression on the mask on the wall...' D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch!', loc.cit.: 9.
- ¹⁷⁴ See D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!' loc cit.: 37.
- ¹⁷⁵ This was probably the Banishing Ritual of the Lesser Pentagram, a standard ritual used by practitioners of the Golden Dawn magical tradition to create sacred space within the magical circle.
- ¹⁷⁶ N. Javes, 'Witches of Sydney', *The Sun*, Sydney, 7 February 1969.
- ¹⁷⁷ Hoffmann's charges, later admitted to be false, were published on the front page of the *Sydney Sun* on 22 September 1955.
- ¹⁷⁸ D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch!', loc.cit.: 9.
- ¹⁷⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁸⁰ D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!' loc cit.: 37.
- ¹⁸¹ See photographs reproduced on pp. 4 and 5 of D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!' loc.cit.
- ¹⁸² This was confirmed by Gavin Greenlees in conversation with Walter Glover in 1982, at the launch function for the re-issue of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*.
- ¹⁸³ These notes are in the possession of the author.
- ¹⁸⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁸⁵ R. Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc cit.:43.
- ¹⁸⁶ In Voodoo, Baron Samedi is a *loa*, or deity, whose role is lord and guardian of the cemetery. Baron Samedi is an aspect of Guede, 'god of the grave'. Erzulie is the *loa* of love, wealth, beauty and prosperity – and the lunar wife of the sun god, Legba.
- ¹⁸⁷ This phenomenon is sometimes referred to in the literature of medieval witchcraft as 'transvection'. See R.H. Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*, Crown, New York 1959: 511 et seq.
- ¹⁸⁸ R.E. Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft*, loc cit: 185.
- ¹⁸⁹ Ibid: 127.
- ¹⁹⁰ J.B. Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York 1972: 216.
- ¹⁹¹ J.B. Russell, *A History of Witchcraft*, Thames & Hudson, London and New York 1980: 84. *Maleficia* are acts of 'low magic' or sorcery.
- ¹⁹² Chapter III, J. Sprenger and H. Kramer, tr.M. Summers, *Malleus Maleficarum*, (*The Hammer of the Witches*), Folio Society, London 1968: 68 et seq.
- ¹⁹³ Ibid: 68-69.
- ¹⁹⁴ G.B. Porta, *Magiae Naturalis siue de Miraculis Rerum Naturalium* [1562], II xxvii, quoted in M.J. Harner (ed.) *Hallucinogens and Shamanism*, Oxford University Press, New York 1973: 138-139.
- ¹⁹⁵ Ibid: 138.
- ¹⁹⁶ Ibid: 139.
- ¹⁹⁷ Ibid: 139, quoting M.B. Krieg, *Green Medicine: The Search for Plants that Heal*, Bantam, New York 1966:53.
- ¹⁹⁸ J.B. Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, loc.cit 1972: 54.
- ¹⁹⁹ Quoted in D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc.cit.:18.
- ²⁰⁰ Goossens says in the letter that he has received a 'monster package' by 'daemonic angel carrier', which suggests air-freight. He also says he will be returning 'very late Friday or else Saturday a.m. and asks Norton to ask her neighbour whether photographs they have taken together have been under or over-exposed due to excessive light. He also asks that the neighbour should 'get some sets ready for Europe'.
- ²⁰¹ See also D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc.cit.:18.
- ²⁰² In another letter headed 'Roie', number four in Dr Marguerite Johnson's sequence, Goossens again refers to the 'A rite', confirming this point. See 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc. cit.
- ²⁰³ This piece of correspondence, which has no opening remarks, is identified as 'letter 10' in Dr Marguerite Johnson's article 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc. cit.
- ²⁰⁴ In medieval demonology a succubus is a demon or discarnate spirit that takes the form of a woman and has sexual intercourse with a man. Her male counterpart is the incubus.
- ²⁰⁵ See P. Turner and C.R. Coulter, *Dictionary of Ancient Deities*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK 2000: 75.
- ²⁰⁶ In letter 10 in Dr Marguerite Johnson's sequence (see 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc.cit.), Goossens also writes 'Asmodeus is enclosed', and within the context of the whole

sentence it is clear that he is posting Norton an illustration of Asmodeus, perhaps from London or some other overseas location. It is possible that the picture may have been a print of Asmodeus taken from Francis Barrett's *The Magus*, 1801, a famous sourcebook of western magic that included an image of the head of Asmodeus as well as other well known devils. The Barrett images may well have been available in print form during the 1950s because they have been frequently republished since 1801. There is a suggestion in the same letter that Goossens and Norton have been exchanging valuable artworks because Norton has apparently offered her drawing *Black Magic* as a gift. That being the case, the reproduction of Asmodeus that Goossens had acquired for Norton may have been a limited edition print.

²⁰⁷ R. Cavendish, 'Asmodeus' in *Man, Myth and Magic*, Marshall Cavendish, London, 1970: 141.

²⁰⁸ Asmodeus is the 32nd. demon, or 'evil spirit', listed in the *Goetia*. See *Goetia: the Lesser Key of Solomon. The Book of Evil Spirits*, trans. S.L.MacGregor Mathers with an introduction by Aleister Crowley, loc cit.1916:32. See also A.E. Waite, *The Book of Ceremonial Magic* [1911], University Books, New York 1961: 204 and I. Shah, *The Secret Lore of Magic*, loc.cit: 191.

²⁰⁹ R. Cavendish, 'Asmodeus' in *Man, Myth and Magic*, Marshall Cavendish, London, 1970: 141.

²¹⁰ Asmodeus is sometimes associated with Samael, a leading fallen angel and, in the Jewish religious tradition, one of the supreme sources of evil.

²¹¹ This has been confirmed by several commentators, most recently Dave Robinson who knew both Norton and Greenlees and was a frequent visitor to Brougham Street during the late 1950s and early 1960s. personal communication from Dave Robinson to the author, 10 October 2006.

²¹² In another letter, number four in Dr Marguerite Johnson's sequence (see 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc.cit.), Goossens seems to be referring to this three-fold sexual partnership when he writes: 'No S.M. [sex magic] so far – perhaps tonight, but I need you and Gav.' Elsewhere (Johnson letter 5, page 3) he makes reference to 'beautiful Gav'.

²¹³ McCann asked Trevenar whether the Honer/Ager photographs obtained by the Vice Squad showed 'Eugene bugging Greenlees as well as Roie', to which Trevenar replied 'Yeah' – although he added that the photographs he had were 'mainly between Roie and Greenlees'. Interview between McCann and Trevenar conducted on 19 June 1999: see <http://nedmccann.blogspot.com>.

²¹⁴ Johnson letter 1, loc.cit.

²¹⁵ Ashtaroth is the dark or 'evil' aspect of Chesed, associated with the Roman god Jupiter in the system of 'magical correspondences' drawn up in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (see Chapter Five). Interestingly, Mathers identifies Asmodeus as the Qliphotic counterpart to Mars, Roman god of war, who is associated with Geburah on the Kabbalistic Tree. See S.L.MacGregor Mathers (trs.) *The Kabbalah Unveiled*, George Redway, London 1887:30.

²¹⁶ M. Johnson, 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc. cit.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid, letter 9.

²¹⁹ Ibid, letter 2.

²²⁰ Given Norton's orientation towards the 'night' side of magic, the unusual reference to 'Arimanic spheres' may well be connected to a comment made by Goossens in letter 10 in relation to Norton's amazing 'Arimanes dream episode'. Ahrimanes (old Persian) and Ahriman (Pavlati) were names ascribed to the Zoroastrian deity Angra Mainyu, the 'wicked, evil prince of demons' who was 'the chief opponent of Ahura Mazda, the god of light'. See P. Turner and C.R. Coulter, *Dictionary of Ancient Deities*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK 2000: 53.

²²¹ M. Johnson, 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc.cit, letter 5.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Presumably the Cream d'Egypte herbal ointment, with blood base, prepared by 'Anna' in Paris, referred to in letter 7.

²²⁴ M. Johnson, 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc.cit: letter 10.

²²⁵ This is my expression, not Goossens'.

²²⁶ See A. Crowley, *Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, Hill and Wang, New York 1969, republished Arkana, London 1989; L. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley*, St Martin's Press, New York 2000 and S. Skinner (ed.), *The Magical Diaries of Aleister Crowley*, Weiser, York Beach, Maine 2003.

²²⁷ L. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley*, loc.cit.: 416.

²²⁸ A. Owen, 'Aleister Crowley in the Desert', extract from *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2004, published on-line at www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/642011.html.

²²⁹ A. Crowley, *Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, loc cit: 386, 768.

²³⁰ Norton and Greenlees had been arrested at their Brougham Street apartment in September 1951 by Sergeant Francis 'Bumper' Farrell and were charged with vagrancy. They were later remanded at Central Court, Sydney, and given two weeks to find 'gainful employment'. Glover provided that employment by paying them a modest salary while they assembled images and poems for the publication of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, released the following year.

²³¹ W. Glover, unpublished written notes on Norton and her background given to the author c.1986 to assist the research for *Pan's Daughter* (Sydney 1988).

²³² Reported in both the Sydney *Sun* on 20 October 1955 and the Sydney *Daily Telegraph* on 21 October 1955.

²³³ Greenlees, who was then aged 25, had in fact been sent to Callan Park Mental Hospital on 7 October 1955 and would remain in this particular hospital and later in the Alma Mater Nursing Home, Kensington, for virtually the rest of his life, although he was allowed periods of temporary release, allowing him to visit Norton and her sister, Cecily Boothman. Greenlees was not discharged from the Alma Mater Nursing Home until 1983, the year of his death. According to a statement prepared by Dr S.G. Sands, acting medical superintendent of Callan Park, and Macquarie Street psychiatrist, Dr R.J. Kiely, submitted to Justice Clegg at the Darlinghurst Court in relation to the Honer/Ager charges, Greenlees had been medically assessed as a schizophrenic. He was hallucinating voices which would perpetually torment and ridicule him and he had also begun materialising doubles of himself which 'walked around the city in the shape of other people' - he could recognise these doubles of himself because of their 'characteristic mannerisms'. Greenlees' conversation was said to be 'stilted and studded with pseudo-scientific jargon' and he had entered Callan Park in an extremely emaciated state, weighing little over eight stone - considerably underweight for a man of six foot, two inches. According to Dr Sands, Greenlees was also 'obsessed with sex' and 'wanted to escape from the real world'. He would take books on occultism into the corner of his room and 'could only be aroused to any action by constant prodding'.

²³⁴ M. Johnson, 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc.cit: letter 10.

²³⁵ See M. Aldrich, R. Ashley and M. Horowitz (ed.), *High Times Encyclopedia of Recreational Drugs*, Stonehill Publishing, New York 1978: 238.

²³⁶ L. Grinspoon and J.B. Bakalar, *Psychedelic Drugs Reconsidered*, Basic Books, New York 1979: 81.

²³⁷ M. Aldrich, R. Ashley and M. Horowitz (ed.), *High Times Encyclopedia of Recreational Drugs*, loc.cit: 110.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ See 'Two skulls for Rowie', *Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 8 April 1972. Norton also offered LSD to me when I interviewed her in her Roslyn Gardens apartment in 1977. I declined this invitation, knowing from my own previous experiences that LSD is an amplifier of subconscious processes. Norton's flat was eerie and confining and would probably have resulted in a terrifying 'trip'.

²⁴⁰ LSD is the popular name for d-lysergic acid diethylamide.

²⁴¹ See M. Aldrich, R. Ashley and M. Horowitz (ed.), *High Times Encyclopedia of Recreational Drugs*, loc.cit: 258 and L. Grinspoon and J.B. Bakalar, *Psychedelic Drugs Reconsidered*, loc.cit.:11.

²⁴² The phrase 'psychedelic' was coined by Dr Humphry Osmond, a Canadian psychiatrist and friend of the well-known novelist Aldous Huxley, who became an icon of the international counter-culture as a result of his pioneering experiments with mescaline during the 1950s. Huxley's correspondence with Osmond on the nature of psychedelics and the visionary experience is featured in Huxley's posthumously published volume, *Moksha*, ed. M. Horowitz and C. Palmer, Stonehill Publishing, New York 1977.

²⁴³ For details of this fascinating process see P. Stafford, *Psychedelic Baby Reaches Puberty*, Praeger, New York 1971 and J. Stevens, *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream*, Atlantic Monthly Press, New York 1987.

²⁴⁴ S. Grof, *Realms of the Human Unconscious: Observations from LSD Research*, E.P.Dutton, New York 1976: 3.

²⁴⁵ N. Javes, 'Witches of Sydney', *The Sun*, Sydney, 7 February 1969.

²⁴⁶ R. Drewe, 'At last the law gives witches a spell', *The Australian*, 8 January 1971.

²⁴⁷ This is an interesting remark. Candlemas, also known as Imbolc, is celebrated by Wiccans in the northern hemisphere on 2 February (and Norton's interview was published on 8 January). These days Australian Wiccans celebrate Candlemas on 1 August, because the cycle of the seasons is inverted in the southern hemisphere, but here Norton was evidently still adhering to the ritual procedures adopted by Wiccans in Britain.

²⁴⁸ R. Drewe, 'At last the law gives witches a spell', loc.cit., 8 January 1971.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ The *Qlipha*, or negative forces of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, are specifically referred to in the glossary in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc.cit. 1952:78, and are represented graphically by the image of the Werplon (plate XV:45).

²⁵¹ W. Glover, unpublished written notes on Norton and her background given to the author c.1986 to assist the research for *Pan's Daughter* (Sydney 1988).

²⁵² 'Witch is so charming', television programme preview, *Sun*, Sydney, 5 December 1967.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

Chapter Six

ROSALEEN NORTON AS A MAGICAL ARTIST

Throughout her life Rosaleen Norton incorporated elements from her magical practice into her visionary art. While her early compositions drew more on graphic styles associated with popular conceptions of ghouls, demons and disembodied spirits, her work gradually became both more artistically accomplished and also more ‘authentic’ in the sense that it drew increasingly on her own personal experiences. From the age of 23 onwards, when Norton began to explore trance states through self-hypnosis, her visionary and magical art began to incorporate material drawn from her ‘inner-plane’ encounters with the principal deities of her magical pantheon – figures like Pan, Lilith, Hecate and Lucifer in his manifestation as the Adversary – as well as nightmarish entities like the Werplon (see Chapter Four).

It can be argued that Norton reached an artistic peak with her exhibition in 1949 at the Rowden White Library at the University of Melbourne (which drew on ten years’ accumulated work) and the publication of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* in Sydney three years later. During the 1960s and 1970s many of Norton’s artworks became parodies of earlier compositions as she sought to replicate earlier images in order to make a reasonably steady, if modest, income. Her palette became increasingly more lurid and garish and many of her works were crudely executed in oils, producing a body of work far less refined and accomplished than her pen and pastel works from the late 1940s and early 1950s. As a consequence it is possible to consider Norton’s artistic output in various stages, or phases, of development (and also decline). These categories are:

- a) Adolescent and other early works.
- b) Artworks from the ten-year period leading up to, and including, the 1949 exhibition at the Rowden White Library gallery at the University of Melbourne.
- c) Drawings reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (1952).

d) Later artworks (especially works produced in the 1960s and '70s.)

In the final section of this chapter I will also present a lengthy, detailed analysis in which I compare the visionary artworks of Rosaleen Norton with those of the controversial British trance-occultist Austin Osman Spare (1886-1956). Spare is now considered a major figure in the 20th century magical revival.¹ Both artists belong within the same milieu, emerging as 'visionary outsiders' intent on exploring atavistic and chthonic imagery associated with sex magic and altered states of consciousness.

Norton's adolescent and other early works

The earliest known artwork by Rosaleen Norton is an untitled pencil drawing from the personal collection of her sister, Cecily Boothman. Produced when Norton was seven years old, it depicts a cluster of rabbits playing and skipping and having an enjoyable time.² It shows none of the

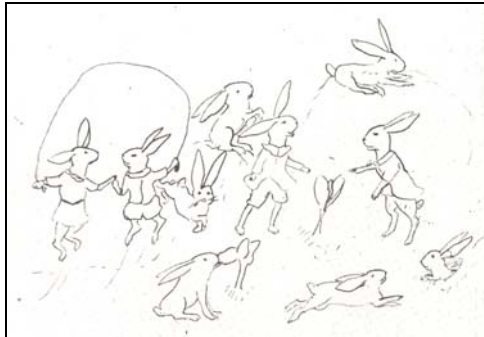


Plate 68: Norton's earliest known artwork – produced when she was seven. Courtesy Cecily Boothman

macabre or supernatural elements that would soon come to pervade her work. However, according to Norton, even her very earliest drawings – now lost, and produced when she was just 3½ years old – did draw on 'psychic' memories:

My first drawings...were mainly creatures called 'Nothing Beasts' and 'Flippers', which I knew very well as presences. The latter looked rather like the conventional sheeted ghosts, and were hostile to me; but they were kept at bay by my friends and protectors, the 'Nothing Beasts', who had animal heads surmounting a mass of octopoid tentacles, with which they seemed to swim through the ether. Apropos of apparitions, various psychic manifestations, both subjective and objective, have always been an integral part of my life; consequently I accepted them unquestionably as part of the natural order of things.³

The drawings Norton produced at Chatswood Girls' Grammar School – bizarre images of vampires, ghosts and werewolves based on Saint Saens' *Danse Macabre* – have not survived but, as mentioned in Chapter One, were sufficiently distressing to the other pupils that they hastened the process of Norton's expulsion from her school, her disruptive personal behaviour being the other main contributing factor.⁴

Initially disheartened by her expulsion from Chatswood Girls' Grammar School, Norton decided to enrol at East Sydney Technical College and studied art for two years under the tutelage of the noted sculptor, Rayner Hoff (1894-1937), who at that time was head of the Art School. Hoff was something of an artistic revolutionary and had arrived in Australia in 1923 with an impressive reputation: as a student at Nottingham Art School in Britain (1910-15) he had received silver and gold medals in a national competition and he had also won the Prix de Rome at the end of his diploma studies.⁵ At East Sydney Technical College he supported the cause of modernism, making the first significant break with the academic Neoclassicism that had dominated Australian sculpture up to this time.⁶ Strongly influenced by European Art Deco and personally attracted to Graeco-Roman mythic imagery,⁷ Hoff believed that a vivid and uninhibited imagination was needed for artistic development, and he had apparently formed the view that Norton had these qualities in abundance. 'He freed me from routine and let me spend my time at figure drawing and composition,' Norton recalled in an autobiographical article published in 1957, 'and since for the first time I was encouraged to work continuously at my own art form, I became an exemplary student.'⁸

It was while attending East Sydney Technical College that Norton also became one of Australia's first female pavement artists,⁹ although this was to be a very brief career. Norton had a favoured location at the bottom of Rowe Street, near the General Post Office in Martin Place, and at this spot she would draw on the pavement to attract attention from passers-by. On her first morning she earned herself seventeen shillings, one penny,¹⁰ at the time a small fortune for a struggling student. Part of the appeal of her location in Rowe Street was that it was just below the Millions Club, and the members of this social club had a tradition of throwing pennies out of the window for a joke. According to Walter Glover the idea behind this activity was that the people below would think pennies were raining from heaven.¹¹ However, on one occasion while exhibiting her art on the pavement, Norton was hit on the

forehead by a falling coin. According to her sister Cecily Boothman, 'It dealt her quite a blow. She decided that the site was too dangerous, and did not go back.'¹²

Norton was still living in the family home in Lindfield and had already begun to stimulate her imagination by performing private rituals in her bedroom, using robes, Chinese joss sticks and wine which she had taken from a stock supply hidden by her parents. Meanwhile, although Rayner Hoff was encouraging her creative process at East Sydney Technical College, Norton was still tied to domestic routines at home and often wondered how she could employ her artistic talents to earn herself a regular income and obtain her independence.

Artworks from the ten-year period leading up to, and including, Norton's 1949 exhibition

Norton's adolescent macabre drawings inclined towards a formulaic horror-comic style and were not especially distinctive. It was after making contact with *Pertinent* magazine in the early 1940s (see Chapter One) that her recognisable artistic style began to emerge for the first time. As mentioned previously, the first of Norton's works accepted by *Pertinent* were published in the magazine's third edition, released in October 1941 when the artist was 24 years old. Three line-works appeared in this edition, *The Borgias*, *Esoteric Study* and *Elementals*. Of these, *The Borgias* (reproduced in Chapter One) is by far the most accomplished. The heads of three mysterious and quietly menacing figures are shown clustered together in a conspiratorial formation; a hand is poised above a bowl and is pouring what may well be poison from a small vial into a translucent bowl. A coiled snake with a darting forked tongue writhes threateningly in the foreground. Here Norton is drawing partly on an Art Nouveau style reminiscent of Aubrey Beardsley: the drawing is characterised by distinctive dark arcs and the snake is shown virtually in silhouette. The sneering expression on the face closest to us has a look of arrogant disdain that Norton would apply to her depictions of other authority figures¹³ in later artworks, especially some of the drawings reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* a decade later.¹⁴

The pencil drawing *Esoteric Study* is of particular interest because the accompanying commentary states that Norton's basic composition was 'actually executed whilst in a hypnotic trance'.¹⁵ It depicts Oriental forms

swirling in a vortex thronging with fanged demons whilst a horned goat-headed figure looks on approvingly in the background. *Elementals*, meanwhile, is described as ‘a conception of what may be amongst us and about us in the unseen world. Shapes of mortally formless evil elemental and disembodied spirits...’¹⁶ The least convincing of the three reproduced works, *Elementals* shows ghoulish heads clustered together above a female figure who may be based on Norton herself.

Other drawings by Norton were published in *Pertinent* in the November and December 1941 editions and some were offered for sale as prints.¹⁷ The November edition of *Pertinent* included *The Rite of Spring*, a pencil drawing of an exuberant, prancing centaur symbolising ‘the Spring of life with fierce and joyous exultation’¹⁸ and *Sorcery*, a portrait of a horned version of Merlin surrounded by serpentine demons and shown wearing a strange conical headpiece reminiscent of the tower in which the wizard was said to have been imprisoned.¹⁹ December’s *Pertinent* included three line studies with supernatural themes. Two of them, *Nightmare* and *Desolation* were compositions featuring ghouls, skulls and images of death and harkened back to Norton’s more formulaic early work. However, *The Goat of Mendes*,

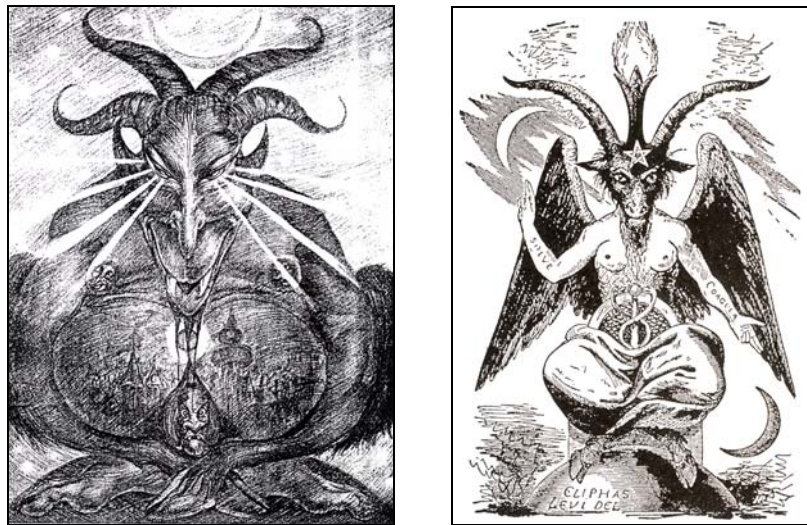


Plate 69: Norton’s *Goat of Mendes* and Eliphas Lévi’s 19th century depiction of Baphomet

a watercolour portrait of a devilish, hermaphroditic goat-headed entity otherwise known as Baphomet and associated with the allegedly heretical

activities of the medieval Knights Templar, had more presence and projected a genuine sense of menace.²⁰ The Goat of Mendes has been associated with Pan by French ceremonial magician Eliphas Lévi and occult historian and Golden Dawn member A.E. Waite;²¹ Norton depicted him in a squatting position with four horns, fangs and large bulbous breasts, and with mysterious beams of light emanating from his eyes.

Nevertheless, in a developmental sense, Norton's work in *Pertinent* can still be considered transitional. Norton's mature style, more clearly evident in the 1949 Rowden White Library exhibition and in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* published in 1952, had not yet emerged in 1941. Just two years later, however, Norton would show a substantial leap forward with the reproduction of several of her most recent drawings in *Pix* magazine. One of these, *Astral Scene*, referred to earlier (reproduced in Chapter Four) and produced c.1943, showed Norton in a comatose state of trance while a magical horned entity manifested itself beside her.²² This artwork is of interest for several reasons. Firstly, it is more inventive than most, if not all, of its predecessors: the comatose Norton is shown facing away from the viewer while a mysterious supernatural being with ram's horns looks on protectively within an atmosphere of swirling magical forces. From a compositional viewpoint this pencil drawing contrasts markedly with *The Goat of Mendes* which is virtually two-dimensional. Secondly, Norton's graphic style has already become more assured. *Astral Scene* is a skilfully rendered drawing and the artist (shown in trance), the atmospheric occult sigils, and the mythic spirit-being are convincing and convey an authentic sense of 'magical reality' – it is perhaps the first work in Norton's *oeuvre* to achieve this.²³ And thirdly, *Astral Scene* is one of the earliest known works by Norton that depicts her magical process, namely her ability to enter a state of trance through self-hypnosis in order to contact supernatural beings in this way.²⁴ For all of these reasons, *Astral Scene* is perhaps the most notable artwork produced by Norton in the early 1940s.

One of the most important roles played by *Pertinent* in Norton's career, apart from the fact that it published several of her artworks in the early 1940s and helped promote her work commercially, was that it also enabled her to meet her future lover and artistic collaborator, Gavin Greenlees. As mentioned earlier,²⁵ two of Greenlees' poems had been published in *Pertinent* in 1943 when he was just 13 years old. Greenlees and Norton had a mutual interest in surrealism, poetry and fantasy and their creative contributions to *Pertinent* apparently brought them together, although exactly how this came about has

not been established. It is thought that they first met each other toward the end of World War Two, while Norton's husband, Beresford Conroy, was serving with the AIF in northern New Guinea.²⁶ By mid-July 1949 Norton and Greenlees knew each other sufficiently well to hitch-hike together from Sydney to Melbourne.



Esoteric Study



The Rite of Spring



Desolation



Elementals

Plate 70: Four of Norton's drawings published in *Pertinent* in 1941

Norton's task in coming to Melbourne was to find a gallery where she could exhibit 46 pictures representing ten years' artistic work.²⁷ At this time, on her own admission, both she and Greenlees were 'flat broke'.²⁸ Fortunately a mutual contact named Ian Stapleton came to their assistance. Stapleton was co-editor of the University of Melbourne student newspaper *Farrago*



Plate 71: Gavin Greenlees and Rosaleen Norton with Ian Stapleton in Melbourne, 1949

and proved to be an enthusiastic ally.²⁹ Impressed by the selection of works that Norton had brought with her, Stapleton quickly became a type of publicity agent acting on the artist's behalf. Not only did he book the gallery at the Rowden White Library at the University of Melbourne so Norton's exhibition could be held there, but he also put up some money for out-of-pocket expenses.³⁰

Among the works that Norton had taken with her to Melbourne were some of her best pen and pastel drawings of the mid to late-1940s : *Timeless Worlds*, *Lucifer*, *Triumph*, *The Adversary*, *The Initiate*, *Merlin*, *Loosing of the Whirlwind* and an early version of *Individuation*. These works would all feature in the forthcoming show. A total of forty-six works would be on display in the Rowden White Library exhibition; it was scheduled to run from 1-23 August 1949, the gallery opening from 10 am to 9 pm. Professor A.R. Chisholm had agreed to give the welcoming address.

A small four-page exhibition catalogue was prepared that included a full-page essay on the artist and some of the featured drawings. Almost certainly written by Norton herself,³¹ it is quoted here in full because it reveals Norton's perceptions of her own creative process and philosophy, and includes references to what Norton clearly believed to be the revolutionary nature of her work. Norton undoubtedly saw herself as an 'outsider' in the contemporary Australian art world, presenting herself as an artist willing to incorporate unfamiliar archetypal and visionary elements into art-forms intended to challenge local 'values' and extend conventional artistic boundaries:

'Modern' Australian art of the last decade is principally noted for its imitation, with greater or less degrees of success, of the European art following the formal revolution of the Post-Impressionists. Our few distinctive artists belong mainly to the older school, and our young artists are hampered by a pathetic obsession with merely temporal values, which expresses itself in their limited formal experimentalism and equally limited 'social realism'.

The work in this exhibition is remarkable in its uninhibited return to that storehouse of timeless archetypal imagery on which the visionaries of all ages have drawn, a return which owes nothing to contemporary fashion or an attitude of idolatry towards the past. Surrealist? Certainly not in the orthodox sense; there is here little Freudian imagery, conscious or otherwise, and the artist expresses a doctrine quite opposed to the pragmatic materialism of Surrealist manifestoes [sic]. Perhaps the wider category used by Herbert Read, 'Superrealism', to include all varieties of fantastic 'literary' art, would encompass best the spirit of these pictures.

In style, again, there is no obvious influence. With frequent alleged influences, those of Goya, Blake, Norman Lindsay and, for some obscure reason, Beardsley, there is no real stylistic affinity.³² This true originality is the fruit of a continual attitude of honesty towards the subject, which consists, in several of these works, of so-called 'psychic' experience. The artist has none of the intellectual's embarrassment before the 'supernatural'; her art is a healthy reaction from the narrow materialism of the 30's towards an integral statement of man's experience, human, demonic and divine.

Her imagery, drawn with a classical feeling for line, is used once more to symbolize the intangible forces of which human life is the playground. Like the Yeats of *A Vision*,³³ she has felt the need for a basic vocabulary of symbols, from whose elements her highly personal vision is compounded. This imagery is sometimes familiar, almost banal, as in *Lucifer*, where the faun (whose resemblance to those of Lindsay is, again, merely superficial) is the obvious expression of a devout Pantheism; again, as in *The Initiate*, it is more esoteric, and the result of deeply felt inner experience which tends to break artistic bounds. Perhaps the most satisfying work lies somewhere between these extremes, in personal statements of broad human themes such as *The Adversary*, *War*,

and *Individuation*, fertile side-alleys such as the mathematical mysticism of *The Blueprint*, social satire as in *The Possessed*, and a remarkable wedding of candid realism to fantasy as in the *Self-Portrait*. On a lighter plane, a strong talent for the satirical grotesque is evident in such smaller drawings as *Punishment of Hop-Frog* and *Adam and Eve*.

By her lack of parochialism and temporal preoccupation, Rosaleen Norton offers a unique example to young Australian artists.³⁴



Plate 72: An early version of *Individuation*, exhibited in Melbourne in 1949

Here Norton is somewhat defensively positioning herself as a visionary Australian artist concerned with themes that extend well beyond the artistic frontiers of her contemporaries. Norton is keen to identify her own unique qualities by emphasising the guiding principles of Pantheism and esoteric philosophy which underpin her creative work. Norton also stresses her lack of indebtedness to other artists even though the influence of Norman Lindsay and, on occasion, other figures like Beardsley, is clearly evident in some of her earlier compositions.

Several of the exhibited artworks would later be reproduced in colour in Walter Glover's *Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (1984), providing us with some sense of the strong visual impact they would have had, displayed on the walls of the university library.³⁵ Given the conservative and conventional nature of mainstream Australian society in the immediate post-World War Two era, Norton should, perhaps, have anticipated a potentially hostile response to her blatantly pagan, sexual images. *Pan* was essentially a portrait of a naked leering Devil; *Timeless Worlds* depicted a naked female demon riding ecstatically through the sky on the back of a griffin; *Loosing of the Whirlwind* showed a black serpentine demon emerging from a vortex of swirling forms beside a triumphant naked she-devil; *Triumph* and *Individuation* both featured naked hermaphrodites with their breasts and penis in full view; *The Initiate* showed two naked women engaged in a warm sexual embrace, while *Lucifer* depicted the figure of the Adversary standing proudly naked above a horned satyr and a female demon, the latter clearly modelled on Norton herself; breasts and genitalia were once again clearly visible for all to see.

Nevertheless, despite the confrontational sexual nature of many of the artworks exhibited in the Rowden White Library, the images themselves displayed a marked development in both form and conception when compared to most of the work Norton had published in *Pertinent* a few years earlier. Norton's artistic rendering of human anatomy was now far more convincing, her metaphysical compositions more assured and original. In addition, Norton's depictions of mythic deities in many instances now reflected her personal metaphysical experiences while in a state of trance. Continuing the compositional style established in the early-1940s drawing *Astral Scene*, which depicted Norton in trance beside a manifested spirit-being, Norton had now produced a dramatic coloured work in pencil and pastel that was in the same genre and every bit as impressive: *Sphinx and Her Secrets* (a work which is also reproduced in the Owen M. Broughton 1948 *Arna* article referred to earlier). This particular composition showed Norton in a horizontal comatose state while Egyptian god-forms and an image of Pan emerged from the astral realms and towered above her.

Mythic encounters were also a feature of several other works in the 1949 exhibition. *The Gnostic*³⁶ is clearly based on the esoteric symbol of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life with its central Middle Pillar³⁷ and shows Norton – naked with arms outstretched – embracing mythic beings who have appeared

above her and who have emanated from higher spheres on the Tree (see Chapter Two for references to the Kabbalah). One of these beings is located on the central axis itself, embodying a fusion of the two polarities of good and evil, while a *Qliphothic* demon leers at us from the left-hand side of the composition – an appropriate rendition since this devilish entity belongs symbolically on the ‘negative’ or left-hand side of the Tree.³⁸ On the right-hand side is a benign feminine deity with a large diamond on her brow. The symbolism of this four-sided geometrical figure may link this goddess to the fourth *sephirah*, or sphere of consciousness, on the Tree of Life known as *Chesed* (representing Mercy), although traditionally this sphere is considered masculine.³⁹ The symbol of the diamond recurs in *The Initiate* which shows two beautiful naked women embracing each other within a diamond of golden light, rendered in colour pastel. At their feet we are shown a sphere inscribed with a hexagram, or Star of David motif. Interpreted in a Kabbalistic context, the Star of David hexagram consists of two interpenetrating triangles: the symbol itself represents the fusion of the triangle of Spirit (the Supernal

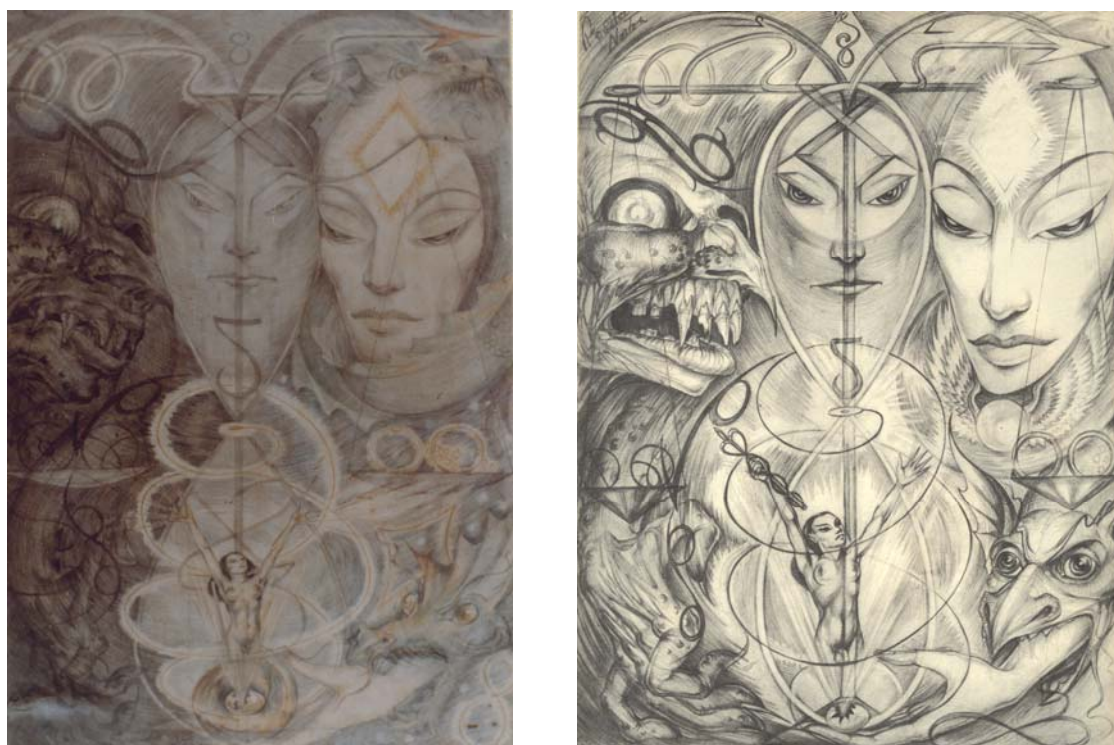


Plate 73: Norton's *The Gnostic* (left), exhibited in Melbourne in 1949 (Plate 35 in *The Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton*). A drawing based on the earlier painting, retitled *Esoteric Study* (right), was included as Plate XII in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*

triad of *Kether*, *Chokmah* and *Binah*, the first three emanations on the Tree of Life) with the obverse triangle of Physical Form or matter. Regarded this way the Star of David is a visual representation of the esoteric maxim ‘as above, so below’: the fusion of the Macrocosm and Microcosm. With this in mind, *The Initiate* (reproduced later in this chapter, in the section dealing with works from *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*) probably represents a state of symbolic harmony rather than spiritual passion, although it is possible that Norton may have sought to represent both of these aspects in the drawing when she produced it. Norton’s face appears low down in the work, as if in a state of trance, and on the left-hand side two disembodied hands are presented cupped together in a diamond form. In the top right-hand side of the picture a small female form is presented travelling ‘astrally’ within a diamond (or yoni)⁴⁰ form, indicating that this work is essentially a depiction of an inner-planes encounter (see Chapter Four for details of Norton’s astral journeys in trance).

Norton’s impressive figurative work, *The Adversary*, which featured on the cover of the 1949 Rowden White exhibition catalogue, offers another example of the mythic encounter (reproduced in Chapter Four). Here the imposing figure of the Adversary, an aspect of Lucifer, confronts a much smaller human being, symbolically cutting him down to size.⁴¹ One of Norton’s iconic images, this work was finely executed by the artist and captures the drama of the encounter between a mere mortal and a ‘higher’ spiritual being: a line drawing based on the same composition would be included by the artist in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* in 1952.⁴² Finally, within the same genre, reference should be made to *Witches’ Sabbath*,⁴³ in which a naked woman – possibly based on Norton herself – is shown engaged in a passionate sexual embrace with a black panther while a winking nun and a leering devil look on. This was a mythic encounter of quite another kind, and this particular picture was one of four artworks that would arouse strong controversy during the 1949 exhibition, leading to a court hearing and charges of alleged obscenity (see below).

Other fine works in the Rowden White Library exhibition included *The Blueprint*, in which a benign form of Pan, representing the Logos – the guiding spiritual force in the cosmos – peers into his crystal bowl, carefully watching the forms emerging in the lower worlds, and *Triumph*, a work divided symbolically into two distinct realms: the domain of dark magical forces, or *Qlipha* (again, shown appropriately on the left-hand side of the picture), and the domain of light ruled by a naked golden-bodied

hermaphrodite who raises an arm in celebration while a transcendent being looks on from a higher spiritual sphere.

Norton probably expected that her exhibition in the Rowden White Library would be attended mainly by students and a few curious academics. However, two days after the opening of the exhibition Victorian police entered the library and seized four of the most controversial pictures on show. Charges would subsequently be laid under the Police Offences Act of 1928 alleging that these particular works – *Witches' Sabbath*, *Lucifer*, *Triumph* and *Individuation* – were decadent and obscene, and 'likely to arouse unhealthy sexual appetites' in those who saw them.



Plate 74: *Triumph* (Plate 10 in *The Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton*)

The raid on 3 August followed a visit to the exhibition earlier in the day by two policemen, Detective John Olsen and Inspector Tannahill. Olsen had spoken to Norton about the controversial nature of some of the exhibited works and discussed with her various complaints he had received about the drawings being 'lewd and disgusting'. One person had described the works as

‘stark sensuality running riot’,⁴⁴ while another claimed the exhibition produced ‘as gross a shock to the average spectator as a witch’s orgy’.⁴⁵

On 4 August, just three days after the opening of the exhibition, the acting Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Professor Paton, ordered the removal of five further paintings from the Library because a woman student had complained that the pictures were obscene.⁴⁶ Norton was extremely unimpressed by this response to her work. ‘Obscenity,’ she countered, ‘like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. This figleaf morality expresses a very unhealthy attitude.’⁴⁷

When Detective Olsen initially asked Norton for an explanation of *Witches’ Sabbath* – a controversial work that would later be retitled *Black Magic* – she replied that it was a ‘symbolistic’ drawing: the female figure depicted was a witch, the panther personified the powers of darkness, and their embrace represented the initiation of the witch into the ‘infernal mysteries’.⁴⁸ In the ensuing legal sessions at Carlton Court, which took place while the exhibition was still being shown at the University of Melbourne, the Crown prosecution alleged that works of this sort could ‘deprave and corrupt the morals of those who saw them’.⁴⁹

During the court hearings the police detectives argued their case vigorously before the presiding Stipendiary Magistrate, Mr Addison, claiming that Norton was exhibiting artworks inspired by medieval demonology. However, in Norton’s defence, Mr A.L. Abrahams countered this claim by stating that these allegedly obscene pictures were mild compared with illustrations published in *The History of Sexual Magic*, a book that had already been cleared by the censors and which was readily available in Australia. ‘We have to cater for people with normal reactions to sex,’ Abrahams noted, ‘not morons, the subnormal and neurotics.’⁵⁰ Emphasising the point still further he added: ‘The Act under which this prosecution is launched is based on a case heard during Queen Victoria’s reign in 1836...’⁵¹

The Warden of Melbourne University Union, Mr R.R. Barbour, also presented evidence which indirectly supported Norton. It was Barbour who had given Norton permission to hold the exhibition at the university, and he provided testimony during the court proceedings stating that he did not personally find Norton’s drawings sexually exciting.⁵² Keen to reinforce this point, Abrahams then asserted that for Norton to be declared guilty as charged, her art would

have to be found to be of a nature 'likely to corrupt those whose minds were open to immoral influences'. Stipendiary Magistrate Addison accepted Abrahams' argument, finding in Norton's favour and dismissing the charges of obscenity brought against her under the Police Offences Act 1928. Costs of £4/4/- were awarded against the Victorian police department.⁵³

Norton was delighted with her court victory but dismayed that the publicity generated by the charges of obscenity had not led to any sales at the exhibition.⁵⁴ 'Here I am with a million pounds' worth of publicity, 46 pictures on my hands, a lot of peep-sees and no buyers, and nowhere to sleep unless another friend bobs up,' she told a journalist from *Truth* magazine. 'I'm flat broke and unless I can cash in on the four pictures mentioned in the court case, I look like walking back to Sydney and then starving...'⁵⁵ When asked the likely purchase price she would place on the four controversial artworks, Norton replied:

Just give me a two-week show somewhere in the city and then I'll hand over any one of them for breakfast in bed, a pillow slip, and two nice sheets. It's all right being a notorious person but a sweet bed and the next meal mean a lot.⁵⁶

However Norton's wish for an additional exhibition in a more central city location, such as Flinders Street in the heart of Melbourne, did not eventuate. Having spent several miserable days at the People's Palace and the Salvation Army Hostel she now found herself 'nearly £50 in the red'. The exhibition at the Rowden White Library had generated enormous publicity but no actual income. 'It's dreadful to think an artist has to get a bed from night to night, but that's how it has been...' she told the *Truth* journalist, adding despondently '...I've had art..⁵⁷

Norton remained long enough in Melbourne, however, to undertake a series of tests and interviews with psychologist L.J. Murphy at the University of Melbourne: the highly informative transcripts from these sessions have been referred to earlier. Twenty-seven of the exhibited artworks were also photographed in colour by Professor Oeser, Head of Melbourne University's psychology department, and it was these colour slides that were sent by Professor Oeser's widow to Walter Glover in 1982, thereby facilitating the publication of the *Supplement to the Art of Rosaleen Norton* two years later.⁵⁸ Norton herself was able to purchase a full set of large colour prints from Professor Oeser, which was some small consolation for her after the

disappointing financial outcome of the Melbourne exhibition. A handwritten letter from Norton to Professor Oeser has survived, in which Norton expresses relief at being able to purchase a new set of colour prints, having lost her own copies in transit while returning to Sydney.⁵⁹

Drawings reproduced in The Art of Rosaleen Norton (1952)

The circumstances which brought Rosaleen Norton, Gavin Greenlees and Walter Glover together have already been described in Chapter One. Glover effectively became Norton's and Greenlees' employer when he provided them with the opportunity to earn a small salary in order to avoid the charge of vagrancy brought against them in 1951 by the NSW Vice Squad. Glover also negotiated an agreement with Norton which made him the copyright holder of all her past, present and future artworks.⁶⁰

Following lengthy discussions with Norton and Greenlees, Glover agreed to finance publication of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*. It would be released as a limited edition art book and would include a selection of major drawings by Norton with accompanying poems by Gavin Greenlees. When the final selection was made, 31 drawings by Norton had been chosen, together with 24 poems by Greenlees. Two of Norton's own poems would also be included, together with relevant extracts from her magical diaries.⁶¹

Together with the major works selected for the Rowden White Library exhibition, the drawings reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* represent the high point of Norton's artistic career. In later years she would parody many of her major compositions, producing hastily drawn copies of some of her best known works in return for modest financial gain. Norton sometimes bartered artworks for gin and tonics in the Prince of Wales Hotel in Sydney's Haymarket, where she used to drink frequently. On other occasions she would paint replicas of her portraits of Pan and Lucifer for prices ranging from £5 for a small work to £100 for a large canvas. However, in late 1951 Norton had found a financial sponsor in Walter Glover and such acts of barter and self-parody were not required. For the most part the black and white artworks included in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* are of a similar calibre to the major works exhibited in the 1949 Melbourne exhibition.

The Art of Rosaleen Norton is especially significant because it contains many of Norton's most recognisable, iconic images. Most of them are modified

pencil renditions of the coloured pen and pastel works exhibited at the Rowden White Library three years earlier. Replicated images in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* – that is to say, works exhibited in Melbourne and then redrawn for black and white reproduction – include *The Bells* (Plate VII); *The Jester* (Plate XI); *The Gnostic* (retitled *Esoteric Study*, Plate XII); *The Adversary* (Plate XVI); *Witches' Sabbath* (retitled *Black Magic*, Plate XVII);⁶² *The Angel of Twizzari* (Plate XXI); *The Initiate* (Plate XXII); *At Home* (Plate XXX) and *Individuation* (Plate VI). The last of these was a substantially re-worked depiction of a winged hermaphrodite, now widely considered one of Norton's strongest images and a vast improvement on the original 1949 version.

Several completely new artworks were also included in the 1952 publication. These included *The Master* (Plate XXXI), a dramatic drawing reversed out in white against a black field depicting the horned god Pan as master of the zodiac; *Fohat* (Plate XIX), a devilish, horned figure with a greatly extended serpentine penis (reproduced in Chapter One); *Eloi* (Plate XIII), a



Plate 75: Norton's revised and greatly improved version of *Individuation* (Plate VI in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*) and *The Initiate* (Plate XXII in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*)

magisterial leonine figure identified by Norton as ‘the planet of Jupiter’;⁶³ *Geburah* (Plate X), an imposing naked figure with a male torso and the head of a hawk, and *Lilith* (Plate IV), a fine depiction of the legendary she-devil accompanied by a black panther.

Once again Norton demonstrated a mastery of human anatomy in her new work; the naked torsos are sculptural, finely hewn and well proportioned, and the mythic figures themselves have an engaging presence. *Geburah* and *The Master* are especially striking, as is her bold depiction of Lilith, shown with pointed cat’s ears and snakes writhing in her hair. Norton’s depiction of the humanoid insect monster, the Werplon (*Qlipha*, Plate XV) is genuinely disturbing and the dynamism of spontaneous ritual performance is well captured in both the Voodoo-inspired *Rites of Baron Samedi* (Plate XIV) and the frenetic *Symphony in Three Movements* (Plate XXIV). Norton also introduces an occasional element of whimsical humour and light-hearted satire with her depictions of a magical teapot (*At Home*, Plate XXX), magical furniture springing to life (*A Room at Castle Issusselduss*, Plate XXIX), a winking nun (*Black Magic*, Plate XVII), pompous and sanctimonious theologians (*Masque of Eidolons*, Plate XXVII),⁶⁴ a weeping pig and haughty socialite woman (*Entombment of Count Orgaz*, Plate XXIII), and a cluster of authority figures dangling on puppet-strings (*The Jester*, Plate XI).⁶⁵ There is even a sense that Norton’s she-devil and goddess images are sometimes idealised, or greatly exaggerated, versions of herself.⁶⁶

Norton’s personal notes on the imagery and symbolism in the drawings selected for *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* have survived in manuscript form.⁶⁷ They are of considerable interest because they reflect Norton’s broad range of interests and knowledge, encompassing such areas as Jungian archetypal psychology, Kabbalah, Buddhism, Western astrology, Kundalini Yoga, ancient Egyptian mythology, Voodoo, medieval witchcraft and demonology, ancient Greek philosophy, Hindu mythology, parapsychology, spiritualism and Theosophy. Norton’s notes are also valuable for the commentaries they provide about major artworks that were published in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* but not included in the 1949 Melbourne exhibition. Norton’s portrait of Lilith, ‘Queen of Air and Darkness’ and ‘symbol of the Night’ (Plate IV),⁶⁸ is one such work.

As noted in Chapter Four, Norton was well aware of Dr Carl Jung’s commentary on Lilith – which is included in *Psychology of the Unconscious*

(1919) – because she refers to Jung’s text in her personal notes accompanying the drawing. As Jung had written, according to an ancient tradition Lilith was Adam’s wife before Eve and she employed the magical names of God in order to elevate herself into the air. Later she transformed into a Lamia, a potential threat to all women bearing children.⁶⁹ Despite this interpretation, Norton’s manuscript notes describe the figure of Lilith (Plate IV) as an ‘image of the unconscious with its power to align images and draw together those spirits who have true affinity – holding man by the soul image’.⁷⁰ Gavin Greenlees presented a similarly positive view of her in his accompanying poem, describing Lilith as the ‘Queen of Night and Sympathy’.⁷¹ In her drawing Norton shows Lilith catching fish on a line, the fish being interpreted here as ‘children’. According to Norton, the writhing serpents in Lilith’s hair are ‘phallic symbols of creativity’ and the sun and a moon drawn above her head represent the male and female polarities of consciousness.⁷²

Norton’s commentary on another work, *Fohat* (Plate XIX, reproduced in Chapter One), is also of considerable interest. The image of *Fohat*, a goat-headed being with a serpentine phallus, caused major controversy in 1952 when it was found to be ‘obscene and an offence to chastity and delicacy’ (see Chapter One). As noted earlier, it was one of two works included in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* which Magistrate Solling, representing the Crown, ruled should be blacked out before publication of the book could proceed.⁷³

In her manuscript notes Norton writes that her drawing of *Fohat* sought to convey ‘the dynamic energy of cosmic ideation...The goat is a symbol of energy and creativity: the serpent of elemental force and eternity’.⁷⁴ She also describes her drawing in the context of Kundalini Yoga, a mystical tradition which, as mentioned in Chapter Three, utilises sexual energies for the release of cosmic consciousness. Norton’s annotation reads as follows:

Kundalini – the undifferentiated elemental and potential creative power of the Self (collective unconscious, personal and impersonal or racial), generally symbolised as the serpent and traditionally associated with the spinal cord. When latent it manifests itself only sporadically and partially in the sex force and sometimes in artistic creativity. Active, it confers supernormal powers in various directions. Kundalini is generally represented as a serpent: the serpent penis of *Fohat* is the same symbol used here to denote macrocosmic creativity. The phoenix is an emblem of immortality.⁷⁵

Equally benign, but also a drawing which caused deep offence in Melbourne in its 1949 incarnation, was Norton’s *Individuation*. The revised, and greatly

improved version of this work (Plate VI) shows a naked winged hermaphrodite standing in a sacred circle inscribed with esoteric symbols, its curling arms outstretched and tapering off into slender pointed claws. The figure has cat's ears, small round breasts and a thin pencil-like phallus, and its face is perhaps modelled on Norton herself. The title of the work presents a key to its interpretation: 'individuation' was Jung's term for psychic unity or inner wholeness.⁷⁶ Norton's commentary indicates that her intention was indeed to demonstrate a universal mystical principle, the cosmic union of opposites:

Individuation – The unified Self which contains all the opposites (such as the conscious and unconscious minds, masculinity and femininity, the animus and the anima etc.) in polarisation symbolised by the Hermaphrodite figure. Whenever the Hermaphrodite is shown it indicates polarisation (unity of opposites) and/or equilibrium. See notes on Jung. Unified Self represents psychic totality – the impersonal and the personal combined.⁷⁷

Norton also comments on the nature of the magical circle and its symbolic embellishments. The significant features here, writes Norton, are 'the signs of the Zodiac – Time – on the *ouroboros*, the snake that bites its own tail meaning eternity. Also the wheels of time...' ⁷⁸

Another image seen for the first time in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* is that of *Geburah* (Plate X). *Geburah* presents a menacing humanoid form with talons, a pointed reptilean tail, and lightning bolts zig-zagging from both hands, and could easily be mistaken for a hawk-headed demon. *Geburah* takes its title from the Hebrew name of the fifth sphere on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, signifying severity and strength.⁷⁹ In her commentary notes Norton describes *Geburah* as 'the sphere of rightful destruction typified by the planet Mars and by the Egyptian god Horus, who ruled wisely, having destroyed Set, the God of Evil'. She also notes that 'the Martian forces [are] represented as destructive of false ideas...hence the scorpion's tail' and adds an astrological observation that 'Scorpio (the astrological sign)...governs all the strong, dynamic powers in life and artistry that spring from polarised opposition – these constructive powers help, and are part of, the Creative.'⁸⁰

Yet another potentially hostile image, seen for the first time in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, is that of *The Master* (Plate XXXI), the final illustration in



Plate 76: *Geburah* (Plate X in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*)

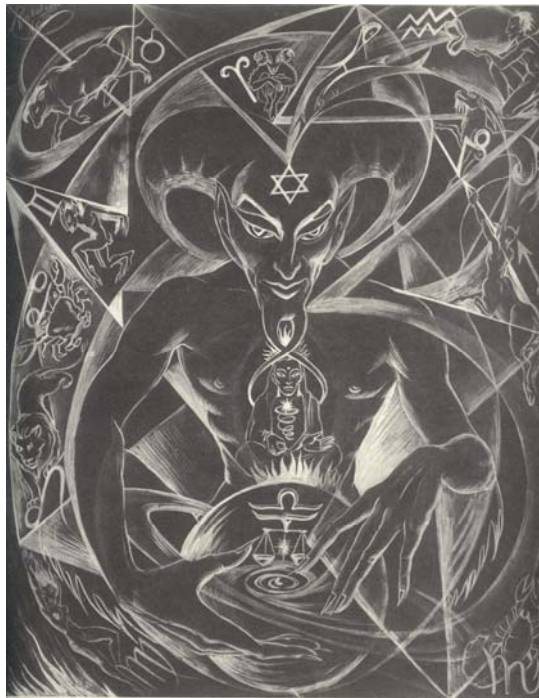


Plate 77: *The Master* (Plate XXXI in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*)

the book. Here Norton shows us a mysterious horned entity who could easily be mistaken for a figure of evil for he is drawn in fine white pencil against a black background and is presented very much as a figure of the night. Portrayed as a master-controller, as a supernatural ruler who governs from within the swirling vortex of the Zodiac, it soon becomes evident that Norton's 'Master' is none other than Pan himself. Norton describes him in her commentary notes as 'the Master Magician, creator of worlds...in psychological terms the psyche, or Self, moulding the ego or minor self'. As with Lilith, Norton's notes locate the dynamic role of 'The Master' within an archetypal Jungian context: 'According to Jung...[there is] a subliminal greater ego dwelling in the Unconscious which, as it were, conditions and forms the Conscious Ego... the 'thinker' becomes the object of that which is thought.'⁸¹ For Norton, and perhaps also for Greenlees, the figure of Pan represents supreme Reality. Greenlees' accompanying poem begins:

*Beyond all forms, beyond the seasons with their animals,
Divinatory rounds of the expanding eye. He dwells.
Centre of Emptiness they call him;
Heart of Heaven from beyond meaning...*⁸²

Norton's Archetypal 'God-forms'

When one surveys the drawings in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* as a whole, most of the major works are archetypal, depicting the sacred 'god forms' that according to Norton inhabit 'the world of Thought'. Norton clearly believed she was breaking through to dimensions of knowledge and awareness normally inaccessible to human consciousness. She describes this process in the Introduction to *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*:

There are senses, art forms, activities and states of consciousness that have no parallel in human experience. In addition to this, there [is] an overwhelming deluge of both Universal and Self knowledge, presented (often in allegorical form) from every conceivable aspect... metaphysical, mathematical, scientific, symbolic etc. These [comprise] a bewildering array of experiences, each complete in itself yet bearing an inter-blending and significant relationship to every other facet.⁸³

Norton believed that her personal quest to explore visionary states of awareness was rather like that of an actor engaged in an ongoing series of symbolic or metaphysical dramas:

One such experience could be compared with simultaneously watching and taking part in a play in which all art forms, such as music, drama, ceremonial ritual, shape, sound and pattern blend into one. These plays were either allegorical or symbolic and generally represented something which had a personal bearing on my own life in addition to their general significance.... all forms, abstract and actual...appear in their real perfection as part of the very essence of Archetypal Form itself which is omnipresent.⁸⁴

Norton and Surrealism

When we consider that Norton's clearly stated artistic intention was to depict the visionary, archetypal realm through her drawings it is interesting that although she had earlier downplayed the influence of Surrealism in the catalogue text accompanying the 1949 Rowden White Library exhibition she nevertheless made reference to two well known Surrealist artists, Roberto Matta Echaurren (1911-2002) and Yves Tanguy (1900-1955), in the Introduction to *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*.⁸⁵ Sydney-based painter and art critic, James Gleeson, widely regarded both then and now as Australia's leading Surrealist artist, was not especially attracted to Norton's work, describing it in September 1952 as 'dated and in some ways rather adolescent' although he conceded that she had drawing talent and a sense of rhythm.⁸⁶ However, at the time Gleeson made these comments his own work had been heavily influenced by the more theatrical style of Salvador Dali and his paintings were considerably more formal and structured than they have been in more recent times.⁸⁷ In contrast to the formalism of Gleeson's painting, Norton was clearly much more influenced by the spontaneity of trance states and visionary encounters beyond her total control. In terms of her artistic process, Norton was more akin to those Surrealists who, in the words of art critic and historian Anna Balakian, 'tried to shut out all outside disturbances and ... give free play to the inner powers of association of words and the images which these suggested'.⁸⁸

Norton's interest in painters like Matta and Tanguy is not really surprising because as a guiding philosophy the Surrealists sought access to what they called the *sur*-reality – the 'greater reality' of dreams and psychic symbols.⁸⁹ We know from the transcripts of Norton's sessions with psychologist L.J. Murphy that she had explored automatic drawing early in her artistic career⁹⁰ and this in itself reflects an artistic orientation shared with several members of the Surrealist movement: in addition to Matta and Tanguy, figures like Wolfgang Paalen (1907-1959) and Max Ernst (1891-1976) had also

practised automatic drawing and painting in order to facilitate the direct flow of imagery from the subconscious mind. Significantly, all of these Surrealist artists shared Norton's interest in metaphysics and the magical traditions.

Paalen, an Austrian painter who lived for a time in Mexico, developed a spontaneous art technique known as *fumage*. Paalen would hold canvases freshly coated with oil paint above a candle so that the smoke would trace eerie random patterns in the wet paint. He then overlaid these images with surreal, supernatural detail, as in his major work of 1938, *Conflict of the Principles of Darkness*.⁹¹ Similarly, the German Surrealist artist Max Ernst developed a process known as *frottage* in order to provoke spontaneous artistic input from his imaginative faculties. Utilising this technique, Ernst would rub lightly with pencil upon sheets of paper placed upon his wooden floor boards, thus allowing the uneven patterns in the grain to come through on his paper as a texture. When Ernst looked carefully at his *frottages* he found a mystical process coming into play. 'When gazing at these drawings,' he wrote, 'I was surprised at the sudden intensification of my visionary faculties and at the hallucinatory succession of contradictory images being superimposed on each other.'⁹²

The Cuban painter Wifredo Lam (1902-1982) would also have been very much a kindred spirit within the international Surrealist movement although it is not known whether Norton was familiar with his work.⁹³ Born in Sagua la Grande, Cuba, in 1902, Lam joined the Surrealist movement in 1940 and after its dispersion in Europe, returned to his native country. Four years later he visited Haiti where he was introduced to the voodoo cult and the ritual practice of *vevers*, employing magical sigils to summon the deities. Introduced to techniques of trance, Lam learned to open his consciousness to the *loa* divinities who would in turn bestow upon him their magical energies, manifesting their curious atavistic forms in his paintings. As with Norton's distinctive artforms, Lam's *oeuvre* features a pantheon of devils, gods and spirits, in turn half-human and half-animal, presented as images of spirit-possession and self-transformation.⁹⁴ While Norton was spiritually and metaphysically aligned with pantheism and the symbolism of the Night, Lam was intrigued by the somewhat comparable image of the Forest, which for him represented 'that world without limits with the mystery of its space indefinitely prolonged beyond the veil of its tree-trunks and leaves'.⁹⁵

The two Surrealists whom Norton specifically refers to in her Introduction, Matta and Tanguy, were both strongly influenced by the practice of ‘automatism’, which first became fashionable in the 1920s. In 1926 Tanguy produced a series of automatic drawings, scratchings, arabesques, loops and tufts, which, when transferred to a canvas coated with colour, seemed to produce what José Pierre has called ‘a universe of smoke, brushwood [and] ghosts, which seem to defy gravity’.⁹⁶ Tanguy is also interesting for another reason. Many of his paintings are grey and eerie, like chthonic landscapes of the netherworld. As a youth Tanguy used to dive into the sea in search of bones and pebbles washed by the waves, and there is a strong sense in his paintings of an ocean of hidden images – of forms about to manifest from a more ethereal source.⁹⁷ It is perhaps this mysterious and elusive aspect of Tanguy’s work that appealed so strongly to Rosaleen Norton.

The Chilean-born painter Matta, a colleague of Tanguy, took up automatic painting just prior to World War Two producing a series of canvases he called ‘inscapes’ or ‘psychological morphologies’. These were characterised by a remarkable sense of freedom, the spontaneous use of colour, and the exploration of cosmic realities beyond the ego. As Valerie Fletcher has observed, Matta ‘sought a spiritualized space infused with an astral light’ employing colours which would suggest ‘a limitless void’.⁹⁸ Matta had also studied the mystical writings of the French ceremonial magician Eliphas Lévi, an occultist who was well known to Norton and who was listed in her bibliography.⁹⁹ Matta’s paintings would certainly have appealed to Norton’s sense of wonderment as well as to the spontaneous, adventurous side of her nature. Also, like Norton, Matta was very aware of the inhuman excesses of industrialisation and several of his works allude to what he called the ‘horrible crisis of society’. Both artists, to this extent, were alienated by mainstream ethics and morality, and both considered themselves cultural outsiders.

Later artworks

A selection of Norton’s later artworks, consisting of paintings from the 1960s and early 1970s, was included in Walter Glover’s *Supplement to the Art of Rosaleen Norton*, published in 1984.¹⁰⁰ Fortunately, since these later paintings were reproduced in colour and included alongside several of the artworks that had been photographed by Professor Oeser at the University of Melbourne in 1949, it is possible to compare Norton’s ‘later’ style of the 1960s and 1970s with her iconic works of the late 1940s and early 1950s.

The fact that none of the paintings in the Deaton exhibition sold individually when they were auctioned in October 1982 and that they were subsequently sold off collectively as a 37-piece 'job lot' to Jack Parker, proprietor of the Southern Cross Hotel in St Peters,¹⁰¹ is indicative of their lack of overall quality. By comparison with major pencil and pastel works like *The Adversary*, *The Blueprint*, *Lucifer*, *The Sphinx and Her Secrets*, *Timeless Worlds* and *The Initiate*, all of which were well conceived and meticulously executed works from the Rowden White exhibition, most of the later works on show at Exiles Bookshop were lurid or roughly crafted paintings, many of them hastily produced and poorly painted. They included two impasto portraits titled *Demon* and *Fur Fur the Storm Demon*, showing the heads of demons peering out from a hazy grey vortex and storm clouds respectively; a painting titled *Khamsin*, featuring two demonic faces manifesting in the humps of a camel; a grotesque and crudely rendered portrait of Woden, and two inconsequential animal portraits, *Squid* and *Rabbit*. Other works of only passing quality from the Deaton exhibition included *Roie with Snake*, showing Norton sitting naked beneath the head of a protective, arched cobra; *Image*, a confronting painting of a leering female face with strongly slanted feline eyes; *The Cat*, which showed a humanoid ginger cat standing beside a tree occupied by a demonic being, and *Snakes*, a more sinister rendition of Norton's earlier c.1952 line drawing *Lilith*. Norton had also parodied her controversial c.1949 work *Witches' Sabbath* in a much more crudely painted rendition titled *Montage*. The most accomplished paintings in the Deaton exhibition were *Three Sisters*, which showed three demonic female heads in a blaze of fiery smoke¹⁰² and *Fire Bird* which depicted a naked and aggressive fire-goddess riding on the back of an eagle, her head ablaze with streaming flames. The latter work featured a 'double image' effect so that the shape of the bird's wings and the female figure's outstretched arms revealed the face of a black panther (one of Norton's 'images of the Night') hidden in the background and seemingly propelling the fire-goddess forward on her hellish journey through the sky.

Given that Norton is known to have used LSD during the mid-1970s¹⁰³ it is possible that the vivid palette, intense colours and expressionistic style of some of her 1970s paintings may reflect her use of psychedelic drugs. Several of the paintings from this period, exhibited at Exiles Bookshop in 1982, were produced in the highly coloured, almost iridescent style associated with psychedelic poster art in the late 1960s /early 1970s California counter-culture. Works like *Witch and Family Secrets*, with its exultant naked witch-

priestess and fiery imagery, and the intense and vibrantly coloured portrait, *The Goddess*, where the head of the female deity manifests amidst searing flames, would not have seemed out of place alongside works by the American psychedelic artists Michael Bowen, Wes Wilson, John Hamilton and Bonnie MacLean – well-known figures in the 1960s counterculture.¹⁰⁴

It is also interesting to note that several of Norton's later images have a stridently demonic flavour: they are characteristically skewed further in the direction of black magic and the imagery of the 'Left-Hand Path' than most of the works from the Rowden White exhibition or the drawings reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*. Several of the later paintings make a pointed visual reference to the Kundalini fire-serpent and some also have an erotic, sexual flavour that may well have been influenced by Norton's exploration of Tantric sex magic. These paintings include *The Temptress*, which shows a naked, blue-bodied witch surrounded by a large coiled snake, her head ablaze with fire;¹⁰⁵ *Witch and Family Secrets*, referred to above, which depicts a serpent rising up from flames as a protector of the witch-priestess herself, and *Satan*, where a female human head has merged with that of a snake amidst hellish waves of fire. The head of Pan, a writhing snake, a surging fire and the head of a witch (who may well be an aspect of Lilith or Hecate), are all featured in Norton's expressionistic painting *Clairvoyant*. A related work, *The Cauldron*, shows two humanoid/animal creatures dancing in ritual ecstasy on rooftops above chimneys which in this painting double as fiery magic cauldrons. One of the dancing figures is male and has a tail and the head of a snake; the other is female, with firm pointed breasts and the smiling head of a pig.

Finally, with regard to Norton's later work, specific reference must once again be made to *Fur Fur the Storm Demon*, but for historical rather than artistic reasons. This work, like most of Norton's paintings and drawings, is undated but was probably produced c.1975: a photograph exists of Norton holding another version of *Fur Fur the Storm Demon*, which is very similar in content and produced in the same artistic style. The photograph itself, which shows Norton displaying *Fur Fur the Storm Demon* in front of a large portrait of Pan, can be dated to the period when Gus de Brito interviewed Norton for an article that was published in the *Sunday Mirror* in August 1975.¹⁰⁶ The key point of



Fire Bird



Fur Fur the Storm Demon



The Goddess



Three Sisters



Witch and Family Secrets



Satan

Plate 78: Six examples of Norton's later work, characterised by a vivid palette, intense colours and a tendency towards lurid expressionism

interest, however, is the name of the demon itself. The reference to 'Fur Fur' is taken directly from the medieval *Goetia* or *Lesser Key of Solomon* and shows that in the mid-1970s Norton had lost none of her fascination with the magical grimoires to which she had been introduced by her former partner in sex magic, Sir Eugene Goossens, as his 'one and only pupil' in this particular branch of the so-called 'black arts'.¹⁰⁷ Furfur is the 34th of the 72 demons profiled in the *Goetia*, and although Norton has spelt his name 'Fur Fur' there can be no mistaking the identity of the demon Furfur based on the contents of Norton's painting and his description in the text of the medieval grimoire:

The thirty-fourth Spirit is Furfur. He is a Great and Mighty Earl, appearing in the Form of a Hart with a Fiery Tail. He never speaketh truth unless he is compelled, or brought up within a triangle.¹⁰⁸ Being therein, he will take upon himself the Form of an Angel. Being bidden, he speaketh with a hoarse voice. Also he will wittingly urge Love between Man and Woman, He can raise Lightnings and Thunders, Blasts and Great Tempestuous Storms. And he giveth True Answers both of Things Secret and Divine, if commanded. He ruleth over 26 Legions of Spirits.¹⁰⁹

Clearly Norton had continued with her study of demonology well into the 1970s and as a consequence several of her images are even ‘darker’ in their magical expression than they were two decades earlier.¹¹⁰ Her later magical images, that is to say, artworks produced in the 1960s and 1970s, are associated with a heavier impasto style of painting, with a lack of compositional refinement, and in some cases with more debased expressions of occult spirituality. Norton seems to have reached her artistic ‘peak’ in the period of the late 1940s and early 1950s – coinciding with the Rowden White Library exhibition and publication of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* – and these heights are rarely glimpsed in her later work, which, for the most part, is far less accomplished in an artistic sense, and very often derivative in relation to the work which preceded it.

The trance magic and visionary art of Austin Osman Spare

I turn now to a consideration of the British visionary artist Austin Osman Spare (1886-1956), a highly distinctive figure in the Western magical tradition. Spare is of considerable interest in any research study of Rosaleen Norton because of the many comparisons that can be made between the work of the two artists and because both were personally involved in the practice of trance magic.



Plate 79: Austin Osman Spare – a self-portrait from 1923

The most intriguing similarity between the two artists relates to their visionary exploration of magical imagery through techniques of self-hypnosis, and there are several other parallels in their personal lives and artistic careers. However, as far as is known, Spare and Norton had no knowledge of each other, either directly or indirectly.¹¹¹

Within their respective individual contexts both Spare and Norton regarded themselves as artistic ‘outsiders’, largely alienated from the mainstream cultural trends of the day¹¹² and both spent most of their impoverished lives in squalid circumstances.¹¹³ Both were skilled figurative artists whose art-school training contributed substantially to their graphic style, both professed a particular affinity with the painter El Greco,¹¹⁴ both exhibited their work extensively in popular meeting places like pubs or coffee shops in order to reach an appreciative audience,¹¹⁵ and both had a strong love for animals, especially cats.¹¹⁶ However, there are more specific parallels between Spare and Norton that suggest they should be regarded as visionary artists within the same esoteric genre. As occult practitioners, both considered themselves pantheists;¹¹⁷ both were well versed in the literature of the Western esoteric tradition, Theosophy,¹¹⁸ Eastern mysticism, and modern psychoanalysis (especially the works of Freud and Jung);¹¹⁹ both were attracted to the practice of sex-magic and were familiar with the magical writings of Aleister Crowley (Spare knew Crowley personally);¹²⁰ both explored medieval magical grimoires like the *Goetia* and were fascinated by the sigils or ‘seals’ associated with elemental spirit-beings; and both were familiar with the philosophy and magical significance of the Kabbalah. Both artists also developed and utilised their own, personal techniques of self-hypnosis and trance in order to produce their distinctive visionary art-works as a direct result of their magical methods. There is a clear parallel between the trance states associated with the Zos/Kia cosmology of Austin Osman Spare (described below) and the trance magic of Rosaleen Norton (described in Chapter Four), which in turn draws attention to the unique contributions of both Spare and Norton as ‘visionary outsiders’ operating within the context of the Western esoteric tradition.

One of five children, Austin Osman Spare was born at home in Snowhill, near Smithfield, London, on 30 December 1886. The son of a policeman,¹²¹ Spare had two elder brothers and two sisters – one of whom, Ellen, was younger than him. The family later moved to south London and Spare attended St Agnes' School in Kennington Park.¹²² In 1902 Spare left school and began

working for a company named Powells, a manufacturer of stained glass, where he distinguished himself by producing five stained-glass panel designs for one of his senior work colleagues.¹²³ However Spare was also taking formal art training at Lambeth Evening Art School, where his precocious artistic talent was noticed. At the age of 16, while he was still working for Powells, Spare won a £40 scholarship and a silver medal from the prestigious art journal *The Studio*, enabling him to study at the Royal College of Art, South Kensington,¹²⁴ and in 1904 one of his black-and-white bookplate designs was displayed at the Royal Academy. This particular work had been produced when he was 14, making him the youngest exhibited artist in the history of that institution.¹²⁵ The President of the Academy, John Singer Sargent, proclaimed Spare to be a genius¹²⁶ and Spare attracted the attention of art connoisseur Pickford Waller, from whom he would receive several commissions for bookplates.¹²⁷ He was later commissioned to illustrate Ethel Wheeler's *Behind the Veil* (1906) and a book of aphorisms by J.Bertram and F.Russell titled *The Starlit Mire*, published by the distinguished arts patron John Lane (1911). Around the same time an article on Spare by Ralph Straus also appeared in *The Book Lovers Magazine*.¹²⁸

In 1916 Spare founded the quarterly magazine, *Form*, joined later by Frederick Carter who became co-editor. The magazine was sponsored by John Lane who hoped it would emulate the earlier success of *The Yellow Book*, an avant-garde literary publication renowned for its erotic and provocative illustrations by Aubrey Beardsley, with whom Spare was sometimes compared.¹²⁹ However in May 1917 Spare was enlisted, against his will, to join the Royal Army Medical Corps¹³⁰ and no further editions of *Form* were issued under the patronage of John Lane.¹³¹ In 1919 Spare visited France as a special war artist documenting the aftermath of the Great War: several works based on sketches from this period are included in the collection of the Imperial War Museum.¹³² After his sojourn in Europe, Spare returned to the genre of journal publishing. Between October 1922 and April 1924 he co-edited an illustrated literary magazine, *The Golden Hind*, which included the work of such notable writers as Aldous Huxley, Alec Waugh and Havelock Ellis.¹³³

However, since 1905 Spare had also been involved in creating and publishing his own distinctive and highly unconventional books and it was these self-published limited-edition works that would identify his unique contribution to the Western esoteric tradition while simultaneously consigning him to the

periphery of mainstream artistic circles. Although he had been praised by John Singer Sargent, and also by the renowned portrait painter Augustus John, who regarded Spare as one of the great graphic artists of his time,¹³⁴ others found Spare's magical compositions deeply confronting. According to Kenneth Grant, Spare's esoteric imagery prompted the noted playwright and critic George Bernard Shaw to remark: 'Spare's medicine is too strong for the average man.'¹³⁵

Spare's self-published works, which he illustrated, designed, and financed himself, include the following titles: *Earth:Inferno* [265 numbered copies, 1905]; *A Book of Satyrs* [300 copies, first edition 1907, 300 copies, second edition 1909]; *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy* [380 copies, 1913]; *The Focus of Life: The Mutterings of Aaos* [650 copies, 1921] and *Anathema of Zos: The Sermon to the Hypocrites* [100 copies, 1927].¹³⁶ In the same way that *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* helped define Norton's persona as 'The Witch of Kings Cross' in Sydney during the 1950s, so too Spare's distinctive and unconventional publications placed him clearly within the context of the Western magical tradition through their references to sigil magic and esoteric symbolism. While Spare had earlier been considered a possible successor to Aubrey Beardsley and was sometimes compared to other notable graphic artists like Charles Ricketts (illustrator of Oscar Wilde's *The Sphinx*) and Harry Clarke (illustrator of Goethe's *Faust* and Poe's *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*), his own publications were polemical in style, graphically complex, and unorthodox in presentation. His two major esoteric works, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy* and *The Focus of Life: The Mutterings of Aaos*, explored sigil magic and the images of the subconscious and were written in an abstruse and inaccessible style that made few concessions to any mainstream readership, despite the spectacular graphic images that accompanied both texts. *Earth: Inferno*, *A Book of Satyrs*, and *Anathema of Zos: The Sermon to the Hypocrites*, meanwhile, were satirical works which drew attention to the misery of the human condition and the emptiness and shallow hypocrisy of the privileged classes in contemporary society. *Anathema of Zos* is a vitriolic and bitter invective directed specifically at the 'Mayfair' artistic elite that had initially supported Spare when his artworks were exhibited in prominent West End galleries.¹³⁷

Spare's *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy* (1913) is widely regarded as his major work. It develops his concept of Kia, which is central to his magical philosophy, and also contains practical instructions for

creating magical sigils and automatic drawings. In addition, it places Spare's magical explorations within the context of modern psychological approaches to the subconscious mind.

Zos and Kia

Spare first makes reference to the term 'Zos' in *Earth: Inferno* (1905) in a black-and-white line illustration titled *Chaos*.¹³⁸ Here a naked man draws aside a curtain revealing a cluster of tangled human forms representing what Spare calls the 'inferno of the Normal'. The accompanying text reads 'Oh! come with me, the Kia and the Zos, to witness this extravagance.' Although Spare does not develop his idea of the polarity between Zos and Kia in *Earth: Inferno*, he nevertheless provides tantalising clues. On page 22 he writes: 'Alas ! we are children of Earth,' indicating that the term Zos refers to human manifestation, the incarnate, the physical. Alongside the preceding image, *Despair*, which shows four forlorn human beings, one of them a prostrate naked woman, Spare writes: 'Revere the Kia and your mind will become tranquil.'¹³⁹ In *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, Spare explains for the first time what he means by 'Zos'. A small, but nevertheless definitive, text-reference is inserted graphically into an illustration teeming with magical sigils, and the text reads: 'The body considered as a whole, I call Zos.'¹⁴⁰ Spare's definition of Kia, meanwhile, is included in the introductory section of the book: 'Kia', writes Spare, is 'the absolute freedom which being free is mighty enough to be "reality" and free at any time...'¹⁴¹ Later in the book Spare also refers to Kia in sexual terms: as 'the ancestral sex principle' and the 'unmodified sexuality'.¹⁴²

As Gavin W. Semple notes in his recently published essay on the art and magic of Austin Spare there is a clear distinction between Zos, representing 'all that which is embodied or manifest', and Kia, representing the Absolute.¹⁴³ Spare had been reading an English-language translation of the Kabbalistic text *The Zohar*¹⁴⁴ prior to working on *Earth: Inferno*,¹⁴⁵ and it has been suggested that Spare's reference to Kia may have a Kabbalistic origin. Semple believes that Kia may be an inversion of the Kabbalistic term *AiqBekar*,¹⁴⁶ a reference to 'the Kabbalah of Nine Chambers' and the secret Kabbalistic code system of Temurah¹⁴⁷ but an alternative suggestion from William Wallace seems more plausible. Wallace believes that Kia probably derives from the Kabbalistic Hebrew word *Chiah* which denotes the highest form of the world of *Atziluth*, the 'Absolute'.¹⁴⁸ This would certainly appear closer to Spare's own meaning of the word. In the Kabbalah, *Chiah*, or *Chiyah*

is an aspect of *Neshamah*, the soul, one of the three principal spiritual agencies mentioned in the *Zohar*, the others being *Nefesh* (life) and *Ruah* (spirit).¹⁴⁹ Even though he was coining his own special term, *Kia*, Spare nevertheless aligned it conceptually with the mystical idea of the Absolute, or Void – the supreme reality in the Kabbalah – and, as discussed below, Spare's notion of the 'void moment' is central to his magical process.

In *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy* Spare uses his concept of *Kia* to refer to the primal, cosmic life-force which can be channelled into the human organism, *Zos*. In one of his later esoteric texts Spare refers to the life-force as 'a potency',¹⁵⁰ and his magical technique for arousing the elemental energies latent within this life-potency – a technique he termed 'atavistic resurgence',¹⁵¹ – involved focusing on magical sigils which he employed as vehicles of his magical will. When the mind was in what Spare called a 'void' or open state – achieved, for example, through meditation, exhaustion or at the peak of sexual ecstasy – magical sigils could be used to send 'commands' to the subconscious mind. Later these magical commands would be intentionally forgotten in order to remove them from conscious awareness but in the meantime, according to Spare, they would 'grow' within the seedbed of the subconscious mind until they became 'ripe' and manifested once again in the familiar world of conscious reality, thereby achieving the magician's initial intent. Spare summarises this magical process in his esoteric text, *The Witches' Sabbath*: 'The ecstatic moment is used as the fecund instant of wish endowment; for at that period of reality, the will, desire and belief are aligned in unison.'¹⁵²

Background to Spare's magical philosophy

Spare's approach to magical states of consciousness draws on a variety of sources, encompassing archetypal mythic imagery from ancient Egypt, a fascination with the sexual energies of the subconscious mind,¹⁵³ and techniques learned through his close personal relationship with an unusual psychic mentor whom he always referred to simply as Mrs Paterson. Spare's magical approach was also shaped by his fascination with death,¹⁵⁴ by his interest in Taoism, which places great emphasis on the flow of positive and negative life-energy,¹⁵⁵ and by his personal conviction that the psychic energies, or 'karmas',¹⁵⁶ of previous incarnations, remained as latent potentials within the mind of every human being 'Ability,' writes Spare in his esoteric tract, *Axiomata*, 'is an endowment from our past selves.'¹⁵⁷ Spare believed that these karmic energies could be activated by the magical will.¹⁵⁸

Spare also maintained that the ancient Egyptians understood the complex mythology of the subconscious mind: their animal-headed deities provided proof that they understood the process of spiritual evolution:

They symbolised this knowledge in one great symbol, the Sphinx, which is pictorially man evolving from animal existence. Their numerous Gods, all partly Animal, Bird, Fish... prove the completeness of that knowledge...The cosmogony of their Gods is proof of their knowledge of the order of evolution, its complex processes from the one simple organism ... They knew they still possessed the rudimentary faculties of all existences, and were partly under their control. Thus their past Karmas became Gods, good and evil forces, and had to be appeased: from this all moral doctrine etc. is determined. So all Gods have lived (being ourselves) on earth, and when dead, their experience or Karma governs our actions in degree: to that extent we are subject to the will of these Gods...This is the key to the mystery of the Sphinx. ¹⁵⁹

Frank Letchford, who was a close friend of Austin Spare from 1937 until the artist's death in 1956, ¹⁶⁰ confirms in his biography, *From the Inferno to Zos* (1995), that ancient Egyptian culture and mythology impacted strongly on Spare's art and magical philosophy throughout his life :

The influence upon Austin of Egyptian art writing and practice were strong. The incidence of Egyptian deities like Isis, Osiris, Horus, Nuit and of amulets, talismans, sigils and magical symbols is varied in his work... According to the Egyptian religion the human 'being' is composed of four parts: the body itself, the astral double, the soul and the spark of life from the Godhead. In all Austin's writings, aphorisms, drawings and sketches are found charms, symbols and symbolic figures, namely, the sun, the moon, cats and gods, part-human, part-animal. ¹⁶¹

The gods and goddesses of ancient Egypt had a profound impact on Austin Spare because they seemed to embody the principle of spiritual evolution through animal and human karma. ¹⁶² However, Egyptian cosmology was not his first point of reference: Spare first learned about the transformative potentials of the subconscious mind from an elderly woman called Mrs Paterson, who was a friend of his parents and used to tell his fortune when he was young. Spare's relationship with his own mother was not close and he soon came to regard Mrs Paterson as his 'second mother'. ¹⁶³ She was illiterate but generous in spirit, and would often help neighbours and friends in distress. Mrs Paterson appeared to have an extrasensory ability to project thought-forms. According to Spare she was able to 'reify' ideas and thoughts to visible, sometimes even tangible, appearance: 'If in her occult prognostications she discovered an event or incident which she could not describe verbally, she would reify the scene...' ¹⁶⁴ Spare describes her

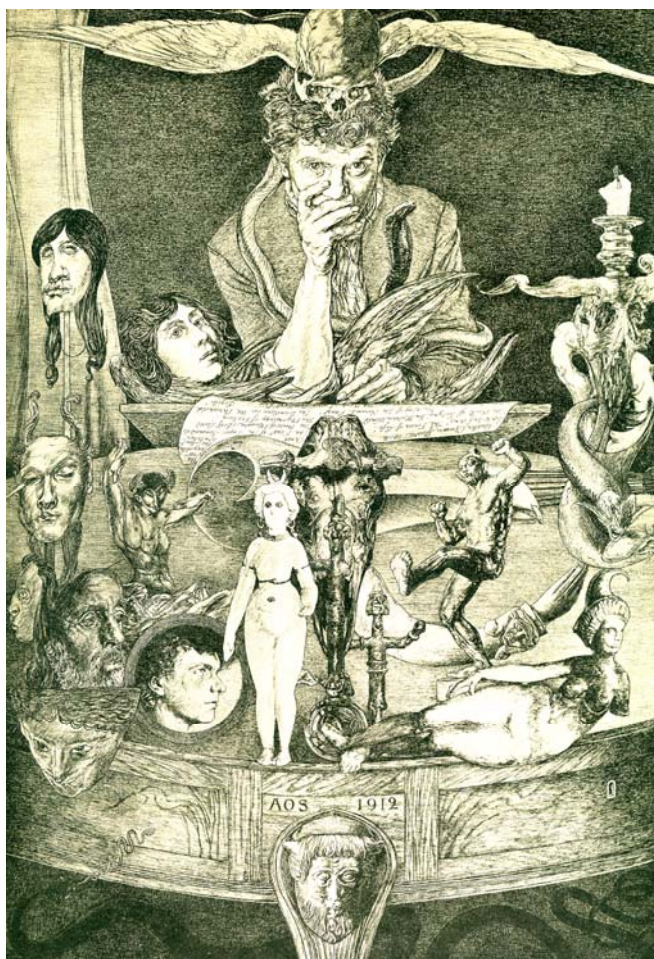


Plate 80: Spare and his atavisms – a self-portrait from *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy* (1913)

technique in the following way: ‘She used to tell my fortune when I was quite young...She was a natural hypnotist. She would say, “Look in that dark corner,” and, if you obeyed, she could make you visualise what she was telling you about your future.’¹⁶⁵

The Thelemic magician and occult writer Kenneth Grant, referred to earlier, first met Spare in 1949¹⁶⁶ and had extensive contact with him during the last eight years of his life.¹⁶⁷ Grant believes that it was because of his close relationship with Mrs Paterson that Spare became attracted to older women, and that this was due, in part, to the fact that as a child he had watched her transform herself visually from an old crone into a young woman through the magical process of ‘reification’:

The wrinkled crone had appeared to change into a large-limbed voluptuous girl. So deep was the impression – whether actual or imagined – that for the rest of his life Spare was fascinated by the idea of sexual potency in ageing women...He used this theme in his witch drawings where he frequently combined the hag and the girl in one picture, if not in one image.¹⁶⁸

The archetypal image of the Universal Woman, or Goddess, in all her various aspects – from sensual maiden through to aged crone – became a central feature in Spare's personal mythology. Spare first refers to her in *Earth: Inferno* where, in an illustration titled *Earth*, she is shown and captioned 'lying barren on the Parapet of the Subconsciousness' while humanity itself is depicted 'sinking into the pit of conventionality'.¹⁶⁹ Spare uses this graphic image to call for what he termed the 'resurrection of the Primitive Woman'.¹⁷⁰ Grant writes that, for Spare, the 'Goddess, the Witch Queen, the Primitive or Universal Woman... is the cypher of all "inbetweenness"',¹⁷¹ and she is experienced in the unity of Self-love, that is to say, in the ecstatic union of Zos and Kia. 'Nor,' adds Grant, 'is she to be limited as any particular "goddess" such as Astarte, Isis, Cybele, Kali, Nuit, for to limit her is to turn away from the path and to idealize a concept which, as such, is false because incomplete, unreal because temporal.'¹⁷²

One of Spare's most significant compositions, *The Ascension of the Ego from Ecstasy to Ecstasy*,¹⁷³ shows the Goddess as a beautiful naked maiden welcoming Spare to higher realms of awareness. Spare is depicted, appropriately, with wings extending from his head, symbolic of ecstatic flight. Spare's 'ego', or persona, is shown merging with an earlier animal incarnation, and the two shapes transcend each other in the form of a primal skull, a motif representing the 'death' of the ego. Spare believed he could retrace his earlier animal incarnations or 'karmas' back to the very source of life itself, the universal 'Oneness of Creation' he called Kia, and that these residual animal energies could in turn become a source of magic power.

Spare's *The Ascension of the Ego from Ecstasy to Ecstasy* provides us with an important insight into this magical process. Although sexual union with a female partner was not his only method for attaining an ecstatic state,¹⁷⁴ Spare frequently combined his magical will with the climax of sexual orgasm in his quest for creative inspiration.¹⁷⁵ According to Spare, at the peak of sexual ecstasy, the personal ego (Zos) and the universal life-force (Kia) are

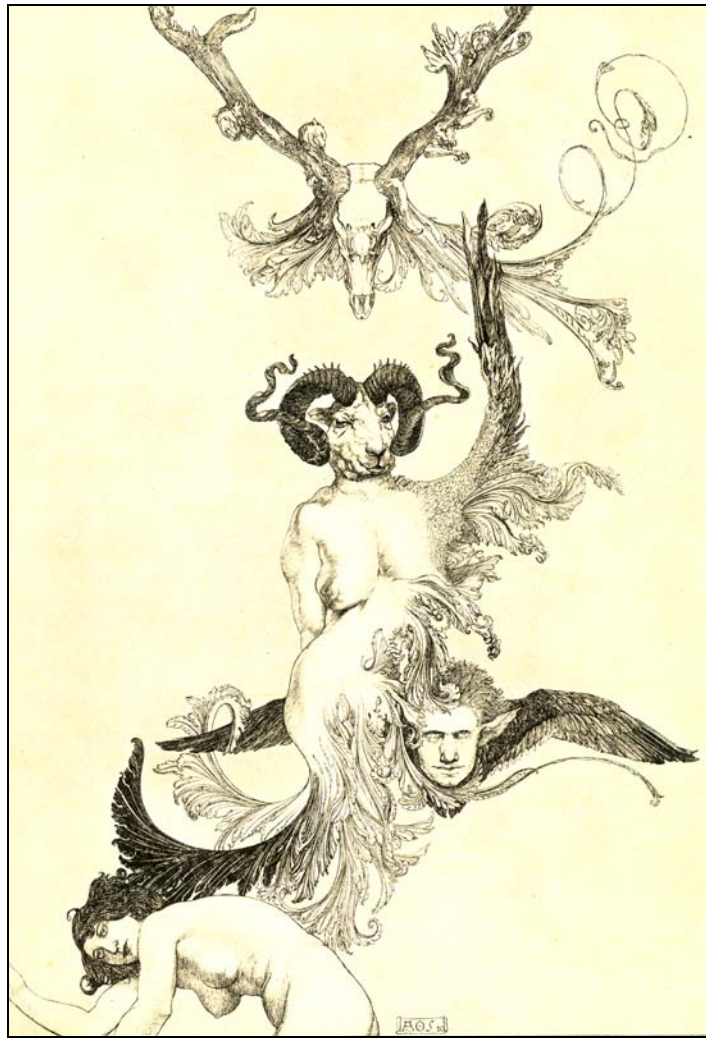


Plate 81: Aubrey Vincent Beardsley: *The Ascension of the Ego from Ecstasy to Ecstasy*
from *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*

united in a state of blissful and transcendent openness: inspiration flows forth from Kia and is transmitted through the primordial Goddess herself.¹⁷⁶

‘Inspiration, writes Spare in *The Book of Pleasure*, ‘is always at a void moment.’¹⁷⁷

In Spare’s system of trance-magic two processes are associated with ecstatic states. The first of these employs a technique that Spare termed the Death Posture: by its very nature an ecstatic peak-moment is characterised by the surrender, or ‘death’, of the ego, and the process could therefore be regarded as a simulation of death itself.¹⁷⁸ ‘Because every other sense is brought to

nullity by sex intoxication’, writes Spare, ‘it is called the Death Posture.’¹⁷⁹
As Gavin Semple notes:

The Death Posture involves a total negation of conceptual thought and perceptual awareness, and the assumption of the Void, Kia, by its practitioner; its aim is ecstasy, the bliss of union with the Absolute in Self-Love.¹⁸⁰

The second of Spare’s magical processes involved the creation and use of ‘sentient’ magical sigils that could act as vehicles or ‘messengers’ to the subconscious mind. This method embodied both Will and Desire, the magical sigils being used to implant the ‘Great Wish’ within the subconscious mind at the peak-moment of ecstasy. The ecstatic peak itself could be attained through sexual union, but there were other methods of attaining it as well, which are referred to below. Considered together, the two processes became a central feature of Spare’s unique approach to trance-magic and his quest for union with Kia, the bliss of the Absolute.

The Death Posture

Spare’s intent in utilising the Death Posture was to ‘incarnate’ the dynamic and inspirational life-force of Kia, the source of artistic genius¹⁸¹ and sexual freedom. Gavin Semple writes that the Death Posture ‘employs the flesh itself as the effigy or sigil of Belief, and through its “death” and resurrection... [initiates] the Great Work. The work is the ecstatic fusion of the Zos and the Kia (Ego and Self), the Self-Love which gives the title of Spare’s book.’¹⁸² Here the attainment of ecstasy is primarily an end in itself. However, because Kia is also the ‘ancestral sex principle’¹⁸³ and the source of ‘unmodified sexuality’,¹⁸⁴ the union of Zos and Kia inevitably leads to expressions of what Spare terms the ‘new sexuality’. In *The Book of Pleasure* Spare writes: ‘Know the Death Posture and its reality in the ascension from duality...The Death Posture is the reduction of all conception to the Neither-Neither [Spare’s term for the Absolute or true Self]¹⁸⁵ till the desire is contentment by pleasing yourself...the restoration of the new sexuality and the ever original self-love in freedom are attained.’¹⁸⁶

Spare describes the actual method as follows:

Lying on your back lazily, the body expressing the emotion of yawning, suspiring while conceiving by smiling, that is the idea of the posture. Forgetting time with those things which were essential reflecting their meaninglessness, the moment is beyond time and its virtue has happened.

Standing on tip-toe, with the arms rigid, bound behind by the hands, clasped and straining to the utmost, the neck stretched – breathing deeply and spasmodically, till giddy and sensation comes in gusts, gives exhaustion and capacity for the former.

Gazing at your reflection till it is blurred and you know not the gazer, close your eyes (this usually happens involuntarily) and visualize. The light (always an X in curious evolutions) that is seen should be held onto, never letting go, till the effort is forgotten; this gives a feeling of immensity (which sees a small form ♡) whose limit you cannot reach. This should be practised before experiencing the foregoing. The emotion that is felt is the knowledge which tells you why.¹⁸⁷

Spare describes the mystical impact of the Death Posture:

The Ego is swept up as a leaf in a fierce gale – in the fleetness of the indeterminable, that which is always about to happen, becomes its truth. Things that are self-evident are no longer obscure, as by his own will he pleases; know this as the negation of all faith by living it, the end of duality of consciousness.¹⁸⁸

According to Frank Letchford, the essential purpose of the Death Posture – a practice Spare believed should be performed daily¹⁸⁹ – was to ‘incarnate’ a transformative magical process:

...the body is allowed to manifest spontaneously... His idea was to form a new body, it was a time for re-birth, incarnating and reincarnating. He *wills* his own death. He awaits the transfiguration, an inversion and reversion, a continuation of evolution; that which he desires will come to pass.¹⁹⁰

In addition to utilising the Death Posture, however, Spare also wished to develop a method for focusing his magical desires. This led him to formulate his own unique system of atavistic magical sigils.

Magical sigils

Spare’s use of magical sigils, which he began to develop into a workable system from 1906 onwards,¹⁹¹ was based on the understanding that the dynamics of the subconscious mind depend entirely on symbols and images, that the ‘language’ of the subconscious is pictorial rather than verbal.¹⁹² As Spare observes in his essay *Mind to Mind and How*:

There is a Grimoire of graphic symbology and vague phonic nuances that conjoin all thought and is the language of the psychic world. Mind is a continuant [sic] and all concepts are relatable to perceptions and contact, therefore real; the continuum of all

aspects of memory and learning is consciousness – the past again becoming explicit...¹⁹³


Spare believed that the human psyche contained all the residual ‘karmas’ of previous incarnations. Kia, as the Absolute, and as the source of all being, encompassed all evolutionary phases of life that had so far existed on the planet. As Spare notes in *The Book of Pleasure*: ‘By sigils and the acquirement of vacuity, any past incarnation, experience, can be summoned into consciousness.’¹⁹⁴ Spare’s sorcery – he himself labelled it as such¹⁹⁵ – utilised the process of atavistic resurgence in order to summon ‘elementals’, or karmic ‘automata’,¹⁹⁶ from the subconscious mind for magical purposes. Even when he lived alone in a small run-down flat in South London, Spare maintained that he was always surrounded by elemental forces and that these ‘spirits’ were his allies or ‘familiars’.¹⁹⁷


As mentioned earlier, Spare was fascinated by medieval magical grimoires like the *Goetia* and *The Greater Key of Solomon* and was intrigued by the magical seals ascribed to various elemental spirits. It has been suggested that these magical seals may have been a source of inspiration for the ‘cryptic letter-forms and devices’ found in *The Book of Pleasure*¹⁹⁸ and that Spare was almost certainly influenced by the magical scripts found in Cornelius Agrippa’s *Three Books of Occult Philosophy or Magic*, a work first published in 1533.¹⁹⁹ Spare appears to paraphrase the Renaissance magician’s writings on sigils and also transcribed two of his signs in a page of sketches for the *Book of Pleasure* vignettes.²⁰⁰ However, whereas the magical seals in the grimoires were linked either to specific demons like those identified in the *Goetia*, or to planetary spirits (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars etc.) like those referred to in Cornelius Agrippa’s *Three Books of Occult Philosophy or Magic*,²⁰¹ Spare’s great innovation was in realising that magical seals or sigils could be personalised. As Gavin Semple has noted:


While the grimoires dictate the use of specific magical seals for the binding and control of spirits and demand a high degree of faith (ie. consciously formulated belief) in their efficacy, and in the theurgic system of which they form a part, Spare realized that *any* symbols must be effective provided they are congruent with the patterns of the operator’s innate beliefs and personal aesthetic. This is certain to be the case if they are drawn from his or her own subconsciousness.²⁰²



Recognising that they would have to reflect his own magical credo, Spare created his own individualised sigils. In *The Book of Pleasure* he provides a summary of his method: ‘Sigils are made by combining the letters of the

alphabet simplified...the idea being to obtain a simple form which can easily be visualised at will, and has not too much pictorial relation to the desire...Verily, what a person believes by Sigils, is the truth, and is always fulfilled.'²⁰³ In effect Spare was seeking to focus his magical will on a single graphic symbol so that his intent or purpose could more readily be grasped as a totality. He did this by first expressing his 'will' (or 'desire') in sentence form and then by combining the basic letters, without repetition, into a unified glyph or sigil. In *The Book of Pleasure*, Spare provides an example of how a sigil can be created from the sentence: 'This is my wish, to obtain the strength of a tiger...'

This my wish 

To obtain 

The strength of a Tiger 

Combined as one Sigil  or 

Spare then describes the personal conditions required for success in projecting the sigil into the subconscious mind:

Now by virtue of this Sigil you are able to send your desire into the subconsciousness (which contains all strength); that having happened, it is the desire's realization by the manifestation of the knowledge or power necessary.

First, all consciousness of the Sigil has to be annulled; do not confuse this with concentration – you simply conceive the Sigil any moment you begin to think. Vacuity is obtained by exhausting the mind and body ²⁰⁴...the time of exhaustion is the time of fulfilment. At the time of exhaustion or vacuity, retain only and visualize the Sigil form – eventually it becomes vague, then vanished and success is assured...the desire for identification carries it [ie. the Sigil] to the corresponding subconscious stratum, its destination....Hence the mind, by Sigils, depending upon the intensity of desire, is illuminated or obsessed (knowledge or power) from that particular Karma (the subconscious stratum, a particular existence and knowledge gained by it) relative to the desire...Knowledge is obtained by the sensation, resulting from the unity of the desire and Karma. Power, by its 'actual' vitalization and resurrection.²⁰⁵

As mentioned earlier, Spare believed that it was crucially important that once the sigil was despatched into the subconscious at the moment of 'vacuity' (the

‘void moment’), the instruction then had to be forgotten so that the process of manifesting desire could become ‘organic’. As Spare explains:

Belief to be true must be organic and subconscious. The desire to be great can only become organic at the time of vacuity and by giving it (Sigil) form. When conscious of the Sigil form (any time but the magical) it should be repressed, a deliberate striving to forget it; by this it is active and dominates at the unconscious period; its form nourishes and allows it to become attached to the subconscious and become organic; that accomplished is its reality and realization.²⁰⁶

It is reasonable to ask whether Spare’s concept of magical sigils actually worked, and the anecdotal evidence is certainly intriguing, if not persuasive. The occultist Kenneth Grant who, as mentioned earlier, had extensive contact with Spare towards the end of his life, describes a situation where Spare needed to move a heavy load of timber without assistance. A sigil was required which could generate great personal strength and Spare employed the tiger sigil, referred to above, in order to access reserves of strength he did not consciously realise he possessed. According to Grant’s account:

Spare closed his eyes for a while and visualised a picture which symbolised a wish for the strength of tigers [ie the sigil above]. Almost immediately he sensed an inner response. He then felt a tremendous upsurge of energy sweep through his body. For a moment he felt like a sapling bent by the onslaught of a mighty wind. With a great effort of will, he steadied himself and directed the force to its proper object. A great calm descended and he found himself able to carry the load easily.²⁰⁷

In 1955 Spare produced a pastel-portrait titled *Elemental Materialisation* depicting the same tiger atavism.²⁰⁸ In the lower left-hand corner of the composition a sheet of paper reveals the appropriate magical sigil, accompanied by a drawing of a tiger’s head. Spare is shown on the right-hand side, staring intently with his fist clenched. Sigils are also drawn on the centre of his forehead, indicating that he was concentrating on them as he sought to impose his magical will. The figure of a brooding tiger, the magician’s ally, or ‘familiar’, lurks in the background. *Elemental Materialisation* is one of the few didactic magical portraits from Spare’s later period and clearly depicts the process of atavistic resurgence.

Spare’s sigil-process can be summarised as follows:

- * A magical sigil may be employed to embody a desire or command in relation to what a person wishes to do or become.

- * Latent karmic potentials already reside within the psyche of the individual and lie dormant in the subconscious.
- * Once despatched through willed concentration, the magical sigil activates 'elementals' or 'karmic automata' related to the magical 'wish' or 'desire'.
- * The wish or desire then becomes 'organic' in the atavistic realms of the subconscious. It automatically loses its effect if consciously remembered.
- * The powers activated by the sigil finally manifest in the realm of consciously perceived 'reality', either as events or personal attributes. As Kenneth Grant has written, 'Sigillization leads... to the realization of belief.'²⁰⁹

Automatic art

In addition to developing his concept of the Death Posture and the Zos/Kia cosmology, Spare also explored the spontaneous creative process of automatic drawing. It has been argued that Spare can legitimately claim to be the first Surrealist artist because his earliest atavistic artworks preceded the 1924 Paris Surrealist Manifesto by at least a decade.²¹⁰

Throughout his life Spare was interested in spiritualism and Theosophy,²¹¹ and his attraction to automatic drawing is directly linked to the psychic automata, or elementals, which he believed surrounded him at all times. *The Book of Pleasure* includes an illustration titled *The Dwellers at the Gates of Silent Memory* which shows a reflective naked woman sitting in a state of repose. What appears to be a tree, but is actually an extended skull with antlers, extends upwards from her head, and perched upon the 'branches' are several birds, or more specifically, 'bird karmas'. Nearby, a disembodied winged head floats in space. Spare's accompanying text, titled 'The Sub-Consciousness', contains a reference to what he calls the 'Storehouse of Memories with an Ever-Open Door' and he goes on to write:

Know the sub-consciousness to be an epitome of all experience and wisdom, past incarnations as men, animals, birds, vegetable life, etc. etc. everything that exists, has and ever will exist. Each being a stratum in the order of evolution. Naturally then, the lower we probe into these strata, the earlier will be the forms of life we arrive at; the

last is the Almighty Simplicity. And if we succeed in awakening them, we shall gain their properties, and our accomplishment will correspond.²¹²

The karmic entities referred to in *The Book of Pleasure* as the ‘Dwellers at the Gates of Silent Memory’ provide a key to Spare’s automatic art. Spare thought of them as ‘the nascent selves swarming at our periphery, always *behind* our attention. It is through interaction with these desire-bodies, and their integration into our subjective continua, that we interact directly with Self, through the infinite permutation of its expression.’²¹³ It was these psychic entities that Spare evoked in producing his automatic drawings; he maintained that they could be perceived in a darkened room:

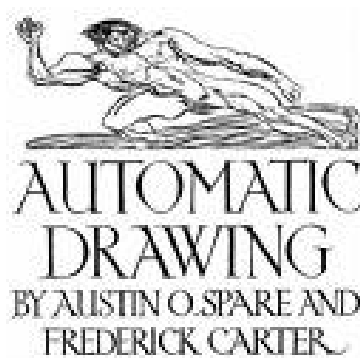
Darken your room, shut the door, empty your mind. Yet you are still in great company – the Numen and your Genius with all their media, and your host of elementals and ghosts of your dead loves – are there! They need no light by which to see, no words to speak, no motive to enact except through your own purely formed desire.’²¹⁴

According to his friend, journalist Hannen Swaffer (1879-1962), Spare used self-hypnosis to facilitate the ‘automatic’ process. Frank Letchford refers to Swaffer’s account in his biographical study, *From the Inferno to Zos*:

In [1929] Hannen Swaffer published a little book entitled *Adventures with Inspiration* in which there is a paragraph describing Austin’s method of work on automatic drawings. Staring into a mirror to induce self-hypnotism, he sets to work, sometimes for hours, awakening to find that he has covered hundreds of pages with most beautiful drawings. Try as he would, he could not stop, but if he wished to draw he could not. In this way he filled a drawing book of fifty sheets.²¹⁵

Spare denied that he was acting like a psychic medium on such occasions, always maintaining that his contact with elementals and karmic automata was subject to his magical will.²¹⁶ However, Letchford’s account suggests that, at least on some occasions, these entities operated spontaneously and were beyond Spare’s artistic control.

An article titled ‘Automatic Drawing’, co-authored by Austin Spare and Frederick Carter, and published in *Form* in 1916,²¹⁷ throws further light on the process:



Automatic drawing, one of the simplest of psychic phenomena, is a means of characteristic expression and, if used with courage and honesty, of recording subconscious activities in the mind. The mental mechanisms used are those common in dreams, which create quick perceptions of relations in the unexpected, as wit, and psycho-neurotic symptoms. Hence it appears that single or non-consciousness is an essential condition and as in all inspiration, the product of involution not invention. Automatism being the manifestation of latent desires (or wishes) the significance of the forms (the ideas) obtained represent the previously unrecorded obsessions. Art becomes, by this illuminism or ecstatic power, a functional activity expressing in a symbolical language the desire towards joy unmodified – the sense of the Mother of all things...

In the ecstatic condition of revelation from the subconscious, the mind elevates the sexual or inherited power...and depresses the intellectual qualities. So a new atavistic responsibility is attained by daring to believe – to possess one's own beliefs – without attempting to rationalize spurious ideas from prejudiced and tainted intellectual sources.

Automatic drawings can be obtained by such methods as concentrating on a Sigil – by any means of exhausting mind and body pleasantly in order to obtain a condition of non-consciousness – by wishing in opposition to the real desire after acquiring an organic impulse toward drawing.

The hand must be trained to work freely and without control, by practice in making simple forms with a continuous involved line without afterthought, ie. its intention should just escape consciousness. Drawings should be made by allowing the hand to run freely with the least possible deliberation. In time shapes will be found to evolve, suggesting conceptions, forms and ultimately having personal or individual style. The mind in a state of oblivion, without desire towards reflection or pursuit of materialistic intellectual suggestions, is in a condition to produce successful drawings of one's *personal* ideas, symbolic in meaning and wisdom. By this means sensation may be visualized.²¹⁸

The *Form* article clearly indicates that Spare's approach to automatic drawing is linked to his concept of atavistic resurgence. Spare's artistic intention is to create a spontaneous and unimpeded flow of imagery that proceeds directly from his karmic atavisms, from the 'Dwellers at the Gates of Silent Memory' that are actually residual metaphysical personifications of his own inner being.

Two limited-edition collections of Spare's automatic art have been published since the artist's death in 1956. The first of these, *A Book of Automatic Drawings*, was published by Catalpa Press, London, in 1972 in a hardcover quarto format, in an edition of 1000 copies. The drawings themselves were from a sketch-book dated 1925, designed as a complete work. As Ian Law indicates in his introduction to the 1972 edition, the compositions featured in *A Book of Automatic Drawings* were reproduced 'in the exact size, style and sequence that Spare indicated'.²¹⁹ The edition contains twelve full-size visionary images, executed in the meticulous and highly accomplished linear style that had led some critics to compare his work with that of Dürer and Holbein. Many of the images seem perverse and excessively ugly: the limbs of most of his humanoid figures are hideously distorted, many have horns or demonic shapes extending from their limbs, and several are surreal bird – or animal – fusions. However, Spare believed that the act of transfiguring the grotesque could be liberating.²²⁰ In his posthumously published text, *The Witches' Sabbath*, Spare refers to the traditional image of the 'ugly witch' and argues, in keeping with the transformative powers he associated with Mrs Paterson, that this sort of ugliness could produce a new aesthetic of its own:

The witch...is usually old, usually grotesque, libidiously learned and is as sexually attractive as a corpse; yet she becomes the entire vehicle of consummation. This is necessary for transmutation; the personal aesthetic culture is destroyed; perversion is also used to overcome the same kind of moral prejudice or conformity...he who transmutes the traditionally ugly into another aesthetic value, has new pleasures beyond fear...²²¹

A second collection of Spare's automatic art, *The Book of Ugly Ecstasy*, was published by Fulgur in London in 1996, in both general and limited-edition hardcover formats. Once again the illustrations were taken directly from one of Spare's sketch-books. The original hand-drawn volume had been purchased from the artist in October 1924 by the art connoisseur Gerald Reitlinger for £20; it contained 58 automatic drawings, of which only 23 could be considered complete.²²²



Plate 82: An atavistic image from Spare's posthumously published work, *The Book of Ugly Ecstasy*

The 1996 edition contains only the 23 finished artworks, all of them meticulously reproduced. In style, subject matter and quality, the automatic drawings in *The Book of Ugly Ecstasy*, resemble those in *A Book of Automatic Drawings* but are, perhaps, even more grotesque. Distorted human shapes transform into clawed, bestial phantasms with multiple eyes or drooping bulbous breasts; horned devils emerge, one from the other, in a nightmarish sequence of bestial emanations; other creatures have truncated limbs or are simply malformed. However, as Robert Ansell writes in his introduction:

...the mystery of their creation may be illumined by a single candle flame. In this light the viewer will find these aberrations slowly become familiar and induce a process of subtle sublimation.²²³

Spare once wrote: ‘Out of the flesh of our Mothers come dreams and memories of the Gods.’²²⁴ Spare’s visionary *oeuvre*, teeming with atavistic forms and spirit-creatures from the nether-regions, embodies its own sense of magical authenticity: it is the unique vision of an artist who was also a sorcerer, and who was highly aware of the permutations of human form and expression.



Plate 83: Austin Osman Spare, *Farewell to Synthesis* – ‘Out of the flesh of our Mothers come dreams and memories of the Gods’

Differentiating Spare and Norton

Norton’s trance magic differs from that of Austin Spare in several distinctive ways, confirming in turn that her method is not simply derivative. As noted in Chapter Four, according to Norton the gods and goddesses exist *in their own right*. They are transcendent beings and they ‘contact’ humanity on the inner planes only through their projected ‘god forms’, which Norton maintained

would then appear to the occultist in a manner that the viewer could comprehend. The so-called 'astral' or 'inner plane' domain which Norton explores during her trance journeys is therefore a type of middle ground between the sacred realm of deity and the world of familiar reality.

For Spare, by way of contrast, deity is an aspect of Kia – the Absolute – and even the figure of the Universal Woman is a manifestation of this higher, abstract life-force. Spare's trance method lies in seeking what he calls the 'void moment'. He then opens his consciousness to an influx of atavistic automata – residual psychic energies he believed were 'karmas' from his own earlier bird, animal and human incarnations. Spare's occult practice seeks to embody these automata through an act of magical 'obsession', a term Spare actually uses to describe his process.²²⁵ While Spare always denied that he was acting like a passive psychic medium, his technique of seeking the 'void moment' and then 'opening the door to the Dwellers on the Threshold' allowed his psyche to be overrun with psychic impressions from his subconscious mind.²²⁶ Norton, however, did not act in this way. Her trance episodes were willed and consciously determined, and did not involve either magical 'obsession' or 'possession'.²²⁷ Characteristically, none of Norton's drawings was produced using the 'obsessive' technique of automatic art. Spare claimed to be a Surrealist, and was perhaps the *first* Surrealist,²²⁸ but Norton consistently denied that she should be labelled as such, the reason being that her artistic method was not surrealist but descriptive. Norton was essentially a representational artist, portraying in a figurative way the archetypal beings and metaphysical entities encountered on the inner planes of the psyche. Her art is essentially a type of magical reportage.

There is no denying that Norton's magical inclination is towards the 'night' side of the psyche and, as noted earlier, through her practice of sex-magic, Tantra and Kundalini yoga, she aligns herself more with the so-called 'Left-Hand Path' associated with Thelemic magick than with the mystical theurgy of the Golden Dawn.²²⁹ However when Norton portrays 'dark forces', they are the *Qliphoth* or 'negative energies' of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, and Norton captions them as such. On the other hand, Spare's 'ugly ecstasies', produced as automatic drawings, are, to use his term, his own karmic atavisms. *They are ultimately aspects of himself.*

Spare focuses both his cosmology and his magic on the potentials of the human organism. In his *Logomachy of Zos* he makes such pronouncements as

‘Man is a potentiality of *anything* becoming actuality,’²³⁰ and ‘The only attribute of God is man...,’²³¹ and ‘God is absolutely my own Idea; otherwise God cannot exist’.²³² As Gavin Semple has noted, Spare sought through the Death Posture to make a magical sigil out of his own body, to ‘flesh’ his desires through an act of magical will.²³³ As Spare succinctly states: ‘*All ways to Heaven lead to flesh.*’²³⁴ Spare’s method is also essentially retrogressive – his ecstatic journey takes him into his previous incarnations and progressively back to the source of all manifestation: Kia.²³⁵ This is spiritual evolution in reverse. Norton’s magical quest is quite different. Having decided that Pan is the overlord of the manifest universe, her task is to pay homage to him as a sacred being, to depict him in her drawings and paintings and in the large mural where he presides over her ritual altar, and to seek his presence on the inner planes of being. Never does she seek to incarnate him *in the flesh*, to use Spare’s term. Her drawing of Lucifer as the Adversary, which shows a small, somewhat intimidated human being encountering a much more substantial metaphysical deity,²³⁶ demonstrates that it is ultimately the gods and goddesses who are in control. For Norton the deities are respected as figures of awe; for Spare they are aspects of the life-force to be embodied or ‘incarnated’.²³⁷

Nevertheless, both artists share one important characteristic: they are both essentially *chthonic* in their artistic processes – although in different ways. It is important to remember, as Marcus M. Jungkurth points out in a recent essay, that Spare’s artistic *oeuvre* derives, essentially, from the mythological Underworld. Spare’s magical name was *Zos vel Thanatos* – ‘Death is all’ – and during his career as a visionary artist and trance magician Spare identified himself with Thanatos, Death, which was one of the bynames of the Greek god of the Underworld, Hades.²³⁸ Spare’s images arise from the Underworld of his densely populated psyche. His artistic atavisms are incarnations of his personal karmas that lie just beneath the surface of awareness and through acts of metaphysical ecstasy he induces them to swarm into his art.

Norton’s art is similarly chthonic in emphasis. Many of her most potent occult drawings throng with *Qliphothic* demons and serpentine imagery that emanate from the nether regions of the psyche. Her instinctive *inspirational* attraction, however, is towards the ecstatic Kundalini fire-snake – the latent cosmic power that lies dormant in the primal sex *chakra* at the base of the spine, where it can be awakened into potent manifestation. A powerful example of this creative impulse can be found in Norton’s coloured rendition of Pan

entwined by a spiral serpent, produced *circa* 1943 and included [*Pan*, Plate 1] in the *Supplement to the Art of Rosaleen Norton* – published posthumously in 1984 (reproduced in Chapter Four).²³⁹ As Kirsti Sarmiala-Berger notes, with reference to this particular work, ‘The coils of the phallic snake, rising out of the black container, combine the duality of life and death into a single cycle of recurrent transformation.’²⁴⁰ Like Spare, Norton’s artistic sorcery arises from the psychic depths but the thrust of her sexual and magical ecstasy depends also on awakening the fire-serpent – and then worshipping Pan as the source and overlord of her primal existence.

Summary of main points

- a) Rosaleen Norton’s recognisable artistic style first emerges in the 1940s – especially in drawings published in *Pertinent* (1941) and *Pix* magazine (c.1943). One especially significant early work, *Astral Scene*, shows Norton utilising a state of trance to contact metaphysical entities.
- b) *Pertinent* brings Norton and Greenlees together creatively. Two of Greenlees’ earliest poems are published in *Pertinent* in 1943, when he is only 13 years old. By 1949 Norton and Greenlees have met each other. They hitchhike to Melbourne and arrange a major exhibition of Norton’s pen and pastel drawings at the Rowden White Gallery, University of Melbourne.
- c) In the catalogue essay that accompanies her 1949 exhibition, Norton identifies herself as an ‘outsider’ in the Australian art-world and writes that she is inspired mainly by Pantheism and esoteric philosophy. She has little in common with her contemporaries.
- d) During the 1949 exhibition, members of the Victorian police force charge Norton with exhibiting works that are decadent and obscene. The four offending drawings are *Witches’ Sabbath*, *Lucifer*, *Triumph* and *Individuation*. The charge of obscenity is later dismissed in court.
- e) While still in Melbourne, Norton is interviewed at length by L.J. Murphy, a psychologist at the University of Melbourne. Twenty-seven of the exhibited artworks are photographed in colour by Professor Oeser, Head of the Psychology Department – most of these works will

later be published posthumously in the *Supplement to the Art of Rosaleen Norton* (1984), released five years after Norton's death.

- f) In 1951 Norton begins selecting a range of drawings for inclusion in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, published the following year – they will be accompanied by poems by Gavin Greenlees and additional texts and poems written by Norton herself. The selected drawings include images of Pan, Lilith, Eloi and other metaphysical entities like the Werplon and a winged hermaphrodite. Two particular images cause offence at the time of publication: *Fohat* and *The Adversary* – a legal ruling determines that these images must be blacked out if publication is to proceed. *Fohat* depicts a goat-headed deity with an enormous serpentine phallus. It is a distinctly *chthonic* work and Norton's commentary links it to the sex-magical potency of the Kundalini fire-serpent. In the Introduction to *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Norton also acknowledges an affinity to the work of the surrealists Tanguy and Matta – both of whom have chthonic, nether-world inclinations. Some of Norton's images also reveal the primal influence of Voodoo.
- g) The thrust of Norton's publication is quintessentially Gnostic. Norton maintains that the visionary images in her drawings derive from dimensions of knowledge and awareness *normally inaccessible* to human consciousness. It is her experiential contact with sacred god-forms while in a state of trance that in turn gives rise to her visionary artistic images.
- h) Fire-snakes feature prominently in Norton's later work of the 1960s and '70s. Examples include *Witch and Family Secrets* and *The Temptress*. Other works in this period are specifically demonic – they include *Satan* and *Fur Fur the Storm Demon*, a painting inspired by the *Goetia*.
- i) In many ways Norton's work parallels to that of British trance magician Austin Osman Spare, whose work is similarly chthonic and is based on atavistic imagery derived from ecstatic and visionary states of awareness. Spare's atavisms, however, derive ultimately from his own personal subconscious – from his accumulated 'karmas' and primal memories. Norton's chthonic imagery derives, by way of contrast, from the *Qliphothic* realms associated with the nether regions of the

Kabbalistic Tree of Life and from primal sources of sexual and magical energy associated with the Kundalini fire-serpent.

¹ Spare's significance as a major figure in the 20th century magical revival depends not only on his status as a major visionary artist but also his substantial influence on Chaos Magick, which arose in Britain in the late 1970s and utilised his concept of magical sigils.

² This pencil drawing is reproduced in N. Drury, *Pan's Daughter: The Strange World of Rosaleen Norton*, Collins Australia, Sydney 1988:7. Following publication of this book the original drawing was returned to Cecily Boothman, who has since died. The present location of the drawing is unknown.

³ R. Norton, 'I was Born a Witch', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 3 January 1957: 4.

⁴ Personal communication to the author by Cecily Boothman, c.1986.

⁵ G. Sturgeon, *The Development of Australian Sculpture: 1788-1975*, Thames & Hudson, London 1978: 98.

⁶ Ibid: 95.

⁷ Ibid: 104

⁸ R. Norton, 'Hitchhiking Witch', *Australasian Post*, 7 February 1957:10.

⁹ Personal communication from Walter Glover, c.1986.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Personal communication from Cecily Boothman, c.1986.

¹³ Especially authority figures in the mainstream religious denominations.

¹⁴ See for example *Fishers of Men* [Plate II:19] *Entombment of Count Orgaz* [Plate XXIII: 61] and *Masque of Eidolons* [Plate XXVII: 69].

¹⁵ 'Rosaleen Norton's Art: Depicting the Sinister and the Occult', *Pertinent*, vol.3, Sydney, October 1941:46.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Readers of *Pertinent* were invited to contact Norton c/- the magazine and it was stated that reproductions of some of her works were for sale in a special artist's print edition produced on 'heavy art paper... perfectly suited to framing and hanging'. See *Pertinent*, vol.4, Sydney, November 1941: 51.

¹⁸ 'More occult fantasy from the portfolio of Rosaleen Norton', *Pertinent*, vol.4, Sydney, November 1941: 51.

¹⁹ Ibid: 54. Another version of this work, in pencil and pastel, would be exhibited at the Rowden White Gallery at the University of Melbourne in 1949 with a different title: *Merlin*. According to one particular legend of Merlin which originated in Brittany, the famous wizard was imprisoned in a tower by his lover Vivian when she turned his own magical spells against him.

²⁰ Baphomet, or the Goat of Mendes, had been depicted as an incarnation of the Devil in a famous print by the French ceremonial magician Eliphas Levi (1810-1875) and Norton may well have seen this print reproduced in various books on the magical traditions. Levi's *Goat of Mendes* similarly shows the hermaphroditic goat-headed Devil with breasts and horns and in a seated position. Levi's figure, however is winged, has a flaming torch between its horns, and also has a caduceus-like phallus – these features are omitted in the Norton portrait. In 1307 King Philip IV of France accused the Knights Templar of worshipping Baphomet. With the

aid of Pope Clement V, the king had members of the Knights Templar arrested and their possessions confiscated. Many members of the order were put on trial and tortured in order to extract confessions of sacrilegious practices. See entry 'Knights Templars' in W.H. Harris and J.S. Levey (ed.) *The New Columbia Encyclopedia*, Columbia University Press, New York 1975: 1490.

²¹ In a footnote to Eliphas Levi's *The History of Magic* (1913), which Waite translated from French and edited with annotations, Waite notes that Levi believed the 'hypothetical idol was Baphomet was a symbolical figure representing the First Matter of the Magnum Opus which is the Astral Light [and he further suggests] that it signified the god Pan...' See E. Levi, *The History of Magic* (trs. A.E. Waite), Rider, London 1969: 211 fn.

²² *Astral Scene*, *Pan* and a work titled *Lunacy* were reproduced in the article 'Art Models Show their own Art' in *Pix*, Sydney, 3 July 1943: 26. A photograph of Norton posing naked in a studio for another artist (Selina Muller) was also included on the following page.

²³ Another pencil drawing, produced around the same time, titled *Nightmare*, also showed a magical entity manifesting above the comatose naked body of the artist, depicted in a state of trance. *Nightmare* is a more conventional drawing, however, and includes stylised elements that reflect Norton's earlier, less sophisticated style. Of the two drawings, *Astral Scene* is clearly the more innovative.

²⁴ *Nightmare* is the other. See fn.23.

²⁵ See fn.27, Chapter One.

²⁶ Norton had met Conroy in 1935 and they were married in Sydney on 24 December 1940. They were divorced in 1951 According to Norton's sister, Cecily Boothman (personal communication to the author, c.1986) Norton and Greenlees first met each other in 1945 when Greenlees was 15 years old. They had certainly become lovers by late 1949, when they returned to Sydney from Melbourne and moved into their apartment at 179 Brougham Street, Kings Cross.

²⁷ 'Candid Reflections on Art by Rosaleen Norton', *Truth*, Melbourne, 27 August 1949: 21.

²⁸ R. Norton, 'Hitchhiking Witch', *Australasian Post*, loc cit: 11.

²⁹ A photograph of Ian Stapleton, Rosaleen Norton and Gavin Greenlees was published in *Truth*, Melbourne, 27 August 1949: 21

³⁰ In 'Hitchhiking Witch' (*Australasian Post*, loc cit: 11) Norton refers to Ian Stapleton as 'John Bolton', acknowledging that this was not his real name. In fact, Ian Stapleton was co-editor of the Melbourne University newspaper *Farrago*, and a picture of Stapleton, Gavin Greenlees and Roie was published in the Melbourne *Truth* on 27 August 1949:21.

³¹ Theoretically Greenlees or Stapleton could also have written it, but the specific references in the text, including references to [Jungian] archetypes, Pantheism, Norman Lindsay (for whom Norton occasionally modelled), Herbert Read's "Superrealism", W.B. Yeats' *A Vision*, allusions to specific aspects of modern art history, and commentaries on particular artworks, suggest strongly that Norton was herself the author.

³² Interestingly, just a few months later, Norton would admit in an interview with *People* magazine, that she admired Beardsley, Leonardo, Tanguy, Van Gogh, Dore, Tchelitchev and Dali and that she regarded Norman Lindsay and William Dobell as 'Australia's only great artists'. See 'She Hates Figleaf Morality', *People*, Sydney, 29 March 1950: 27.

³³ This controversial metaphysical work by the distinguished poet W.B. Yeats included a substantial amount of cosmological, alchemical, astrological, Kabbalistic and Neoplatonic material and was first published privately in 1925, presumably because it was so unlike Yeats' main body of literary work. Yeats' principal publishers, Macmillan, did not issue an edition until 1937. See W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, Macmillan, London (revised edition) 1962 and S.J. Graf, *W.B. Yeats: Twentieth Century Magus*, Weiser, York Beach, Maine 2000.

³⁴ This is the complete text of the accompanying essay in the catalogue for the exhibition titled 'The Art of Rosaleen Norton' at the Rowden White Library, University of Melbourne, 1-123 August, 1949.

³⁵ The full list of works from the 1949 exhibition included in *Supplement to the Art of Rosaleen Norton* (Walter Glover, Sydney 1984) is as follows: *Pan*; *Timeless Worlds*; *The Invocation*; *The Blueprint*; *Merlin*; *Loosing of the Whirlwind*; *The Bells*; *Triumph*; *Sphinx and Her Secrets*; *A Tune*; *The Tree*; *The Jester*; *Lucifer*; *At Home*; *The Gnostic*; *War*; *The Adversary*; *The Djinn*; *The Initiate* and *The Possessed*. *The Djinn* is not identified in the *Supplement to the Art of Rosaleen Norton* as one of the works exhibited in Melbourne in 1949 but it was in fact listed in the exhibition catalogue.

³⁶ Retitled *Esoteric Study* when Norton reworked this image as a pencil drawing and included it in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (Plate XII :39)

³⁷ The Middle Pillar on the Tree of Life is defined by the central alignment of the following *sephiroth*: Kether; Tiphareth, Yesod, Malkuth. See section on the Kabbalah in Chapter Two.

³⁸ In western culture the left-hand side has been viewed traditionally as symbolically negative. The Latin word for 'left' was *sinister*, from which the present English meaning derives.

³⁹ In the Kabbalah *Chesed* is the sphere of the Merciful Father. However Norton sometimes focused on female counterparts to familiar images – her *Sphinx and Her Secrets* from the same era presents the Sphinx as totally feminine.

⁴⁰ See O.M. Broughton, 'The Art of Rosaleen Norton', *Arna*, Sydney 1948, referred to earlier. Broughton noted that in *The Sphinx* (as it was titled in this article) Norton is shown lying comatose within a *yon*i form, symbolising the female sexual organs. Here the shape is very much a *yon*i and not a diamond, whereas in *The Initiate*, the two female beings embrace each other within a clearly defined diamond shape.

⁴¹ As mentioned earlier, Norton believed that the essential role of the Adversary was to bind and limit man 'when it appears he is growing too big for his boots. He tries to trick man, not with malicious intent, so much as his exposing the limitations of the ego and man's pride in his own existence.' Notes based on my interview with Norton at Roslyn Gardens, 1977. See N. Drury, *Inner Visions: Explorations in Magical Consciousness*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1979:106.

⁴² See *The Adversary*, plate XVI, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc cit. 1952:47.

⁴³ Retitled *Black Magic* in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc cit.:49.

⁴⁴ See 'She Hates Figleaf Morality', *People*, Sydney, 29 March 1950: 26.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 4 August 1949.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 20 August 1949.

⁴⁹ Reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 August 1949.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 20 August 1949.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Not all the works were for sale. Only 29 out of the 46 pictures on display were available for purchase, at prices ranging between 1 and 30 guineas. *Lucifer* and *Merlin* were the two most expensive works in the show, listed at 30 guineas each (details taken from the exhibition catalogue).

⁵⁵ 'Candid Reflections on Art by Rosaleen Norton', *Truth*, Melbourne, 27 August 1949: 21.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ The new publication featured twenty works from the 1949 Rowden White exhibition.

⁵⁹ A photocopy of this letter is the possession of the author. Norton paid £3/10/- for the complete set of colour prints.

⁶⁰ Glover advised me c.1986 that he had a signed contract with Norton to this effect, but I have never seen it. Since Glover is no longer alive the contract may now be in the possession of his son, Walter Glover Jnr.

⁶¹ See R.Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Walter Glover, Sydney 1952: 18, 48 for examples of Norton's poetry.

⁶² It is both interesting and revealing that *Witches' Sabbath* was retitled *Black Magic* in the 1952 publication. As noted in Chapter One, Norton had read various histories of demonology while still in her twenties but she appears not to have had a working knowledge of black magic (*Goetia*) at the time this particular drawing was produced. Eugene Goossens offered to instruct Norton in the use of magical seals (ie. the magical sigils found in the medieval grimoires) and describes her in one of his letters (undated, but *circa* 1953-55) as 'my best – and only – pupil' in this particular area of magical specialization (see Chapter Five). Prior to meeting Goossens, Norton had endeavoured to reflect her interest in the 'black arts' by including a magical sigil within her revised composition *Black Magic* (reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, 1952: Plate XVII). However, although the 'demonic' sigil has been inserted for graphic impact next to the winking nun, it does not accurately depict any of the demonic seals reproduced in the major medieval grimoires, including the *Goetia* itself. It would be fair, in fact, to describe the symbol Norton has drawn as a visual parody of an authentic demonic sigil because it is very clumsily constructed. This supports my view that until meeting

Goossens, Norton's knowledge of grimoires and demonology was relatively superficial. It was Goossens who had the practical knowledge and techniques in this area of magic, having presumably learned them from Philip Heseltine, a disciple of Aleister Crowley (like Crowley, Heseltine was interested in practical *Goetia* – see Chapter Three).

⁶³ Norton identifies Eloï as such in her unpublished notes that were drawn up and presented to Walter Glover when she was selecting drawings for inclusion in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*.

⁶⁴ *Masque of Eidolons* shows a motley parade of phantasms, several identifiable as figures from different denominations of the Christian Church. One of the figures in the procession sports horned buttocks, another cloven hooves, wings and bare breasts. A sanctimonious priest following up the rear is depicted with a serpent lunging across his shoulder, in turn flanked by a padre who looks haggard and drained of all vitality. Gavin Greenlees' accompanying poem is biting and critical. He called it 'a sonata...written in the glow of ecclesiastical spooks: landscape of faces hypnoforce, faces of dead shells marching'.

⁶⁵ *The Jester* pokes fun at different figures of authority – a priest, a judge, a headmaster, a scientist, and two totalitarian leaders: the Kaiser and Karl Marx. In his accompanying verse Greenlees refers to the 'shadow play of dolls' and Norton depicts these figures of high public office simply as mannikins on strings.

⁶⁶ Figures like Lilith, the lovers in *The Initiate*, the naked female figure embracing the black panther in *Black Magic* and the dancer in *Rites of Baron Samedi* all have shapely, sensuous bodies and in particular, large firm breasts – an attribute that Norton herself did not possess. Norton was relatively slim and flat-chested as one can see from the 1943 photograph which shows her modelling naked for fellow artist Selina Muller ['Art Models Show their own Art', *Pix*, Sydney, 3 July 1943: 27]. Nevertheless, Norton was not self-conscious about her body. She often walked around naked in the company of her fellow coven members and was similarly unselfconscious when sitting topless during journalistic interviews. See D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 6 October 1955.

⁶⁷ These notes were passed to me by Walter Glover c.1986 at the time I was researching *Pan's Daughter* and are still in my possession.

⁶⁸ R. Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc. cit. 1952: 23.

⁶⁹ C.G. Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious* [first American edition 1919], Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., London 1919: 153-154.

⁷⁰ See fn.70.

⁷¹ Ibid: 22.

⁷² Manuscript notes from Rosaleen Norton passed to me by Walter Glover c.1986.

⁷³ For details of the trial relating to the obscenity charges brought against *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* see *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 5 February 1953 and *The Sun*, Sydney, 5 February 1953. In addition to *Fohat*, the other image which had to be blacked out was *The Adversary*.

⁷⁴ Manuscript notes from Rosaleen Norton passed to me by Walter Glover c.1986.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ In his autobiographical work *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* Jung refers to the mandala as the symbol of individuation: '...the mandala is the centre. It is the exponent of all paths. It is the path to the centre, to individuation....the goal of psychic development is the self.' See C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Collins/Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1963:222.

⁷⁷ Manuscript notes from Rosaleen Norton passed to me by Walter Glover c.1986.

⁷⁸ Ibid. The ouroboros is a well known spiritual symbol in medieval alchemy and represents the cycles of life and Nature, the fusion of opposites, and the transcendence of duality.

⁷⁹ See D. Fortune, *The Mystical Qabalah* [1935], Benn, London, seventh impression 1966: 173.

⁸⁰ Manuscript notes from Rosaleen Norton passed to me by Walter Glover c.1986.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² R. Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (Introduction), loc. cit. 1952: 76.

⁸³ Ibid: 15.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid: 12.

⁸⁶ Gleeson is quoted in 'Witches, demons on rampage in weird Sydney sex book,' *Sun*, Sydney 11 September 1952.

⁸⁷ Interestingly, James Gleeson's more recent surrealist paintings have become much more spontaneous and cosmological and are now closer to the free-form style Norton was aiming for. For an interview with James

Gleeson regarding his own creative process see N. Drury and A. Voigt, *Fire and Shadow: Spirituality in Contemporary Australian Art*, HarperCollins, Melbourne 1999:15-27.

⁸⁸ A. Balakian, *Surrealism: The Road to the Absolute*, Allen & Unwin, London 1973:128.

⁸⁹ The Surrealist painter and sculptor Max Ernst (1911-1976) writes: 'When it is said of the Surrealists that they paint constantly changeable dream-reality, this does not mean that they paint a copy of their dreams (that would be descriptive, naïve naturalism), or that each individual builds his own little world of dream elements, conducting himself amicably or maliciously within it (that would be a "flight from time"), but that they freely, bravely and self-confidently move about in the borderland between the internal and external worlds which are still unfamiliar though physically and psychologically quite real ("sur-real"), registering what they see and experience there, and intervening where their revolutionary instincts advise them to do so.' See Max Ernst, extract from *Beyond Painting* in L.R. Lippard (ed.) *Surrealists on Art*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 1970:135-136.

⁹⁰ See transcripts of interview with Rosaleen Norton conducted by L.J. Murphy at the University of Melbourne, 27 August 1949: Appendix A.

⁹¹ See C. Barreda, *Paalen*, Museum of Modern Art, Mexico City 1967.

⁹² Quoted in L. Lippard (ed.), *Surrealists on Art*, loc cit: 121.

⁹³ Volume 1 of Lam's definitive Catalogue Raisonné 1923-1960 was published in an English language edition in 1996. See L. Laurin-Lam, *Wifredo Lam*, Acatos, Lausanne 1996.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Quoted in G. Xuriguera, *Wifredo Lam*, Filapacchi, Paris 1974 :23.

⁹⁶ J. Pierre, *A Dictionary of Surrealism*, Eyre Methuen, London 1974:153.

⁹⁷ See J.T. Soby, *Yves Tanguy*, Museum of Modern Art, New York 1955.

⁹⁸ See Valerie Fletcher, 'Matta' in *Crosscurrents of Modernism : Four Latin American Pioneers*, Hirschhorn Museum / Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington D.C., 1992: 247. This volume also contains material on Wifredo Lam.

⁹⁹ Ibid. Levi produced a graphic image of the Goat of Mendes (Baphomet) referred to earlier.

¹⁰⁰ Of the 48 works reproduced in *Supplement to the Art of Rosaleen Norton*, 28 were included in the Don Deaton exhibition at Exiles Gallery, 1-7 October 1982.

¹⁰¹ See K. Booth, 'Demon Drinks: Rosaleen's satanic art puts pub patrons off their brew', *People*, Sydney , December 1984 and the report in the *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 22 December 1984.

¹⁰² Norton had two older sisters, Cecily and Phyllis, so this work is presumably titled with reference to Norton's siblings, even though the images in the painting bear no physical resemblance to any of the family members. The painting appeared on the jacket of N. Drury, *Pan's Daughter*, loc cit. 1988.

¹⁰³ As mentioned earlier, Norton offered me an LSD trip when I interviewed her in her Roslyn Gardens apartment in 1977. I declined her offer.

¹⁰⁴ See T. Owen and D. Dickson, *High Art: A History of the Psychedelic Poster*, Sanctuary Publishing, London 1999.

¹⁰⁵ The painting shows the 'Temptress' with the head of a cat and the figure seems to be modelled on Norton herself.

¹⁰⁶ G. de Brito, 'A Witch's Warning', *Sunday Mirror*, Sydney 17 August 1975.

¹⁰⁷ See section 'Norton, Greenlees and Goossens, and the influence of Aleister Crowley' in Chapter Five.

¹⁰⁸ In the Western magical tradition, demons are *evoked* within a ceremonial triangle whereas higher beings like gods and goddesses are *invoked* within a sacred ceremonial circle. The triangle is the ritual motif associated with magical evocation.

¹⁰⁹ S.L. MacGregor Mathers (trs.), *Goetia: the Lesser Key of Solomon*, De Laurence Scott & Co., Chicago 1916: 33.

¹¹⁰ *Snakes* is an excellent example of this tendency and depicts a naked she-devil with double-banked rows of eyes, leering at the viewer. She is painted in sinister hues of blue, black and lime yellow and has snakes writhing in her hair. A reptilian tail extends from her spine and trails behind her. The figure shown in *Snakes* appears to be a more 'demonic' version of *Lilith*, Plate IV in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc cit. 1952: 23.

¹¹¹ The first publications to explore Spare's magical approach in depth – K. Grant, *The Magical Revival*, Muller, London, and N. Drury and S. Skinner, *The Search for Abraxas*, London – were both published in 1972, twenty years after the publication of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* and just seven years before Norton's death, and it is unlikely that Norton had access to Spare's privately published books, which for many years

have remained extremely rare items in the secondhand book market. Norton does not refer to Spare in her bibliography.

¹¹² The autobiographical essay included in the catalogue accompanying Rosaleen Norton's art exhibition at the University of Melbourne in 1949 shows that she did not believe she had any true artistic 'contemporaries' and she shunned the so-called 'contemporary' trends emerging in Australian art at that time. Similarly, although Spare was briefly fashionable in London's West End early in his career he felt more at home in his vastly less glamorous environment in the slums of south London. See Steffi Grant's personal profile of Spare (whom she first met in the 1940s) in K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks !: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, London 1998: 13-25. In 1927 Spare also published an invective directed against the 'Mayfair set' titled *The Anathema of Zos: a Sermon to the Hypocrites*. See R. Ansell, *The Bookplate Designs of Austin Osman Spare*, The Bookplate Society/Keridwen Press, London 1988: 6.

¹¹³ Norton and her lover Gavin Greenlees lived in run-down terrace houses in the Kings Cross and Darlinghurst districts of Sydney and Spare lived for most of his life in confined and impoverished conditions in slum-flats located south of the Thames in the Southwark area of London.

¹¹⁴ Frank Letchford, a close friend of Spare's, writes in *Inferno to Zos* (First Impressions, Thame, UK 1995: 273) that many had wrongly assumed that Spare had been inspired primarily by William Blake, 'his real tradition being with El Greco'. Norton acknowledges her artistic debt to El Greco in her satirical drawing Entombment of Count Orgaz (Plate XXIII of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, 1952). Spare also acknowledges his attraction to artists like Bosch, Grünewald, Cranach, Dürer, Michelangelo and Leonardo in his posthumously published text *The Living Word of Zos*. See K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks !: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 267.

¹¹⁵ Spare held exhibitions at the Elephant and Castle in Southwark and in other 'public houses' in the Borough and Brixton, although he also held exhibitions at mainstream London art galleries, including Bruton Galleries, The Baillie Gallery, The Ryder Gallery, Lefevre Galleries and Archer Gallery. See R. Ansell, *The Bookplate Designs of Austin Osman Spare*, The Bookplate Society/Keridwen Press, London 1988: 6, and W. Wallace, *The Early Work of Austin Osman Spare*, Catalpa Press, Stroud, UK 1987: 20-21. Norton had ongoing 'exhibitions' at the Apollyon and Kashmir coffee-shops in Kings Cross, Sydney.

¹¹⁶ Steffi Grant, a personal friend of Spare, writes that 'He was mad on cats. They crawled all over his place... cosy tame strays wandering straight in and out of the 'kitchen', which was his back room...' See Grant's introduction in K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks !: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, London 1998: 15. Norton was similarly fond of cats and was photographed with one of her many feline pets in Dave Barnes' article 'Confessions of a Witch', *Australasian Post*, Sydney 15 June 1967: 2.

¹¹⁷ Norton's pantheism, expressed as ritual homage to Pan, is discussed in Chapter Three. Spare declares in *The Logomachy of Zos* ; 'I am a Pantheist...because I can conceive God in You and You in Me... God in us all and in all potencies...' See K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks !: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 210.

¹¹⁸ According to his close friend, Frank Letchford, Spare read the Theosophical works of Annie Besant and H.P. Blavatsky and was also strongly influenced by Taoism. See F.W.Letchford, *Inferno to Zos*, First Impressions, Thame, UK 1995 :231.

¹¹⁹ Norton acknowledged a specific debt to Jung and his theory of archetypes in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* [Sydney, 1952] as well as in her interviews with the psychologist L.J. Murphy at the University of Melbourne. Spare appears to have incorporated elements of Freudian psychology into his Zos/Kia conception although Steffi Grant recalls that he used to refer to Freud and Jung as 'Fraud and Junk'. See *Zos Speaks !: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 23.

¹²⁰ Spare joined Crowley's occult order, the Argenteum Astrum, as a probationer in 1909. His magical name was *Yihoveaum*, a combination of the Hebrew JHVH and the Eastern symbol AUM. He also contributed drawings to Crowley's biennial publication, *The Equinox*. See W.Wallace, *The Early Work of Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: chronology section (no page number).

¹²¹ His parents were Philip Newton Spare and Eliza Ann Adelaide Osman. Philip Spare was a constable in the City of London police force.

¹²² Spare lived briefly in Golders Green and later in Bloomsbury but mostly lived south of the Thames. See S. Grant, introduction, *Zos Speaks !: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 18.

¹²³ See R. Ansell, *The Bookplate Designs of Austin Osman Spare*, The Bookplate Society / Keridwen Press, London 1988: 1.

¹²⁴ R. Ansell, *The Bookplate Designs of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 1.

¹²⁵ Ibid : 2.

¹²⁶ See I. Law, 'Austin Osman Spare' in G. Beskin and J. Bonner (ed.) *Austin Osman Spare 1886-1956: The Divine Draughtsman*, exhibition catalogue, The Morley Gallery, London, 1987: 5 and K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, Muller, London 1975: 11.

¹²⁷ R. Ansell, *The Bookplate Designs of Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 2.

¹²⁸ It was published by Otto Schutzer & Co., 1909. See W. Wallace, *The Early Work of Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit 20.

¹²⁹ See R. Ansell, *The Bookplate Designs of Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 5. *The Yellow Book* was published between 1894 and 1897. Henry Harland was its literary editor and Beardsley its art editor until 1896. Spare himself did not acknowledge any direct influence from Beardsley although he was very familiar with his graphic work.

¹³⁰ F.W. Letchford, *From the Inferno to Zos*, First Impressions, Thame, UK 1995: 99.

¹³¹ *Form* was revived in 1921, but issued in a more modest format.

¹³² Ibid: 105.

¹³³ *The Golden Hind* was co-edited with Clifford Bax and published by Chapman & Hall, London..

¹³⁴ See K. Grant, introduction to A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure* [1913], facsimile reprint, 93 Publishing, Quebec, Canada 1975.

¹³⁵ See K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, Muller, London 1975: 16. According to Robert Ansell this quote is hearsay and no documentary evidence has so far been produced to support it.

¹³⁶ K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks!: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 286-288.

¹³⁷ R. Ansell, *The Bookplate Designs of Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 6. Ansell writes that Spare was acclaimed the 'darling of Mayfair' between 1907 and 1913. The latter date coincides with the release of Spare's most revolutionary and confronting work, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*.

¹³⁸ A.O. Spare, *Earth:Inferno*, London 1905: 21.

¹³⁹ Ibid: 18.

¹⁴⁰ A.O. Spare. *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, London 1913: 45.

¹⁴¹ Ibid: iii.

¹⁴² Ibid: 7.

¹⁴³ G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, London 1995: 11.

¹⁴⁴ Specifically, S.L. MacGregor Mathers' translation of Knorr Von Rosenroth's selection of key texts from the Zohar, *Kabbala Denudata*, published in an English language edition as *The Kabbalah Unveiled*, Redway, London 1887.

¹⁴⁵ F.W. Letchford, *From the Inferno to Zos*, loc cit: 79.

¹⁴⁶ G.W. Semple, 'A Few Leaves from the Devil's Picture Book' in A.O. Spare, *Two Tracts on Cartomancy*, Fulgur, London 1997: 21fn.

¹⁴⁷ Temurah, or Temura, is a Kabbalistic coding technique intended to work as a disguise. The first half of the Hebrew alphabet is written in reverse order and located above the remaining section so that the letters form vertical pairs:

k y th ch z v h d g b a
l m n s o p tz q r sh t

Here k=l, y=m, th=n and so on. A given word can be disguised in Temurah by substituting the code letter in each case. See C. Poncé, *Kabbalah*, Garnstone Press, London 1974: 172.

¹⁴⁸ W. Wallace, *The Early Work of Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 13

¹⁴⁹ G.G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, revised edition, Schocken, New York 1961: 240.

¹⁵⁰ A.O. Spare, *Axiomata*, Fulgur, London 1992: 9. According to publisher, Robert Ansell, this work is based on previously unpublished texts from the early 1950s.

¹⁵¹ 'Atavistic resurgence' has been defined as 'the return into the sorcerer's consciousness of latent powers and knowledge, resurrecting the 'dead' from the pre-human strata; typically manifesting through bestial and elemental forms, evoked by intense nostalgia.' See G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 48.

¹⁵² A.O. Spare, *The Witches' Sabbath*, Fulgur, London 1992:7. This is a posthumously published text, based on manuscripts dating from the early 1950s and is not one of Spare's self-published works.

¹⁵³ Spare was familiar with the writings of Freud, Krafft-Ebbing and Havelock Ellis, all specialist authors in the field of the psychology of sexuality.

¹⁵⁴ One of Spare's magical names was *Zos vel Thanatos* which, according to Frank Letchford, was derived 'from the theory posited by Dr Sigmund Freud of the eternal conflict between Eros (love) and Thanatos (the so-called Death-wish).' See F.W. Letchford, *Inferno to Zos*, loc cit: 137. In ancient Greek mythology, Thanatos was the Greek god of Death, the brother of Sleep and the son of Night.

¹⁵⁵ According to Frank Letchford, a close friend of Spare's, 'The Tao was one of *the* most important influences upon Austin' (see F.W. Letchford, *Inferno to Zos*, loc.cit:231) and it is of interest that the coloured self-portrait of Spare titled *Prayer* [1906], reproduced opposite the title page in William Wallace's *The Early Work of Austin Osman Spare 1900-1919*, loc.cit, shows the artist wearing a Taoist yin-yang pendant around his neck. Spare makes a very Taoist remark in his posthumously published text *The Living Word of Zos*: 'I believe in the life; in the flesh of infinite variety. We are eternity, with - as now - a fleeting and fluxing consciousness. Possibilities of being are limitless...' See K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks!: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 273.

¹⁵⁶ For an explanation of 'karmas' see fn 162 below.

¹⁵⁷ A.O. Spare, *Axiomata*, loc cit: 19. This publication is not one of Spare's self-published works but a more recent publication based on previously unpublished manuscripts assembled and edited long after his death in 1956.

¹⁵⁸ Spare illustrated these 'karmas' in his graphic compositions. Examples may be found in *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy* [1913] on pages 49 and 57.

¹⁵⁹ A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, loc.cit: 52-53.

¹⁶⁰ Letchford provides these dates in his foreword to William Wallace, *The Early Work of Austin Osman Spare 1900-1919*, loc cit.

¹⁶¹ F.W. Letchford, *From the Inferno to Zos*, loc cit: 161.

¹⁶² The Hindu concept of karma is based on the principle of cause and effect, and states that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The renowned Indian spiritual teacher Vivekananda (1862-1902) described karma as 'the eternal assertion of human freedom...our thoughts, our words and deeds are the threads of the net which we throw around ourselves.' In Hindu philosophy the law of karma extends beyond the physical world into the mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of life and applies not only to physical actions but to every conscious thought and action that arises in everyday life. According to the karmic philosophy of life, positive thoughts and actions produce a positive outcome and create good karma. Negative thoughts and actions result in negative outcomes and create bad karma. Austin Spare may have developed his interest in karma through reading the Theosophical writings of Madame H.P. Blavatsky and Annie Besant.

¹⁶³ K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, Muller, London 1975: 9.

¹⁶⁴ K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 10.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 7

¹⁶⁶ K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 21.

¹⁶⁷ Grant's close friendship with Spare, and their voluminous correspondence, are documented in K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks!: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit.

¹⁶⁸ K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 23.

¹⁶⁹ A.O. Spare, *Earth: Inferno* [1905], loc cit.

¹⁷⁰ K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit:71.

¹⁷¹ Ibid:73.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, loc.cit: 6.

¹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Steffi Grant claims in her Introduction to *Zos Speaks!* that Spare had numerous lovers. Many of them were local women who also modelled for him. Grant writes that 'He said that until he was forty-five he never thought of anything except sex; that he was seriously in love every single week. He must have been very attractive to women, and never found any difficulties in satisfying his desires.' See K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks!: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 18.

¹⁷⁵ To this extent, Spare's approach resembles the Thelemic sex magic of Aleister Crowley, discussed in Chapter Three. However, Spare was already developing his Zos/Kia cosmology as early as 1906 (elements of

it appear in *Earth: Inferno*) so it would appear that Spare did not derive his sexual practice from Crowley, even though he was briefly a member of Crowley's sex-magic order, the Argenteum Astrum, 1909-1910.

¹⁷⁶ K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 61.

¹⁷⁷ A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, loc.cit: 48.

¹⁷⁸ In *The Focus of Life*, Spare actually defines it in these terms: the Death Posture, he writes is 'a simulation of death by the utter negation of thought.' See A.O. Spare, *The Focus of Life* [1921], Askin Publishers, London 1976:18.

¹⁷⁹ A.O. Spare, *Metamorphosis by Death Posture*, quoted in K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit:61.

¹⁸⁰ G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 29.

¹⁸¹ In *The Book of Pleasure*, Spare writes: 'Magical obsession is that state when the mind is illuminated by sub-conscious activity evoked voluntarily by formulae at our own time, etc. for inspiration. It is the condition of Genius.' (p.41)...The chief cause of genius is realization of "I" by an emotion that allows the lightning assimilation of what is perceived...Its most excellent state is the "Neither-Neither" [Kia], the free or atmospheric "I" (p.43)...My formula and Sigils for sub-conscious activity are the means of inspiration, capacity or genius, and the means of accelerating evolution.' (p.48), loc cit.

¹⁸² G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit:26.

¹⁸³ A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, loc.cit: 7.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Spare says specifically that the Self is the 'Neither-Neither'. It is the Absolute because it transcends duality. See A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, loc.cit: 33.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid: 18.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ In *The Book of Pleasure*, Spare writes with regard to the Death Posture: 'Let him practise it daily, accordingly, till he arrives at the centre of desire.' loc.cit:19.

¹⁹⁰ F.W. Letchford, *Inferno to Zos*, loc.cit:119.

¹⁹¹ The first publication of one of Spare's pictographic magical sigils appears in the illustration 'Existence', included in *A Book of Satyrs*, 1907. The illustration itself is dated 1906 and also includes the motif of the vulture-head, one of Spare's symbols for Kia. However, as Robert Ansell has pointed out in a personal communication to the author (June 2007), sigils do not appear in Spare's art throughout his career. For the most part they are a feature of his art between 1909 and 1912, and much later, between 1948 and 1956.

¹⁹² As Gavin Semple astutely observes, 'A sigillic language enables the sorcerer to think in symbols... allowing consciousness to prevade hitherto occluded regions; the sigil acts as a "courier" in the transference across the threshold.' See G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, London 1995: 33.

¹⁹³ A.O. Spare, 'Mind to Mind and How' in *Two Tracts on Cartomancy*, Fulgur, London 1997: 32.

¹⁹⁴ A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, loc.cit: 48.

¹⁹⁵ Gavin W. Semple's edition of Spare's *Two Tracts on Cartomancy* (Fulgur, London 1997) contains a text written by Spare himself. It is titled *Mind to Mind and How* 'by a Sorcerer', and makes reference to the rationale underpinning Spare's magic of Zos/Kia: 'The law of sorcery is its own law, using sympathetic symbols' (page 31).

¹⁹⁶ According to Kenneth Grant, Spare regarded elementals as a 'dissociated part of the subconsciousness'. See K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Spare*, loc cit: 22. Gavin Semple similarly defines 'elemental automata' as 'residual fragments of consciousness, independent and motivated within a specific field of activity and influence. Once rendered perceptible these are delegated by the sorcerer to new functions according to intent.' See G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, London 1995:48.

¹⁹⁷ In his introduction to the 1975 facsimile reprint of *The Book of Pleasure* (93 Publishing, Quebec) Kenneth Grant writes: 'Towards the end of his life, when Spare lived more or less reclusively in a Dickensian South London slum, he was asked whether he regretted his lonely existence. "Lonely !," he exclaimed, and with a

sweep of his arm he indicated the host of unseen elementals and familiar spirits that were his constant companions; he had but to turn his head to catch a fleeting glimpse of their subtle presences.'

¹⁹⁸ G.W. Semple, 'A Few Leaves from the Devil's Picture Book' in A.O. Spare, *Two Tracts on Cartomancy*, Fulgur, London 1997:21.

¹⁹⁹ Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535) first published his text in 1533 and an English translation appeared in 1651. A revised edition of Book One ('Natural Magic') of *Occult Philosophy or Magic*, edited by Willis F. Whitehead, was published in 1897 and would have been accessible to Spare. This particular edition was subsequently reissued by Aquarian Press, London, in 1971. Agrippa's so-called *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy* was issued as a limited-edition facsimile reprint by Askin Publishers, London in 1978.

²⁰⁰ G.W. Semple, 'A Few Leaves from the Devil's Picture Book', loc.cit:21.

²⁰¹ See H.C. Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy or Magic* [1533], ed. W.F. Whitehead, Aquarian Press, London 1971: 113.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, loc.cit: 50.

²⁰⁴ Exhaustion could be brought about in a variety of ways. Spare cites 'Mantras and Posture, Women and Wine, Tennis, and the playing of Patience, or by walking and concentration on the Sigil etc. etc.' See A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, loc.cit: 51.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid: 45.

²⁰⁷ Kenneth Grant's account of atavistic resurgence, first published in *Man, Myth and Magic*, vol.6, Marshall Cavendish, London 1970, is quoted in N. Drury and S. Skinner, *The Search for Abraxas*, London 1972: 66.

²⁰⁸ The pastel portrait *Elemental Materialisation* is reproduced in colour as Plate 17 in the gallery catalogue *Austin Osman Spare 1886-1956: The Divine Draughtsman*, prepared by Geraldine Beskin and John Bonner to coincide with an exhibition of Spare's works at the Morley Gallery, London 1987. The pastel, which is owned by Jimmy Page, guitarist with the well-known rock-group Led Zeppelin, was included in the exhibition.

²⁰⁹ K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 37.

²¹⁰ Kenneth Grant writes in his introduction to Spare's *Book of Zos vel Thanatos*: 'Spare's relationship to the Surrealist Movement, which he claims to have anticipated by at least a decade, remains to be explained. The Movement was a phenomenon of major occult importance. It not only explored and explicated the creative potential of the subconscious, it also influenced powerfully the direction of the Arts, bringing to the fore the subjective treatment of external 'reality'. The Movement was, of course, intimately related to the researches of Freud, whose exploration of subconscious mechanisms fired the Surrealists to experiment with the method of 'free association'. Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* was first published in English translation in 1913, the year in which *The Book of Pleasure* (1909-1913) appeared. The latter showed that Spare's knowledge of the predominating role of the Subconsciousness in Art and Sorcery had already matured and was well in place by the time his book appeared.' See K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks ! : Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 158.

²¹¹ An observation forwarded by Robert Ansell, June 2007.

²¹² A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, loc.cit: 47.

²¹³ G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 31.

²¹⁴ A.O. Spare, *The Logomachy of Zos*, an unpublished manuscript quoted in G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 31.

²¹⁵ F.W. Letchford, *Inferno to Zos*, loc cit: 161-163.

²¹⁶ G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 37.

²¹⁷ The article appeared in issue no.1, volume 1 of *Form*, April 1916, and was re-published in a facsimile edition by 93 Publishing, South Stukely, Quebec, Canada in 1979, in an edition of 250 copies.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ I. Law, introduction to A.O.Spare, *A Book of Automatic Drawing*, Catalpa Press, London 1972.

²²⁰ See R. Ansell, introduction to A.O.Spare, *The Book of Ugly Ecstasy*, Fulgur, London 1996.

²²¹ A.O. Spare, *The Witches' Sabbath*, Fulgur, London 1992:5.

²²² R. Ansell, introduction to A.O.Spare, *The Book of Ugly Ecstasy*, loc cit.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ In *The Book of Pleasure* Spare writes: 'Magical obsession is that state when the mind is illuminated by sub-conscious activity evoked voluntarily by formula at our own time, etc. for inspiration. It is the condition of genius.' A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure*, London 1913: 41.

²²⁶ Spare appears to admit this in *The Book of Pleasure* when he writes : 'Depending on its degree of intensity and resistance shown at some time or another, the Ego has or has not knowledge of the obsession; *always is its expression autonomous, divorced from personal control.*' [my emphasis in italics] See A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure*, loc. cit: 41.

²²⁷ 'Possession' is a term used in both anthropological and esoteric literature to describe a situation where a trance medium believes he or she has become 'possessed' by a spirit or discarnate entity which then takes over aspects of the personality either totally or in part, and appears to operate independently of the person concerned. Spirit possession is a feature of voodoo and modern spiritualism.

²²⁸ A claim supported by the distinguished British surrealist, Ithell Colquhoun: note to the author from Robert Ansell, June 2007.

²²⁹ Norton clearly aligns herself with the 'Left-Hand Path' in her interview with D.L. Thompson and uses this expression in the second half of the article, which she wrote herself (see D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 6 October 1955: 370). Research scholar Richard Sutcliffe has recently described the 'Left-Hand Path' as 'an umbrella term of self-designation used by certain contemporary ritual magicians and is usually taken to incorporate practitioners of Thelemic magick (beginning with Aleister Crowley), Tantric magick, and Chaos Magick (inspired by both Crowley and the magickal techniques devised by the occult artist Austin O.Spare, 1886-1956). The notion of the Left-Hand Path is derived from the Tantric term *vama-marga* ('left-path'), ie. the Left-Hand Path in Tantrism.' See R. Sutcliffe, 'Left-Hand Path Ritual Magick' in G. Harvey and C. Hardman, *Pagan Pathways*, Thorsons, London 2000:110.

²³⁰ A.O. Spare, *The Logomachy of Zos*, in K.and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks! : Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, London 1998: 184

²³¹ Ibid: 169.

²³² Ibid: 168.

²³³ G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, London 1995: 26.

²³⁴ A.O. Spare, *The Logomachy of Zos*, loc.cit: 172.

²³⁵ Spare writes: 'I believe in the Eternity of the Ego whether I am carnate, discarnate, reincarnate or whatever metamorphosis I suffer. For I am *change* and forever ultimate, however I may appear.' A.O. Spare, *The Living Word of Zos*, in K.and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks! : Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 172

²³⁶ This drawing is *The Adversary*, reproduced as Plate XVI in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc cit: 47.

²³⁷ As Spare notes in *The Logomachy of Zos*, 'My gods have grown with me...they are my potentials.' See A.O. Spare, *The Logomachy of Zos*, loc.cit: 188.

²³⁸ M.M. Jungkurth, 'Neither-Neither: Austin Spare and the Underworld', in *Austin Osman Spare: Artist, Occultist, Sensualist*, Beskin Press, London 1999.

²³⁹ R. Norton, *Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Walter Glover, Sydney 1984: 1.

²⁴⁰ K. Sarmiala-Berger, 'Rosaleen Norton – a Painter of Occult and Mystical Pictures' in *Overland*, 162, Autumn 2001: 62.

Chapter Seven

THEORIES AND DEFINITIONS OF MAGIC

Having presented data relating to Rosaleen Norton's magical beliefs and cosmology in Chapters Four and Five it is appropriate to consider a range of formal academic definitions of magic, most of them obtained from anthropological and sociological sources, and then to compare these academic descriptions of the magician's world with a range of comparable definitions and commentaries provided by influential magical practitioners themselves. The latter include practising ceremonial magicians like Aleister Crowley and Dion Fortune,¹ whose published works, as noted earlier, are known to have influenced Norton herself.

Some of the key issues which arise in making a comparison of this sort include an evaluation of the central characteristics of magic as perceived by 'outsiders' and 'insiders' in relation to magical belief and practice; an increased understanding of the relationship between magic and religion and, in turn, the possibility of identifying both the similarities and essential differences, if any, between magical and religious perspectives within their specific social and spiritual contexts.

The relationship between magic and science is also of interest. While many academic authors writing about magic have come to view magic as a form of pre-science, pseudo-science or superstition, there may yet prove to be some sort of common ground – as noted in Chapter Four where connections between Norton's dissociative 'astral plane' experiences and medical specialist Dr Pim van Lommel's quantum theory of consciousness – proposed as a scientific model to explain near-death experiences – were discussed. To some extent perceptions of magic may also reflect changing paradigms of thought. A classic case of variant perceptions is provided by British historian Sir Keith Thomas who prefaces his well-known work, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971) with these remarks:

...this book began in an attempt to make sense of some of the systems of belief which were current in sixteenth- and seventeenth- century England, but which no longer enjoy much recognition today. Astrology, witchcraft, magical healing, divination, ancient prophecies, ghosts and fairies, are now all rightly disdained by intelligent persons. But they were taken seriously by equally intelligent persons in the past, and it is the historian's business to explain why this was so.²

In making these remarks, Thomas appears to have been totally unaware of the rise of the American counterculture and New Age movement that had blossomed across the Atlantic shortly before this preface was written, and he was possibly also unaware that the noted poet and Nobel Prize-winner W.B. Yeats – presumably an ‘intelligent person’ – was at one time a leading member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, an occult organisation which, as noted in Chapter Two, was specifically associated with the *rebirth* of magic (in the 20th century) and not with its decline.

Similar perceptions denying the legitimacy of magical thought can also be found in much of the anthropological literature, as I will show later in this chapter. However it soon becomes apparent that within the modern context at least, *academic* perceptions of magic and *practitioner* perceptions of magic are often far removed from each other. The anthropological dilemma is then whether to accept *emic*, or subjective, interpretations of modern and contemporary magic – interpretations which acknowledge the validity of the magical beliefs and perceptions of the practitioner – or adopt reductionist *etic* models of explanation that impose external ‘objective’ frameworks of analysis onto the data. The *emic/etic* distinction is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter but the key point I wish to emphasize here – a point I have also made in my introduction – is that many modern occultists are highly literate and are able to express their magical convictions and beliefs both competently and lucidly. The challenge from an academic perspective is to distil meaning and context from metaphysical and spiritual perspectives that are largely unfamiliar and sometimes far removed from current trends in intellectual debate and analysis.

Anthropological perspectives on magic

Because magic has traditionally been associated with pre-literate social groups and cultures around the world, much of the classical academic literature on magic has been written by anthropologists and social theorists. As the following commentaries will indicate, social theorists have responded to the data on magic in a variety of different ways. Academic responses to magic – and also religion – include the late 19th century *evolutionary* approach, which sought common threads in the development of magical and religious systems (a perspective associated especially with Frazer and Tylor); the *functional* approach, which focused on the relationship of magic and religion to the structure and survival of society (Durkheim, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown), and the *psychosocial* approach, which has been concerned with the relationship between culture and personality and the connection between the society and the individual

(Evans-Pritchard, Freud, Spiro, et al.).³ All of these perspectives continue to influence current anthropological thought in varying degrees. Some theorists have related the existence of magic in pre-literate societies to the control of Nature and to specific social needs (Middleton, Evans-Pritchard, Geertz, Faivre and Needleman); others have seen magic as providing an apparent means of resolving and/or escaping from situations where there was no rational or empirical solution to a problem (Malinowski and Luhrmann). Some theorists regard magic as essentially subversive (O'Keefe) and, in some instances specifically evil (Lessa and Vogt) or profane (Durkheim). For some, the worlds of magic and religion are clear and distinct (Frazer, Malinowski, Durkheim) whereas for others there is an undoubted sense of overlap (Levi-Strauss, Kieckhefer, Titiev, Hsu) – see below.

Frazer held that, in the evolution of social forms and intellectual ideas, magic preceded both religion and science, whereas O'Keefe – a contemporary social theorist – maintains that magic everywhere derives from earlier religious traditions and that science follows on from magic in the evolution of ideas.⁴ Frazer considered magic to be a form of pseudo-science, whereas for Malinowski and Durkheim magic is distinct from science in several key respects and cannot be considered strictly as a scientific precursor. Jahoda associates magical thought with superstition and maintains that it usually arises during times of great stress and uncertainty.⁵ Overriding all of this debate has been the implicit assumption that magical thinking is a precursor of scientific thought and that it has no place of value in modern society, especially when we consider that since the Enlightenment – theoretically at least – Western cultures have been associated with reason and rationality.⁶

Magic and Nature

Key aspects involving the relationship between magic and the natural world were identified by Frazer in the late 19th century and outlined in his classic work, *The Golden Bough*, first published in 1890. Here Frazer proposed the *Law of Sympathy*, which states that magic depends upon the apparent association between various phenomena. This law in turn creates two further sub-laws: the *Law of Similarity*, which states that things that resemble each other are essentially the same, and the *Law of Contagion*, which states that things that were once in contact continue to be connected even after the connection is severed.⁷ The Law of Similarity gives rise to *imitative magic*, whereas the Law of Contagion gives rise to *contagious magic*.⁸ In addition, academics and practitioners generally agree that in the

magical world, which is essentially holistic, all events and phenomena – both natural and ‘supernatural’ – are perceived as being either directly or indirectly interconnected.

Contemporary anthropologist Susan Greenwood (2005) concurs that magical thinking creates connections between phenomena and events ‘through forces and influences unseen but real’⁹ and Faivre and Needleman similarly observe that magic is ‘at once the knowledge of a network of sympathies or antipathies which bind the things of Nature and the concrete implementation of this knowledge’.¹⁰ For Middleton, this allows magic to be employed as a means of controlling Nature, which in turn maintains social cohesion.

In pre-literate societies a belief in magic leads human beings to believe that they can affect Nature for either good or evil purposes – even though they may not understand the actual mechanisms that bring about these results. For this reason, according to Middleton, witchcraft, sorcery, magic, oracular consultation, divination and even many forms of curing, are all closely related.¹¹ Evans-Pritchard, meanwhile, has suggested that specific ritual forms can be utilised to address social needs in a recurrent pattern from one generation to the next:

To peoples such as the Trobrianders and the Maori the spell is a rigid unalterable formula which is transmitted intact from generation to generation, and the slightest deviation from its traditional form would invalidate the magic....Knowledge of the magic is knowledge of the spell, the ritual centres round it, it is always the core of the magical performance.¹²

Magic as the solution to a problem

On the basis of his extensive anthropological fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands, Malinowski came to believe that both religion and magic could help individuals endure situations of emotional stress by opening up escapes from situations and impassés that offered ‘*no empirical way out* except by ritual and belief into the domain of the supernatural’.¹³ Influenced initially by Frazer’s *Golden Bough* and later by functionalist models of analysis, Malinowski recognised the significance of the relationship between individual psychology and the cultural and social value of magic. According to Malinowski, magic was essentially about problem-solving:

Magic is to be expected and generally to be found whenever man comes to an unbridgeable gap, a hiatus in his knowledge or in his powers of practical control,

and yet has to continue in his pursuit.... His fears and hopes, his general anxiety, produce a state of unstable equilibrium in his organism, by which he is driven to some sort of vicarious activity.¹⁴

In this way, according to Malinowski, magic helps bridge the gulf between empirical reality and uncertainty, allowing the individual to plan for the future and hopefully foresee any unexpected turn of natural events.

According to this perspective, magic helps the practitioner to ‘master accident and to ensnare luck’.¹⁵ The contemporary American researcher, T.M.Luhrmann, author of a recent anthropological study of modern ritual magic in England (1989), takes a view similar to that of Malinowski, even though the magic she is writing about – witchcraft in a contemporary urban setting – relates to a sophisticated form of magical practice associated as much with the subjective inner world of human beliefs and feelings as it is with the external world of practical causes and effects. Luhrmann writes:

Magic is about controlling the uncontrollable world. Esoteric knowledge serves a protective role...It is deeply therapeutic, for it gives the magician some access to his private, perhaps frightening, inner life, offers the hope of compelling those feelings rather than being controlled by them, and provides the symbolic forum through which those personal feelings can be confronted, identified and to some extent understood.¹⁶

Magic as subversive or evil

In a commentary on magic and witchcraft included in their anthology, *Reader in Comparative Religion: an Anthropological Approach* (1972), anthropologists Lessa and Vogt define occult beliefs and practices in much starker terms, arguing that ‘witchcraft is the exercise of evil through an immanent power’. They also provide the bleak assessment that ‘whereas magic may be either malevolent or beneficent, witchcraft is invariably evil’¹⁷ – a view clearly at odds with practitioner perceptions of contemporary witchcraft (see especially the views of Starhawk, Chapter Two). Durkheim, in a somewhat surprising and completely negative generalization, similarly notes that ‘magic takes a sort of professional pleasure in profaning holy things’¹⁸ and the contemporary social theorist D.L.O’Keefe also regards magic as basically subversive:

Magic borrows religious scripts and then uses them to argue with religion, to bend and challenge them...The limit of magic is black magic which reverses every value of religion and appears utterly hostile to it. But this tendency is present in all magic: all the provinces of magic have an antinomian thrust. Even quasi-official ceremonial magic and the magic that is part of religion have an anti-religious potential that must be carefully curbed.¹⁹

We have already explored antinomian elements in modern Western magic in Chapter Three, identifying them as characteristic of the Left-Hand Path in modern occultism. Antinomianism is by no means intrinsic to modern magic *per se* but O’Keefe, Lessa and Vogt seem intent on focusing primarily on the confrontational elements in magical practice, which are usually associated with sorcery; they ignore the more positive, transformative *theurgic* practices that are associated, for example, with rites of initiation, spiritual rebirth and mystical transcendence (see especially the data on the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn described in Chapter Two). Interestingly, the distinguished psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud also held a profoundly negative view of the occult. In his autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1961) Carl Jung reports details of a fascinating conversation he had with Freud in 1910. The first part of the conversation had to do with Freud’s psycho-sexual theory of repressed material in the human unconscious but later the conversation switched to Freud’s view of the occult:

I can still recall vividly how Freud said to me, ‘My dear Jung, promise me never to abandon the sexual theory. That is the most essential thing of all. You see, we must make a dogma of it, an unshakable bulwark.’ He said that to me with great emotion...In some astonishment I asked him, ‘A bulwark – against what?’ To which he replied, ‘Against the black tide of mud’ – and here he hesitated for a moment, then added – ‘of occultism.’ What Freud seemed to mean by ‘occultism’ was virtually everything that philosophy and religion, including the rising contemporary science of parapsychology, had learned about the psyche.²⁰

Magic and religion

The classic distinction between magic and religion described by Frazer in *The Golden Bough* remains influential among academics as well as magical practitioners²¹ but debate about several of Frazer’s fundamental claims remains unresolved. Frazer maintained that magic represented the earliest phase of development in the intellectual evolution of humanity – a prejudice that continues to the present day, as exemplified by the quotation from Sir Keith Thomas, referred to earlier. Frazer also believed that an important difference between magic and religion could be discerned in their different approaches to the supernatural universe. Religious views acknowledged a range of potentially ‘variable’ outcomes in Nature: religious devotees could call on their deities to *modify* the outcomes associated with future events, whereas the magical view of the world was necessarily more impersonal and tied in with essentially *unchanging*,

almost ‘*mechanistic*’, laws in the natural world that the magician could theoretically harness:

Religion assumes the world to be directed by conscious agents who may be turned from their purpose by persuasion [and] stands in fundamental antagonism to magic as well as to science, both of which take for granted that the course of nature is determined, not by the passions or caprice of personal beings, but by the operation of immutable laws acting mechanically.²²

Frazer distinguished between magicians – who believed they could *compel* supernatural beings to act in their favour – and religious priests who adopted a more humble *supplicatory* approach to the divine powers.²³ He also identified magic as a *precursor* of religion – indeed, its very foundation – and believed that in modern times it survived only among the so-called ‘ignorant classes’:

Ancient magic was the very foundation of religion. The faithful who desired to obtain some favour from a god had no chance of succeeding except by laying hands on the deity, and this arrest could only be effected by means of a certain number of rites, sacrifices, prayers and chants, which the god himself had revealed, and which obliged him to do what was demanded of him. Among the ignorant classes of modern Europe the same confusion of ideas, the same mixture of religion and magic, crops up in various forms...²⁴

The pioneering French sociologist Émile Durkheim supported Frazer’s distinction between magic and religion and added a further two-fold distinction of his own, maintaining that magic tended to be an activity associated with individuals who had a ‘clientele’, whereas religions were associated with priests, churches and communities. According to Durkheim, all aspects of human activity could be classified as either *sacred* or *profane*²⁵ and only religious acts could truly be deemed ‘sacred’. Durkheim defined religion as a ‘unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them...religion should be an eminently collective thing.’²⁶ He also drew a clear line between religion and magic, contrasting their communal and individualistic aspects:

There is no Church of magic. Between the individuals themselves...there are no lasting bonds...The magician has a clientele and not a Church, and it is very possible that his clients have no other relations between each other...It is true that in certain cases, magicians form societies...but when these societies of magic are formed, they do not include all the adherents of magic, but only the magicians: the laymen...are excluded.²⁷

Durkheim's distinction between the sacred and the profane has remained influential: theorists who have adopted this perspective include Spiro, Pandian and Evans-Pritchard.²⁸ However Titiev and Hsu (1960) maintain that the line of demarcation between magic and religion is not as clear-cut as Frazer and Durkheim have suggested.²⁹ Hsu has commented that 'whichever criterion we employ, we are led to the conclusion that magic and religion, instead of being treated as mutually exclusive entities, must be grouped together as magico-religion or magico-religious phenomena'³⁰ Hsu's position is supported by other influential theorists like Levi-Strauss and Kieckhefer, who similarly believe that the dividing line between magic and religion is blurred and indistinct. Levi-Strauss notes that '...all ritual trends towards magic',³¹ further observing that 'there is no religion without magic any more than there is magic without at least a trace of religion.'³² Kieckhefer, a specialist in medieval magic, similarly notes that co-existent blends of magical and religious practice are quite common:

Magic is connected in multiple ways with mainstream religious practice: prayers are recited over magical herbs, gospel verses are written on bread and then scraped into potions, charms can be virtually identical in form sometimes to blessings and sometimes to exorcisms and the exorcisms used to dispel demons can with the necessary adjustments be made to summon them as well.³³

Magic and science

If the apparently clear line of demarcation between magic and religion is less distinct than Frazer and Durkheim would have us believe, Frazer's identification of magic as a form of 'pseudo science'³⁴ has also aroused ongoing debate. Like Frazer, O'Keefe regards magic as 'transitional to logical thought'.³⁵ Lessa and Vogt similarly maintain that 'magic is analogous to science in its use but its premises – its theoretical bases – are supernatural and antithetical to science.'³⁶ Lévi-Strauss views magic as 'a timid and stuttering form of science'³⁷ but while he clearly regards magic as intellectually inferior to science, he nevertheless makes the point that, within its given context, magic

forms a well-articulated system, and is in this respect independent of that other system which constitutes science, except for the purely formal analogy which brings them together and makes the former a sort of metaphorical expression of the latter. It is therefore better, instead of contrasting magic and science, to compare them as two parallel modes of acquiring knowledge.'³⁸

Malinowski supports Frazer's concept of the 'sympathetic' and 'contagious' principles in magic but emphasizes that even 'primitive'

peoples have their own form of *empirical science* which they then distinguish from 'magic'. Malinowski therefore rejects Frazer's notion of magic as 'pseudo-science':

Magic unquestionably is dominated by the sympathetic principle: like produces like; the whole is affected if the sorcerer acts on a part of it; occult influences can be imparted by contagion... [but] sympathy is not the basis of pragmatic science, even under the most primitive conditions. The savage knows scientifically that a small pointed stick of hard wood rubbed or drilled against a piece of soft, brittle wood, provided they are both dry, gives fire... There is no sympathy, no similarity, no taking the part instead of the legitimate whole, no contagion. The only association or connection is the empirical, correctly observed and correctly framed concatenation of natural events.³⁹

O'Keefe's challenge to Frazer's evolutionary sequence

In *The Golden Bough* Frazer describes what he regards as an evolutionary progression of ideas from magic through religion to science.⁴⁰ However, in *Stolen Lightning: the Social Theory of Magic* (1983) O'Keefe maintains that Frazer's proposed evolutionary sequence of magic / religion / science, as outlined in *The Golden Bough*, is based on prehistory that 'cannot be proven',⁴¹ and he also argues that the expression *magico-religious* (advocated by Hsu and Titiev above) is of no use at all because, in his view, 'it abdicates from the inquiry.'⁴² However, O'Keefe clearly believes that an evolutionary sequence of religion / magic / science *can* be demonstrated: his theory follows on from what he terms 'a close reading of Durkheim':⁴³

The data prove the thesis in several ways. First, content analysis of magical rites and representation reveals elements which can be traced to immediate or distant religions. Second, throughout the third world we have a vast laboratory in which we can see new magics arising by appropriating religious material. Whatever the unobservable prehistorical sequences, we are confronted every day with these *new* sequences which *can* be observed. And even if the dialectic action gets complicated, as when the magic movements try to turn back into religion, the Durkheim R...M... [Religion....Magic] thesis can be understood as true in a logical sense. Since magic shows itself to be the use of expropriated religious symbolism, religion is logically prior to magic.⁴⁴

According to O'Keefe, religion first arises during the Paleolithic era and is expressed initially in collective totemic representations of society that provide survival value in integrating small human groups. Magical practices associated with specific deities arise later during the Neolithic tribal stage associated with 'generalization of mana', when more complex societies use more general symbols that are easier to expropriate,

extrapolate and apply to individual or profane ends.⁴⁵ For O'Keefe, the development of magical thought therefore reflects an evolutionary shift from totemic, communally based religion, associated with Paleolithic bands, through to the emergence of individual self-awareness associated with the Neolithic period. According to O'Keefe, this is demonstrated by the existence of magical rites of initiation that confer new levels of individual status within society:

Just as magic derives from religion, many institutions begin in religion and then go through a transitional magical phase before they are consolidated. This is true of the individual. His nature was born in the membership rites of the tribal religion, but his independence was won by the tribal magic spun off from those rites.⁴⁶

O'Keefe further argues that 'magic arises initially because it has to, to defend the ego against the demonic entities of the holistic-religious world; it is the only way coping with such entities, but it has the effect of gradually changing them...' ⁴⁷ Magic arises as a response to what O'Keefe describes as the cumulative 'moral pressure' imposed by religion, and attracts those who 'dare to think and speak as individuals'.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, for him this process also has a down-side: the rise of magical thought can only produce negative outcomes, embedding the magical practitioner 'in structures of domination and evil which still further mystify his religious representations and darken his understanding.' ⁴⁹

Limitations of anthropological models

Some of the anthropological perspectives described above relate not only to magic in the pre-literate world but also to the modern, largely urban, magic associated with the Western esoteric tradition. Of particular interest is O'Keefe's controversial notion that religion precedes magic, a theory that receives support from the magic of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, where the historical data (published in Regardie, 1937-1940)⁵⁰ shows that practitioners drew freely on imagery from ancient religious pantheons to assist in the formulation of their magical rituals (see Chapter Two). O'Keefe's model is also supported by data relating to the rise of modern Wicca, which draws in turn, as we have seen, on cultural imagery and practices derived largely from the Celtic spiritual tradition.

A further issue in categorising magical phenomena has to do with functional outcomes. It is clear from my descriptions of Rosaleen Norton's magical practices (described in Chapter Five) and Aleister Crowley's doctrine of *Thelema* and other forms of Left-Hand Path magic

(described in Chapter Three), that many contemporary witches and magicians *do* indeed seek specific outcomes through their rituals, so the *pragmatic* or *functional* element identified by Middleton and Evans-Pritchard in relation to pre-literate societies is also clearly present in modern Western magic as well. However, modern Western magic is not concerned only with functional outcomes. Data has been presented in earlier chapters that indicates that some forms of modern occult practice seem more overtly ‘religious’ than ‘magical’, in a Durkheimian sense. How else are we to account for the spiritual quest for rebirth, transcendence and mystical union with the Godhead in the Golden Dawn, or conversely Crowley’s heretical ceremony of the Gnostic Mass? (see Chapters Two and Three respectively)

A recurrent problem with many anthropological critiques of magic arises simply because they focus almost exclusively on patterns of social behaviour and ritual belief in *pre-literate societies*: anthropologists tend to be concerned primarily with various forms of ‘functional’ magic – describing a range of magical acts intended to produce specific outcomes for good or evil within a range of indigenous contexts. In my view this can lead to shortcomings. Even when studying magic in *contemporary urban England* ⁵¹ Luhrmann still believed it appropriate to draw on Malinowski’s Trobriand-island model of ‘magical crisis’ reaffirming that, in essence, magic was all about seeking control in an uncontrollable world. Needless to say, Luhrmann’s own data does not uniformly support her conclusion – one of the magical groups studied by Luhrmann (Gareth Knight’s Western Mysteries group) derives its esoteric practices from Dion Fortune’s Fraternity of the Inner Light (see Chapter Two), and its key focus is spiritual rather than functional.

In the parlance of contemporary magical practice ‘outcomes magic’ or ‘results-oriented magic’ is known as ‘*low magic*’. Low magic is associated in modern occult practice with spells, hexes, charms, sorcery, fortune-telling and spiritual healing – and, as mentioned earlier, has a definite place in contemporary magical practice. However a much more significant thrust, especially within the Golden Dawn, Wicca, and the Goddess spirituality movement, involves the practice of *theurgy* – an esoteric and, at times, mystical approach that derives ultimately from the Hermetic and Neo-Platonic traditions. In *theurgy* – or so-called ‘*high magic*’ – practitioners seek to identify visually, mentally and spiritually with a god or goddess in a consecrated ritual setting, thereby endeavouring to incorporate the sacred qualities of that particular deity within their inner being (see Chapter Two).⁵² Because the concept of *theurgic* or ‘*high*’ magic does not arise

among pre-literate peoples it has not been addressed by major social theorists like Frazer, Durkheim, Malinowski and Levi-Strauss. Neither has it been adequately addressed in Luhrmann's recent anthropological study of contemporary magic in Britain, referred to above.⁵³

Significantly, the distinction between 'low' and 'high' magic is referred to in Ronald Hutton's *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft* (1999),⁵⁴ which documents the rise of contemporary witchcraft from a *historical* rather than an *anthropological* perspective. Hutton distinguishes between the 'low magic' tradition of so-called 'cunning' men and women, hexers and fortune-tellers – which survived well into the 19th century as an identifiable, largely rural category – and the tradition of high magic that developed in 19th century Britain with the establishment of the Rosicrucian Society in England, and the subsequent rise of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn before giving rise in turn to the modern post-World War Two witchcraft revival in Britain known as Wicca (see Chapter Two).⁵⁵

Finally, in this critique of anthropological approaches to magic, I feel obliged to comment briefly on the familiar stereotypes of the 'wicked witch' and 'magic as pseudo-science' referred to earlier. Lessa and Vogt's notion that witchcraft is 'invariably evil' is not reflected by data from the history and practice of contemporary Wicca and Goddess worship (see Chapter Two) and Frazer's notion of magic as a form of pseudo-science has little or no relevance to our present inquiry unless we are willing to discard the now substantial body of scientific research into near-death and out-of-the-body experiences that appears highly relevant to Norton's concept of the 'astral plane' (see Chapter Four).

Participant observation

In his article on anthropological approaches to religion in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Social Science* (1998) William H. Swatos poses a question that in the present context is highly relevant: can a religion be fully understood only from the perspective of the believer? The same question could be asked of many modern magical practitioners who have embraced esoteric beliefs that extend well beyond the range of familiar religious doctrines. Swatos responds to his own rhetorical question as follows:

While a number of leading psychologists and sociologists of religion are themselves adherents to the faiths they study, the overwhelming majority of anthropologists are sceptics. Most anthropologists are materialists and reductionists. They would find

themselves in strong agreement with Firth ⁵⁶ who contends that ‘there is truth in every religion. But it is a human not a divine truth.’⁵⁷

Swatos also notes that a number of anthropologists have insisted that religions can only be grasped from “within”.⁵⁸ The same point could also be made about a number of contemporary anthropologists who, in recent times, have explored magical beliefs and practices as ‘insiders’. They include Jeanne Favret-Saada (1980),⁵⁹ who studied witchcraft in the Bocage region of Normandy; Paul Stoller (1987),⁶⁰ who became an apprentice to Songhay sorcerers; Lynne Hume (1997),⁶¹ who researched Wicca and neo-paganism as a participant with various groups in Australia; Susan Greenwood (2000, 2005),⁶² who became a Wiccan priestess in England, and Nikki Bado-Fralick (2005),⁶³ who is currently both an academic and a high priestess in a witchcraft coven in Ohio. This brings us back to the *emic/etic* distinction referred to earlier, and specifically to a consideration of the value of the *emic* approach in anthropological research – *emic* research orienting itself by definition towards what Alex Anton-Luca has referred to as ‘an insider’s point of view’.⁶⁴

The terms *emic* and *etic* were first proposed by the anthropological linguist Kenneth Pike and were further developed by the sociocultural anthropologist Marvin Harris.⁶⁵ Essentially they relate to issues of subjectivity and objectivity in anthropological research. ‘Emic’ derives from the word *phonemic*, a linguistic term that refers to the categories of sounds used by native speakers to understand and create meaningful utterances. ‘Etic’ is from the linguistic term *phonetic*, referring to the acoustic properties of sounds discernible through linguistic analysis.⁶⁶ Harris is quite specific in describing their application to the study of cultural anthropology:

Emic operations have as their hallmark the elevation of the native informant to the status of ultimate judge of the adequacy of the observer’s descriptions and analyses. The test of the adequacy of **emic** analyses is their ability to generate statements the native accepts as real, meaningful, or appropriate...**Etic** operations have as their hallmark the elevation of observers to the status of ultimate judges of the categories and concepts used in descriptions and analyses. The test of the adequacy of **etic** accounts is simply their ability to generate scientifically productive theories about the causes of sociocultural differences and similarities.⁶⁷

Harris himself was in no doubt as to which was the superior method. According to Harris the value of the *etic* approach was that it allowed the anthropologist to establish ‘the social nature of truth’ in an objective and

scientific fashion, whereas *emic* approaches, in his opinion, were invariably ‘relativistic’. As Harris succinctly explains:

‘...the participant observer can never find the truth of the lived experience, apart from the consensus about such things found in the community in which the observer participates.’⁶⁸

Harris also makes specific reference to the ‘obscurantist’ approach adopted by some anthropologists with regard to various forms of contemporary esoteric and religious practice:

Obscurantism is an important component in the emics of astrology, witchcraft, messianism, hippiedom, fundamentalism, cults of personality, nationalism, ethnocentrism, and a hundred other contemporary modes of thought that exalt knowledge gained by inspiration, revelation, intuition, faith, or incantation as against knowledge obtained in conformity with scientific research principles. Philosophers and social scientists are implicated both as leaders and as followers in the popular success of these celebrations of non-scientific knowledge, and in the strong anti-scientific components they contain.⁶⁹

Harris’s point is well taken, whether one agrees with it or not, but it is ultimately of little assistance in solving the vexed issue of how to legitimately research contemporary magical consciousness in general, and Rosaleen Norton’s trance magic and visionary art-making processes in particular. Harris refers to the study of altered states of consciousness in *Cultural Materialism* (1979), noting that the

ecstatic knowledge of mystics and saints, the visions and hallucinations of drug users and schizophrenics, and the aesthetic insights of artists, poets, and musicians are certainly not obscurantist merely because they are not based on scientific research principles. The issue of obscurantism arises only when knowledge obtained through non-scientific means is deliberately used to cast doubt on the authenticity of scientific knowledge...⁷⁰

One senses something of an impasse here – for Harris would certainly not have regarded Norton’s cosmological explanation of trance states and god-forms (detailed in her interview with L.J. Murphy) as being based on sound scientific principles. Nevertheless, despite the obvious difficulties in engaging with the complex, and at times seemingly impenetrable mysteries associated with altered states of consciousness – including visionary and mystical states of awareness – scientific research in these areas continues to progress as a result of the serious efforts undertaken by a small number of highly regarded medical specialists, neuroscientists and transpersonal researchers.⁷¹

A more sympathetic view than that of Marvin Harris – one which seeks to bridge the apparent gulf between the magical realm and the world of legitimate academic research – is provided by Australian anthropologist Lynne Hume (1997), one of the participant observers referred to above. Hume recognized the appeal of the ‘non-rational’ for many of the neo-pagan practitioners she was researching and found a process of reflexive enquiry especially valuable. Hume says she became ‘conscious of being conscious’ while reflecting on her own process of observing, and endeavoured to merge her academic, logical self with the imaginative, fantasy realm of her informants.⁷² Hume has since come to believe that a phenomenological [or substantially *emic*] approach is extremely useful in researching magical beliefs and practices:

To my mind, the most appropriate approach to the study of belief systems is a phenomenological one which aims at moving beyond the constraints of structural functional analysis, and even beyond semiotic symbolic anthropology which treats accounts as texts to be analysed in terms of their meaning. A phenomenological approach aims at an objective descriptive analysis, and a systematic evaluation of the *essence* of a belief system, endeavouring to perceive the devotee’s conception of truth in order to assess what is meaningful to the devotee, without raising questions of its ultimate status in reality...as a phenomenologist one suspends disbelief without accepting the totality of the informants’ worlds as one’s own.⁷³

British anthropologist Susan Greenwood describes the world of magic and fantasy as the ‘otherworld’ and, like Lynne Hume, has adopted a reflexive approach in engaging with the beliefs and practices of her fellow magical practitioners. ‘My contention,’ she writes, ‘is that if an anthropologist wants to examine “magic” then she or he must directly experience the otherworld.’⁷⁴ Greenwood maintains that it is important to regard magic and the otherworld as serious subjects worthy of study in their own right and that they should not simply be reduced to the level of metaphors or conceptual devices. For her, magical energies and occult deities are constituent elements in the holistic world of the Pagan practitioner and deserve respect, even if at times they may seem irrational.⁷⁵ Greenwood also recognises the intangible nature of altered states of consciousness and acknowledges the part they play in modern Western magic:

Paganism is an umbrella term for a number of diverse groups and practices...These disparate groups have varying mythologies and cosmologies, but all share a common uniting belief in communication with an ‘otherworld’ – a realm of deities, spirits or other beings experienced in an alternative state of consciousness. The otherworld is viewed as part of a holistic totality co-existent with ordinary, everyday reality; it is seen to be a source of sacred power. Contact and communication with

the otherworld is usually conducted through special rituals, a process that is seen to bring transformation both to the individual and to the wider cosmos.⁷⁶

Here we have a contemporary anthropologist describing the magical world in terms that Rosaleen Norton would have thoroughly understood and endorsed. Greenwood accepts the magical 'otherworld' on its own terms and recognises its significance as a source of sacred power and inspiration for its devotees and followers. According to Greenwood, 'anthropological and sociological analyses of magic [often] fail to take account of magicians' interactions with the otherworld... By failing to attach sufficient importance to the otherworld, these analyses miss what Pagans see as the essence of magic: otherworldly experience.'⁷⁷ Hopefully participant observation, as described by Hume and Greenwood, will have an expanding role in the magical anthropology of the future.

Charting the polarities of the magical spectrum

Pursuing an essentially *emic* approach to modern Western magic, while at the same time acknowledging the key distinction made earlier between the Right-Hand and Left-Hand paths (as described in Chapter Three), allows us to establish a spectrum model for exploring magical aspirations within the 20th century Western esoteric tradition as a whole. As noted in Chapter Two, ritual activities in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn focused especially on structured initiations and 'rites of passage' linked specifically to the symbolic pathways on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. This initiatory process had as its principal aim the mystical experience of spiritual rebirth (associated with the Kabbalistic sphere of *Tiphareth* and the ritual grade of Adeptus Minor: 5°=6°), and culminated ultimately in the transcendent act of sacred union with the Godhead in *Kether*. Influential occult author and theurgic practitioner Israel Regardie describes the ultimate aim of the Golden Dawn magician as follows:

The final goal of his spiritual pilgrimage is that peaceful ecstasy in which the finite personality, thought and self-consciousness, even the high consciousness of the highest Gods, drops utterly away, and the Magician melts to a oneness with the Ain Soph.⁷⁸

Regardie's statement confirms that the theurgic magicians of the Golden Dawn employed their ceremonial practices in the pursuit of transcendence and mystical union, and we are reminded that a number of influential members of the Golden Dawn also regarded themselves as fundamentally Christian – a point emphasised in a personal communication between occult historian Gerald Yorke and Kathleen Raine.⁷⁹ Christian Golden

Dawn members like Arthur Edward Waite, Dion Fortune, Rev. W. A. Ayton and Arthur Machen believed that a key function of the Golden Dawn was to recover the ‘sacred mysteries’ or *gnosis* discarded or overlooked by mainstream Christianity.⁸⁰ Christ, for these practitioners, was associated with the sphere of *Tiphareth* at the very heart of the Tree of Life and, like Osiris in the ancient Egyptian pantheon – a deity also assigned to *Tiphareth* – personified spiritual rebirth. The legendary figure of Christian Rosenkreutz, who is central to the Adeptus Minor ritual grade – the portal to the Rosicrucian Second Order – is similarly a figure of Christian *gnosis*, an alchemical embodiment of spiritual rebirth and transformation (see Chapter Two). Accordingly, the theurgic ceremonial approach adopted by members of the Golden Dawn involved ‘assuming the god-form’ of various gods and goddesses from a number of ancient pantheons, their purpose being to partake of the specific spiritual qualities of these various deities as part of their ‘spiritual pilgrimage’, or mystic journey, towards the transcendent Godhead.⁸¹ Nevertheless, at the same time, the initiates of the Golden Dawn also understood that all ten spheres of consciousness upon the Tree of Life were essentially aspects of the unified ‘body of God’ – each *sephirah* representing an emanation from its sacred and transcendent source in *Ain Soph Aur*.⁸² The Golden Dawn practitioners were well aware that because Judaism was, by its very nature, monotheistic, the Kabbalistic tradition which provided the *modus operandi* for their esoteric rituals had to be considered in this context. This is a significant point because an ‘outsider’ evaluating the cosmology of the Golden Dawn from an *etic* perspective could easily note the plurality of deities charted as ‘magical correspondences’ on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life (see Golden Dawn Order document *The Book of Correspondences* referred to in Chapter Two), and conclude, incorrectly, that the magical approach adopted by Golden Dawn initiates was fundamentally polytheistic. It is only through reference to the beliefs of the practitioners themselves that one is able to establish that the theurgy practised in the Golden Dawn was, in essence, monotheistic.

I would like to suggest, therefore – with specific reference to 20th century Western magic – that at one end of the *emic* ‘magical spectrum’ [characterised as ‘Right-Hand Path’] we find an essentially *monistic* esoteric approach that culminates in the transcendent, mystical act of ‘merging into God’. The various forms of ceremonial and visionary magic associated with this spiritual quest can then be reasonably categorised as *white* magic – and specifically as *white high magic* – because they are associated, in a fundamental way, with the pursuit of mystical illumination [‘light’] and spiritual transcendence.

At the other end of the *emic* spectrum, by way of contrast, are 20th century occult practices associated with darkness, chthonic deities, and the exploration of subterranean mythic imagery, coupled with a fundamentally antinomian approach to mainstream society, antagonism towards orthodox religious traditions – a prime example being Crowley’s *Book of the Law* – and a strong emphasis on individualism and/or self-deification. As an extension of this emphasis on individualism and antinomianism one could also expect to find support for the practice of sorcery or ‘black magic’ as a form of self-defence – see Anton LaVey’s satanic statements, which he intended as ‘rules of the jungle’ (Chapter Three). Members aligned with the Left-Hand Path are also strongly opposed to the mystical act of merging with the Godhead, since this denies the fundamental individuality of the practising magician. Key occult figures associated with the Left-Hand path, such as Aleister Crowley – and more recently LaVey and Michael Aquino – have all emphasized the *individual* nature of the magical quest. The task of the magician aligned with the Left-Hand Path is ultimately *to transform the individual into a god*. There is even a belief among some practitioners – for example, among members of the Typhonian O.T.O. and the Scandinavian Dragon Rouge – that the Left-Hand Path initiate eventually enters a completely different metaphysical universe, associated symbolically with the reverse (*Qliphothic*) face of the Tree of Life. The Left-Hand Path magician operating within the Typhonian tradition, for example, employs the so-called ‘eleventh’ *sephirah* on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life – *Daath* (‘knowledge’)⁸³ – as an occult doorway leading to this unfamiliar magical realm. These Left-Hand Path practitioners willingly embrace the dark – as we have seen, they define their approach as the *nightside* tradition, and in the case of the Temple of Set, revere Set [the Egyptian God of the Night] as a deity associated with the infinite potential that is theoretically available to all aspiring magicians who pursue the Left-Hand Path. Because these practitioners of the Left-Hand Path specifically identify the ‘dark’ with their own infinite potential they acknowledge that their magic is *black* but distinguish it from *evil*, as conventionally understood.⁸⁴ For them, as noted in Chapter Three, the concept that ‘dark = evil’ is a judgemental evaluation associated primarily with the Judaeo-Christian tradition and lies outside their essential frames of reference.

This being so, it is reasonable to propose that the Golden Dawn on the one hand, and the Typhonian O.T.O., Temple of Set, and Dragon Rouge on the other, represent extreme points of the *emic* magical spectrum embraced by practitioners of the 20th century Western esoteric tradition. At various mid-way points along this magical spectrum other forms of occult practice combine aspects of both the Right-Hand and Left-Hand paths, and to this

extent may be considered neither ‘white’, nor ‘black’, but, instead, as manifestations of various shades of grey.

Modern Wicca represents a significant case in point. The influential American Wiccan spokesperson and author Margot Adler – an initiated Gardnerian priestess – has emphasized that in Wicca the practitioner seeks to *become* the Goddess or the God – an aspirational magical goal associated more with the Left-Hand Path than the Right. According to Adler the practitioner can *become* the deity: ‘Within yourself you are the God, you are the Goddess – you can actualise within yourself and create whatever you need on this earth and beyond.’⁸⁵

However Adler’s friend and fellow Goddess devotee, Starhawk, has said that she personally believes the Goddess is both immanent and transcendent⁸⁶ – this allows her to embrace a spiritual perspective that allows for both transcendence and spiritual self-empowerment. Wicca pays willing homage to chthonic underworld deities like Persephone and Hecate as aspects of the universal Triple Goddess and to this extent regards the ‘dark’ as a significant dimension of spiritual growth and aspiration. The second initiation in Wicca, for example, focuses specifically on a mythic journey to the Underworld of the subconscious (see Chapter Two). To this extent Wiccan magic seems to move freely between transcendent and chthonic imagery, and between the polarities of ‘white’ and ‘black’ associated with the life-and-death imagery innate to the ‘rebirth’ cycle of the seasons and the sowing, growth and harvesting of crops (ie. the cultural source of the Wiccan Sabbats). In so doing Wicca stands in marked contrast to the more polarised approach adopted within the Golden Dawn, exemplified in the *Book of the Black Serpent*, where Order members were urged to shun the dark forces of the *Qliphoth* and to ‘banish thou therefore the Evil and seek the Good...[by invoking] the Divine Brightness.’⁸⁷

It seems to me, therefore, that we are well served by considering a spectrum-based *emic* approach to modern Western magic because this allows us to consider key points of similarity and difference within the various strands of esoteric practice. It is ultimately statements *made by the practitioners themselves* with regard to their occult philosophy and practice that enable us to classify their specific forms of magic as ‘black’, ‘white’, ‘left-hand path’ or ‘right-hand path’, or as variants of ‘grey’ that lie somewhere in-between.

Definitions of magic from leading practitioners

As noted earlier, because several key figures within the Golden Dawn, Wicca and the Goddess movement have written well-researched and lucidly expressed texts relating to their own magical practice it is possible to supplement the classic anthropological analyses of magic and religion with insights into magical practice provided by the practitioners themselves. The following definitions of magic, which conclude this chapter, are from leading figures within the Western esoteric tradition. Statements from practitioners associated with *Thelema* and the Left-Hand Path are also included here:

Aleister Crowley (founder of the *Argenteum Astrum* and the magical doctrine of *Thelema*):

*The Microcosm is an exact image of the Macrocosm; the Great Work is the raising of the whole man in perfect balance to the power of Infinity.*⁸⁸

*Magick is the Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will.*⁸⁹

*A man who is doing his True Will has the inertia of the Universe to assist him.*⁹⁰

*Man is capable of being and using anything which he perceives, for everything that he perceives is in a certain sense a part of his being. He may thus subjugate the whole Universe of which he is conscious to his individual will.*⁹¹

Israel Regardie (member of the *Stella Matutina* and editor of *The Golden Dawn*, 1937-40):

*As a practical system, Magic is concerned not so much with analysis as with bringing into operation the creative and intuitive parts of man....Magic may be said to be a technique for realising the deeper levels of the Unconscious.*⁹²

The magician conceives of someone he calls God, upon whom attend a series of angelic beings, variously called archangels, elementals, demons etc. By simply calling upon this God with a great deal of ado, and

commemorating the efforts of previous magicians⁹³ and saints who accomplished their wonders or attained to the realization of their desires through the invocation of the several names of that God, the magician too realizes the fulfilment of his will.⁹⁴

The union or identification with the God is accomplished through suggestion, sympathy and the exaltation of consciousness. ...the magician imagines himself in the ceremony to be the deity who has undergone similar experiences. The rituals serve but to suggest and to render more complete the process of identification, so that sight and hearing and intelligence may serve to that end. In the commemoration, or rehearsal of this history, the magician is uplifted on high, and is whirled into the secret domain of the spirit.⁹⁵

The higher Magic...has as one of its objectives a communion both here and hereafter with the divine, a union not to be achieved by mere doctrine and sterile intellectual speculations, but by the exercise of other more spiritual faculties and powers in rites and ceremonies. By the 'divine' the Theurgists recognized an eternal spiritually dynamic principle and its refracted manifestation in Beings whose consciousness, individually and severally, are of so lofty and sublime a degree of spirituality as actually to merit the term Gods...⁹⁶

Magical ritual is a mnemonic process so arranged as to result in the deliberate exhilaration of the Will and the exaltation of the Imagination, the end being the purification of the personality and the attainment of a spiritual state of consciousness, in which the ego enters into a union with either its own Higher Self or a God.⁹⁷

All the characteristics of the higher worlds are successively assumed by the Magician, and transcended, until in the end of his magical journey, he is merged into the being of the Lord of every Life. The final goal of his spiritual pilgrimage is that peaceful ecstasy in which the finite personality, thought and self-consciousness, even the high consciousness of the highest Gods, drops utterly away, and the Magician melts to a oneness with the Ain Soph⁹⁸ wherein no shade of difference enters.⁹⁹

S.L.MacGregor Mathers (co-founder of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, 1888):

Magic is 'the Science of the Control of the Secret Forces of Nature' ¹⁰⁰

Dr Edward Berridge (Frater Resurgam in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn):

Imagination is a reality. When a man imagines he actually creates a form on the Astral or even on some higher plane; and this form is as real and objective to intelligent beings on that plane, as our earthly surroundings are to us...To practise magic, both the Imagination and the Will must be called into action... the Imagination must precede the Will in order to produce the greatest possible effect. ¹⁰¹

Dr Wynn Westcott (co-founder of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in 1888 ; magical name Non Omnis Moriar):

To obtain magical power, one must strengthen the will. Let there be no confusion between will and desire. You cannot will too strongly, so do not attempt to will two things at once, and while willing one thing, do not desire others. ¹⁰²

Dion Fortune (former member of the Alpha and Omega Temple of the Golden Dawn, and founder of the Fraternity of the Inner Light):

White magic...consists in the application of occult powers to spiritual ends. ¹⁰³

W.E.Butler (member of the Fraternity of the Inner Light):

All magical work begins within and is projected outwardly. ¹⁰⁴

Francis King and **Stephen Skinner** (esoteric practitioners associated with the Golden Dawn tradition)

*...the word magic is primarily used in the same sense that it is defined by the overwhelming majority of contemporary magical practitioners – the art and science of using little known natural forces in order to achieve changes in consciousness and the physical environment.*¹⁰⁵

*...human will-power is a real force, capable of being trained and concentrated...the disciplined will is capable of changing its environment and producing supernormal effects...this will power must be directed by the imagination.*¹⁰⁶

Michael Aquino (founding member and principal formulator of the doctrines of The Temple of Set):

*The theory and practice of non-natural interaction with the subjective universe is defined as Greater Black Magic...Greater Black Magic is the causing of change to occur in the subjective universe in accordance with the Will. This change in the subjective universe will cause a similar and proportionate change in the objective universe.*¹⁰⁷

Doreen Valiente (practising witch and co-founder, with Gerald Gardner, of modern pagan witchcraft):

*By developing their powers, the magician or witch develop themselves. They aid their own evolution, their growth as a human being; and in so far as they truly do this, they aid the evolution of the human race.*¹⁰⁸

Starhawk (aka Miriam Simos, American witch, eco-feminist and Goddess worshipper):

The primary principle of magic is connection. The universe is a fluid, ever-changing energy pattern, not a collection of fixed and separate things. What affects one thing affects, in some way, all things. All is interwoven

*into the continuous fabric of being. Its warp and weft are energy, which is the essence of magic.*¹⁰⁹

*Magic is part of nature; it does not controvert natural laws. It is through study and observation of nature, of the visible, physical reality, that we can learn to understand the workings of the underlying reality. Magic teaches us to tap sources of energy that are unlimited, infinite...*¹¹⁰

*A witch is somebody who has made a commitment to the spiritual tradition of the Goddess, the old pre-Christian religions of Western Europe. So I am a witch in the sense that that is my religion, my spiritual tradition. I am an initiated priestess of the Goddess.*¹¹¹

¹ Both of these authors are included in Norton's bibliography in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, 1952:79.

² K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, Scribner, New York 1971: ix.

³ R.L. Stein and P.L. Stein, *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic and Witchcraft*, Pearson/Allyn & Bacon, Boston 2005: 21-23.

⁴ D.L. O'Keefe, *Stolen Lightning: the Social Theory of Magic*, Vintage, New York 1983.

⁵ G. Jahoda, *The Psychology of Superstition*, Penguin Books, Baltimore 1970: 146.

⁶ S. Greenwood, *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld*, Berg, Oxford and New York 2000:1.

⁷ See R.L.Stein and P.L.Stein, *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic and Witchcraft*, loc cit.:143.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ S. Greenwood, *The Nature of Magic: an Anthropology of Consciousness*, Berg, Oxford and New York 2005: 92.

¹⁰ A. Faivre and J. Needleman,(eds.) *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*, SCM, London 1992: xvi.

¹¹ J. Middleton (ed.) *Magic, Witchcraft and Curing*, Natural History Press , New York 1967 : ix

¹² E.E. Evans-Pritchard, 'The Morphology and Function of Magic: A Comparative Study of Trobriand and Zande Ritual and Spells' [1929] in J.Middleton (ed.) *Magic, Witchcraft and Curing*, Natural History Press , New York 1967: 3,5

¹³ B. Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion*, Beacon Press, Boston 1948: 67

¹⁴ B. Malinowski, 'The Role of Magic and Religion' [1931] in W.A. Lessa and E.Z. Vogt (eds.) *Reader in Comparative Religion: an Anthropological Approach*, (third edition) Harper & Row, New York 1972: 68.

¹⁵ Ibid: 64.

¹⁶ T.M. Luhmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1989: 260

¹⁷ W.A. Lessa and E.Z. Vogt (eds.) *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, (third edition), loc cit: 414.

¹⁸ E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Allen & Unwin, London 1915: 43

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- ¹⁹ D.L. O'Keefe, *Stolen Lightning: the Social Theory of Magic*, Vintage, New York 1983: 124.
- ²⁰ C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Pantheon, New York 1963: 150-151
- ²¹ Frazer's *Golden Bough* was recommended by ceremonial magician Aleister Crowley as being 'invaluable to all students' (A. Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice*, Castle Books, New York, n.d [1929]: 211) and was also included in Rosaleen Norton's bibliography in the 1952 edition of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*.
- ²² Ibid: 51.
- ²³ Ibid: 52.
- ²⁴ Ibid: 53.
- ²⁵ E. Durkheim, abridged version of *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* in W.A. Lessa and E.Z. Vogt (eds.) *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, loc cit: 29.
- ²⁶ Ibid:30
- ²⁷ E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 1915: 44-45.
- ²⁸ See W.H. Swatos (ed.) 'The Anthropology of Religion' in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society*, Altamira/Sage Publications, Walnut Creek, California 1998.
- ²⁹ See M. Titiev, 'A Fresh Approach to the Problem of Magic and Religion' [1960] in W.A.Lessa and E.Z.Vogt (eds.) *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, loc cit: 431.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ C. Lévi-Strauss *Totemism*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK 1969: 127-128.
- ³² C. Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1966: 221.
- ³³ R. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge University Press 2000 [1989]: xii.
- ³⁴ In *The Golden Bough*, (abridged edition) Macmillan, London 1987 [1922]: 11 Frazer describes magic as 'a spurious system of natural law as well as a fallacious guide of conduct; it is a false science as well as an abortive art.'
- ³⁵ D.L. O'Keefe, *Stolen Lightning: the Social Theory of Magic*, loc cit: 490.
- ³⁶ W.A.Lessa and E.Z.Vogt (eds.) *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, loc cit: 413
- ³⁷ C. Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, loc cit: 13.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ B. Malinowski, 'The Role of Magic and Religion' [1931] in W.A.Lessa and E.Z.Vogt (eds.) *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, loc cit: 67.
- ⁴⁰ J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, (abridged edition) Macmillan, London 1987 [1922]:711-712.
- ⁴¹ D.L. O'Keefe, *Stolen Lightning: the Social Theory of Magic*, loc cit.:164.
- ⁴² Ibid: 165.
- ⁴³ O'Keefe writes: 'A very close reading of Durkheim shows that...he wrote that magic grows out of religion. Durkheim wrote that magic is stimulated by religion because religion precipitates a supernatural worldview, the world of the sacred, which is different from the natural world, and makes belief in magic possible.' D.L. O'Keefe, *Stolen Lightning: the Social Theory of Magic*, loc cit:124.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid: 159.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid: 504.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid: 360.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid: 490.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid: 503.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ I. Regardie (ed.), *The Golden Dawn*, four volumes, Aries Press, Chicago 1937-40.
- ⁵¹ T.M. Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1989.
- ⁵² See M. Stavish, 'Assumption of the Godform', published on-line at www.hermetic.com.
- ⁵³ T.M. Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England*, loc cit.
- ⁵⁴ R. Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon: a History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1999.
- ⁵⁵ Hutton also writes that 'The rituals of the Golden Dawn trained initiates to invoke deities and angels, but with the object neither of presenting them with praise and pleas nor of making them do the will of the person invoking; with neither, in short, of the customary aims of religion and magic. They encouraged the practitioners to empower themselves with incantation, within a ceremonial setting, so that they came to feel themselves combining with the divine forces concerned and becoming part of them.' See R. Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, loc cit: 83.

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- ⁵⁶ R.T. Firth, *Religion*, Routledge, New York 1995: 215.
- ⁵⁷ W.H. Swatos (ed.) 'The Anthropology of Religion' in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society*, loc cit.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ⁵⁹ J. Favret-Saada, *Deadly Words: Witchcraft in the Bocage*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1980.
- ⁶⁰ P. Stoller (and C. Olkes), *In Sorcery's Shadow*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1987.
- ⁶¹ L. Hume, *Witchcraft and Paganism in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne 1997.
- ⁶² S. Greenwood, *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld*, Berg, Oxford and New York 2000, and *The Nature of Magic: an Anthropology of Consciousness*, Berg, Oxford and New York 2005.
- ⁶³ N. Bado-Fralick, *Coming to the Edge of the Circle: A Wiccan Initiation Ritual*, Oxford University Press, New York 2005.
- ⁶⁴ A. Anton-Luca, 'Humanistic Anthropology', Department of Anthropology, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, May 1998, available on-line at www.indiana.edu.
- ⁶⁵ See M. Harris, *Cultural Materialism*, Random House, New York 1979.
- ⁶⁶ P.E. Sandstrom, 'Anthropological Approaches to Information Systems and Behaviour', *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 30, 3, February/March 2004.
- ⁶⁷ M. Harris, *Cultural Materialism*, loc cit: 32.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid: 315.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid.
- ⁷¹ Prominent researchers currently committed to the study of the spiritual implications of the near-death experience and other related phenomena include Dr Kenneth Ring, Dr Michael Sabom and Dr Bruce Greyson in the United States, and Dr Peter Fenwick, Dr Sam Parnia and Dr Pim van Lommel in Europe. See Bibliography.
- ⁷² L. Hume, *Witchcraft and Paganism in Australia*, loc cit: 10.
- ⁷³ Ibid: 11.
- ⁷⁴ S. Greenwood, *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld*, loc cit: 12.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid: 13.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid: 1.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid: 3.
- ⁷⁸ The *Ain Soph* is the 'limitless light' that transcends finite creation as delineated on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. See Chapter Two.
- ⁷⁹ K. Raine, *Yeats, the Tarot and the Golden Dawn*, Dolmen Press, Dublin 1976: 9.
- ⁸⁰ The well known mystical scholar and poet, Kathleen Raine, refers to the Christian element in the Golden Dawn in her book *Yeats, the Tarot and the Golden Dawn* (Dolmen Press; Dublin 1976). Here she quotes correspondence from esoteric publisher Geoffrey Watkins, who notes the Christian dedication of initiates entering the Second Order – the R.R. et A.C. (1976: 9 – see also Chapter Two). Raine also quotes occult historian Gerald Yorke on the influence of Arthur Edward Waite in particular: 'Where the G.D. called itself a Hermetic Order, Waite called his version a Rosicrucian Order, and the Rosicrucians were always more Christian than the Hermeticists' (Ibid.). Waite confirms his essentially *gnostic* position in his autobiography, *Shadows of Life and Thought* (Selwyn and Blount, London 1938) when he writes: 'I believe to this day...that there is a Church behind the Church on a more inward plane of being; and that it is formed of those who have opened the iridescent shell of external doctrine and have found that which abides within it. It is a Church of more worlds than one, for some of the Community are among us here and now and some are in a stage beyond the threshold of the physical senses.' (1938: 170-171)
- ⁸¹ A.E. Waite describes the spiritual quest – a quest he refers to as the 'unconditional Godward direction' – as 'the path and term of the Union between Man and God...The Godward direction is the secret of that transcendent state in which Mind discovers that it is in Unity of Real Being with Eternal Mind; in other words, that God is within us...It is we and no other exploring the Great Mystery of our own being.' See A.E. Waite, *Shadows of Life and Thought*, loc cit: 281.
- ⁸² See section on the Kabbalah in Chapter Two.
- ⁸³ The so-called 'eleventh' *sephirah*, Daath, is located on the Middle Pillar of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life between Kether and Tiphareth. It is associated with the so-called Abyss, the gulf between the sacred Trinity (Kether, Chokmah, Binah) and the realms of manifestation (the remaining seven *sephiroth*, or 'Days of Creation'). See also Chapter Two.
- ⁸⁴ See quotations from Vexen Crabtree in Chapter Three.
- ⁸⁵ Interview with the author for the television documentary *The Occult Experience*, New York, December 1984 (released in the United States on Sony Home Video).

⁸⁶ Starhawk, interview with Alexander Blair-Ewart in *Mindfire: Dialogues in the Other Future*, Somerville House, Toronto 1995: 130.

⁸⁷ Anon., *The Book of the Black Serpent*, c.1900, circulated among initiates of the Isis-Urania Temple in London. Included as an appendix in R.A. Gilbert, *The Sorcerer and his Apprentice*, Aquarian Press, Wellingborough, UK 1983.

⁸⁸ A. Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice* [1929], Castle Books, New York 1964; Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1973: 4

⁸⁹ Ibid: xii.

⁹⁰ Ibid: xv.

⁹¹ Ibid: xvii

⁹² I. Regardie, *The Middle Pillar*, Aries Press, Chicago: 1945: 19

⁹³ This quotation refers to the magical concept that the repeated performance of the same rituals - whether by magicians or religious practitioners - has a cumulative effect on the 'inner planes', an effect referred to as the 'egregore' or 'group consciousness'. W.E. Butler, a disciple of Dion Fortune in the Fraternity of the Inner Light, describes the nature of the egregore in *The Magician: His Training and Work* (1959): 'When two or three or many people gather together in one place to perform certain actions, to think along certain lines, and to experience emotional influences, there is built up, in connection with that group, what may be termed a composite group-consciousness, wherein the emotional and mental forces of all the members of the group are temporarily united in what is known in occultism as a group-thought-form or "artificial elemental". This group consciousness seems to have a much greater power than the simple sum of the objective minds in the group would suggest. This is because, not only is the group-thought-form built up by the *conscious* minds of all who help to build it up. Since those subconscious minds reach back on the one hand into the Collective Unconscious and on the other reach upwards into the realms of the superconscious, the group-thought-form is psychically linked with...many aspects of thought and many forms of psychic-mental energy. Thus it is greater than any sum of its parts.' See W.E. Butler, *The Magician: His Training and Work*, 1959: 57-58.

⁹⁴ I. Regardie, *Ceremonial Magic: A Guide to the Mechanisms of Ritual*, loc.cit: 93.

⁹⁵ Ibid: 93-94.

⁹⁶ I. Regardie, *The Tree of Life: A Study in Magic*, Rider, London 1932: 85.

⁹⁷ Ibid: 106.

⁹⁸ The *Ain Soph* is the 'limitless light' that transcends finite creation as delineated on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. See Chapter Two.

⁹⁹ Ibid: 246-47.

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in D. Valiente, *An ABC of Witchcraft, Past and Present*, revised edition, Hale, London 1984: 231.

¹⁰¹ Quoted from Flying Roll No.5 (Golden Dawn source document), 'Some Thoughts on the Imagination' in F. King (ed.) *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy*, Spearman, London 1971:33.

¹⁰² Quoted in Flying Roll No.1, Part II (Golden Dawn source document), 'A Subject for Contemplation' in F. King (ed.) *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy*, loc cit: 39.

¹⁰³ D. Fortune, *The Mystical Qabalah*, Williams and Norgate, London 1935: 11.

¹⁰⁴ W.E. Butler, *The Magician: His Training and Work*, Aquarian Press, London 1959:30

¹⁰⁵ F. King and S. Skinner, *Techniques of High Magic: A Manual of Self-Initiation*, C.W.Daniel, London 1976: 9.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid: 10.

¹⁰⁷ M. Aquino, 'Black Magic in Theory and Practice,' in M.Aquino (ed.) *The Crystal Tablets of Set, Selected Extracts*, Temple of Set, San Francisco 1983: 18, 28.

¹⁰⁸ D. Valiente, *An ABC of Witchcraft, Past and Present*, loc cit: 233.

¹⁰⁹ Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess*, 20th Anniversary edition, HarperCollins, San Francisco 1999 [1979]:155.

¹¹⁰ Ibid: 159.

¹¹¹ Starhawk in conversation with Alexander Blair-Ewart. See A.Blair-Ewart (ed.), *Mindfire, Dialogues in the Other Future*, Somerville House, Toronto 1995:127.

Chapter Eight

ROSALEEN NORTON'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE WESTERN ESOTERIC TRADITION

As I noted in my introduction, the key focus of this thesis has been to present a detailed account of Rosaleen Norton's personal background and ideas, as well as her cosmology, magical practices and approach to visionary art. This material was presented in Chapters One, Four, Five and Six. In this concluding chapter my purpose is to provide a summation of Norton's contribution to the Western esoteric tradition.

Clearly, both as a magician and as a visionary artist, Norton is not entirely original – nor did she ever claim to be. As detailed in Chapters Four and Five, Norton's magical approach drew on ancient pagan cosmologies and esoteric belief systems and she acknowledged an artistic interest in nether-world surrealists like Tanguy and Matta, even though she claimed she was not a surrealist herself.¹ Norton also acknowledged a stylistic parallel of sorts in the decadent art of Norman Lindsay, for whom she had modelled and with whom she was sometimes compared, although she maintained that Lindsay's imagery drew on the 'Daylight world',² whereas she was a creature of the Night.³ At 179 Brougham Street, Kings Cross, Norton's ritual altars were constructed to honour Pan and Hecate – chthonic deities from ancient Greece (see Chapter Five); her overriding philosophical frame of reference was Pantheism; and her magical and artistic practice combined elements drawn from the Kabbalah, Kundalini Yoga and the Thelemic sex-magick of Aleister Crowley – prior to evolving, during the late 1950s, into her own version of coven-based Gardnerian witchcraft. Accordingly, I have argued that Norton's magical-historical context extends well beyond the purely localised post-World War Two socio-historical Australian context and that her *most significant context* – expressed through a broader frame of reference – is the Western esoteric tradition itself.

Many of the elements in Norton's creative art-making process, her philosophical alignment with Pantheism, and her eclectic approach to practical magic, as noted above, would seem – on the face of it – to run counter to any claim of genuine originality. However it seems to me that it is the way in which Norton approaches the magical realm *as a visionary explorer* that provides the key to her unique contribution to the Western esoteric tradition.

In Australia during the 1950s and '60s, as noted in Chapter One, Norton acquired a largely media-driven Australian persona as the 'Witch of Kings Cross' and then began to respond in like fashion by donning witches hats for the camera,⁴ posing dramatically for photographs in front of her altar,⁵ and later emphasizing her hexing powers of 'black magic' to investigative journalists like Robert Drewe (see Chapter Five). However, as I have noted, much of this media response was a façade and I do not believe that Norton should be evaluated solely on the level of localised eccentricity. Her contribution to the Western esoteric tradition is both broader in scope and also substantially more significant.

Norton as a visionary explorer

My approach in this thesis has been to draw more attention to her unusual (and unquestionably pagan and chthonic) spiritual quest, in which she sought direct experiential contact with what she referred to as 'that storehouse of timeless archetypal imagery on which the visionaries of all ages have drawn'.⁶ Accordingly, the data I have presented – especially in Chapters Four and Six of this thesis – relates to Norton's esoteric practice as a trance magician and visionary occult artist; here I have sought to demonstrate that her magical exploration of altered states of consciousness provides rare and valuable insights into the psyche of the modern magical practitioner. What I am referring to as the 'rare insights' provided by Norton's magical exploration of trance states could, in all likelihood, have occurred in a number of comparable environments – they do not depend upon her immediate Australian context. Norton would have been equally at home with her pet cats in Austin Spare's south London community – with its rich assortment of pubs and artistic bohemian life – and would have similarly thrived amidst the neo-pagan Goddess worshippers of 1970s California, had she been born in another time and place. In my opinion this is just one indicator among many that demonstrates the significance of her contribution. Norton manages to transcend her local context by providing a substantial body of visual and written material that makes a distinctive and, in my view, *uniquely notable*, contribution to 20th century Western magic – and to the magic of the Left-Hand Path in particular.

From the very beginning, Norton's practice of pagan witchcraft – or more specifically, pantheistic sex magic – involved a combination of ancient Greek and Middle Eastern deities that was unique within the modern Western magical tradition. A further key indicator is that Norton was *self*-initiated as a witch.⁷ Her sense of magical attunement was *innate*. She was not introduced to an existing Wiccan coven, as Gerald Gardner had been in

the New Forest in 1939, but discovered during her adolescent years that she had an intuitive spiritual connection with Pan as the wild and untamed God of Nature. Then, in 1940, at the age of 23, Norton began her own, personal exploration of self-hypnosis and trance states that would help her formulate her own unique, visionary approach to the magical universe. Only later would Norton expand her intellectual book-knowledge through reading esoteric texts by such influential figures as Aleister Crowley, Eliphas Lévi, Papus, Dion Fortune and Madame H.P. Blavatsky – texts that helped her make sense of what she had already experienced.⁸

The ‘invented tradition’ of Wicca, developed in England by Gerald Gardner and Doreen Valiente during the 1950s, focused on the worship of the Great Goddess and her three-fold nature as Maid, Mother and Crone (see Chapter Two). Norton’s magical cosmology centred instead on Pan and the lesser – but nevertheless distinctive – triad of Hecate, Lilith and Lucifer. Norton maintained that these deities existed *in their own right* and that they were a *living and existential reality* for her within the magical domain, and not simply figures derived from Classical myths and legends, or standard biblical texts. Norton also emphasized that on the astral plane these deities revealed only their *god-forms* – or symbolic veneers – and that these sacred god-forms appeared in a form and manner appropriate to the perception of the viewer. This cosmological feature is unique to Norton. Nowhere in modern occult literature do we have the concept of gods and goddesses utilising the astral plane *on their own terms* in order to mediate with human beings *at a time and place of their choosing*. Norton’s approach is almost shamanic in the classic sense: her trance journeys on the astral plane make possible the opportunity for direct encounters with the gods and goddesses but it is *they* who are calling the shots at all times. Norton’s trance technique in turn provides the basis for Norton’s visionary imagery; her art can be considered ‘superrealistic’⁹ rather than ‘surrealistic’ because she uses her magical images to portray the specific content of her magical experiences. Her visionary art, as mentioned earlier, is ultimately representational and is really a form of ‘magical reportage’.

Norton and the Left-Hand Path

Norton’s magical approach is markedly different from the Right-Hand Path theurgy of the Golden Dawn, where the magician invokes an archetypal deity to appear in a consecrated setting and then seeks to incarnate and embody the sacred qualities associated with that particular god – a practice known as ‘assuming the god-form’.¹⁰ Norton’s approach differs also from the ritualism of Eliphas Lévi and Aleister Crowley – Lévi and Crowley

both believed they could bend Heaven and Earth to the dictates of the magical will (see Chapters Two and Three respectively). Only the Left-Hand Path organisation, the Temple of Set, begins to approach Norton's unique cosmology – in the sense that here the principal deity (in this case, Set) – is *set apart* from the rest of humanity. And yet even in the Temple of Set, great emphasis is placed on the potency of the magical will. An invocation included in Michael Aquino's *Crystal Tablet of Set* (1986) begins: 'In the name of Set, the Prince of Darkness, I enter into the Realm of Creation to Work My Will upon the Universe.'¹¹

In the Temple of Set considerable emphasis is placed on the notion that the magical psyche is forced to operate in a universe where it is innately *alien*, 'separate', and doesn't belong.¹² The appeal of Set for his contemporary followers is that he represents the 'Principle of *Isolate* Intelligence' (my emphasis in italics, see Chapter Three). Norton never makes this particular claim, or anything remotely like it, and in some ways adopts a position that is exactly the reverse. According to Norton, Pan *sustains* the universe energetically – he is the very *essence* of the Cosmos – and on a local level he is regarded by Norton as a *living presence* able to re-sacralize the world. In the *Crystal Tablet of Set* Aquino describes Pantheism as a form of 'monistic idealism' and categorically rejects it because it suggests that 'God and the Universe are one and the same substance'.¹³ Norton, meanwhile, accepts Pantheism for precisely this reason. As Norton expresses it:

I think the God Pan is the spirit whose body – or such of it as can be seen in these four dimensions (the fourth being time) – is the planet Earth, and who, therefore, in a very real sense, is the ruler and god of this world.¹⁴

Although I believe Norton is essentially aligned with the Left-Hand Path in modern Western magic – on the basis of her *antinomian* social attitudes, her *libertine* approach to sex-magic, her *Qliphothic* artistic orientation, and the essentially *chthonic* nature of her magical quest (see Chapters Three, Four and Six) – she is atypical of the Left-Hand Path in other ways. As noted in Chapter Three, many Left-Hand Path practitioners place considerable emphasis on *individual* self-mastery and *self-empowerment*. The focus in Crowley's doctrine of *Thelema* is on *individual* communication with the Holy Guardian Angel (the magician's 'true self') – so that, in due course the 'self' becomes God. Similarly, members of the Dragon Rouge and Temple of Set have as one of their principal aims the magical quest for *self-deification*. Norton, however, at no time seeks self-deification – she does not wish to '*become* the God' and unlike members of

the Temple of Set does not believe that she has been born into an ‘unnatural’ or ‘alien’ world. Instead, Norton acknowledges Pan as Lord of the Universe – regarding him as the foundation of humanity’s existence – and at no point seeks to challenge his control or dominance. Norton’s personal expression of *gnosis* is based instead on her inner-plane journeys, for it is here that she enters the realm of Pan and the other gods and goddesses who collectively guide and inspire the world as we know it. From Norton’s perspective, it is Pan who is ultimately in control of the world and it is her function to operate as ‘High Priestess at the Altar of Pan’ – as a willing and dedicated subject in Pan’s domain. At the same time it is Norton’s specific role as a visionary magician to document her discovery of Pan’s ‘secret’ inner-plane universe and to record details of her visionary experiences in her paintings and drawings.

The significance of Norton’s 1949 interview

This leads us to consider Norton’s explanation of the visionary universe itself, and the remarkable interview conducted with L.J. Murphy at the University of Melbourne in 1949, which has survived in transcript form (see Chapter Four and Appendix A).¹⁵ This document is surely among the most significant visionary documents in the annals of modern Western magic: it rivals in importance the so-called ‘Flying Rolls’ of the Golden Dawn, which include comparable accounts of trance magic techniques and ‘rising in the planes’. However, the Flying Rolls concentrate primarily on practical considerations – emphasizing specific *Tattva* or Tarot card images to be used as ‘astral doorways’; specific symbols associated with pathways on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, and so on – whereas Norton is seeking to explain the *experiential nature of the astral plane itself*, including the sensory characteristics of the ‘plasmic body’ and the nature of the mediating role of the sacred god-images, referred to earlier. This is without parallel in the literature of the Western magical tradition and is likely to consolidate her significance in years to come. At the present time the L.J. Murphy transcript has not yet been published in full (see Appendix A).¹⁶

Norton and Austin Spare

I would now like to focus once again on Norton’s role as a magical artist and to add some further brief comments in relation to British trance magician and visionary artist, Austin Osman Spare, whose work is atavistic and, like Norton’s, associated with chthonic imagery derived from ecstatic and visionary states of awareness (see Chapter Six). There is no question that Norton and Spare are both extraordinary magical artists in their own

right, and as noted in Chapter Six, Spare is now widely regarded as one of the major figures in the 20th century magical revival.¹⁷ However, as mentioned earlier, Spare's atavisms emanate ultimately from his own personal subconscious – from his accumulated 'karmas' and primal memories. Norton's chthonic imagery, on the other hand, derives from the *Qliphothic* realms of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life and from primal sources of sexual and magical energy associated with the Kundalini fire-serpent. One must therefore conclude that despite the fact that Spare and Norton both employed trance-magic techniques and made use of magical sigils,¹⁸ they were each pursuing something different and ultimately quite distinctive – and both artists deserve acclaim within the Western esoteric tradition for their respective contributions to the visionary imagery of the Left-Hand Path.

Was Norton a Satanist?

In his introduction to Austin Spare's posthumously published *A Book of Automatic Drawings* (1972) Ian Law notes in passing that Spare was 'possibly a Satanist'¹⁹ – this is a claim that was also made frequently against Rosaleen Norton. When Norton exhibited her paintings and drawings at the Apollyon and Kashmir coffee-shops in Kings Cross during the 1950s, both locations were described in the tabloid press as the haunt of the 'Devil's cult' and on occasions visitors to these coffee-shops would mischievously request a cup of 'bat's blood'.²⁰ New Zealand migrant Anna Hoffmann's claim in September 1955 that she had attended a Black Mass with Norton in Kings Cross, created sensationalist headlines on page one of a daily Sydney newspaper.²¹ Even though Hoffmann's charges were later found to be fabrications and Hoffmann herself was jailed for two months and described as a 'menace' by the presiding magistrate,²² the image of Norton as a 'Satanist' or 'Devil-worshipper' persisted during the 1950s, and even up into more recent times. For her own part, Norton went to great lengths, both during media interviews and sometimes also during various court proceedings, to explain that the 'horned god', Pan, was a pagan deity from the tradition of ancient Greek mythology and that her practice of witchcraft had no connection with the Christian Devil.²³ Nevertheless, it is easy to see how members of the public may have misconstrued Norton's occult imagery in the conservative social climate of post-World War Two Australia.

As mentioned earlier, Norton was unquestionably drawn to the 'night' side of the psyche and she herself described her art in those terms.²⁴ Her drawing of *The Master*,²⁵ which depicts a horned deity controlling the

forces of destiny, is a confronting image that could easily be mistaken for an image of the Devil, while *Black Magic*,²⁶ one of several controversial artworks exhibited at the University of Melbourne in 1949, and against which charges of obscenity were subsequently brought, could easily cause offence to any practising Christian, with its imagery of bestial lust, a winking nun, and a bare-breasted woman mounted on a crucifix.



Plate 84: *Black Magic* (Plate XVII in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*). Norton offered this drawing as a gift to Eugene Goossens – see Appendix B. An earlier version of this work was exhibited in Melbourne in 1949 (reproduced in Chapter One)

However, while many of Norton's paintings and drawings feature provocative and irreverent subject matter, it is quite another matter to assume they promote a Satanic perspective. When Norton was accused of conducting blood-sacrifice rituals during a 'Kings Cross Black Mass' she was deeply offended.²⁷ Norton had always had a strong affinity with Nature, and with animals in particular, since her early childhood. As visitors to her apartment invariably attested, Norton was always accompanied by numerous pets, including cats, lizards, frogs, turtles and mice,²⁸ and she always maintained that she would never cause harm to

animals.²⁹ The very notion of ritualistic, Satanic ‘blood sacrifice’ was completely abhorrent to her.³⁰ The evidence provided by her own artistic work and comments made to the popular press and in journalistic articles strongly suggests that while Norton was unquestionably both pagan and ‘heathen’³¹ – and often provocative in her presentation of ‘images of the night’ – she was not a practising Satanist. As noted earlier, Norton’s pagan practice in Kings Cross featured ceremonial altars dedicated specifically to Pan and Hecate, and her coven rituals made no reference to the Christian Devil. It is also significant that the symbol depicted on the forehead of the goat-headed deity in *The Master*, a representation of Pan, was a Kabbalistic hexagram – a symbol showing the interconnection between Spirit and Cosmos, the Macrocosm and Microcosm – and not the inverted pentagram associated with contemporary Satanism.³² (*The Master* is reproduced in Chapter Six.)

Norton and the sacred aspects of Nature

From the late 1970s onwards influential American feminist witches began to speak of the Earth as the ‘body’ of the Goddess. In her book *Rebirth of the Goddess*, Carol P. Christ writes that ‘the Goddess as earth is the firm foundation of changing life’.³³ She also observes that ‘when the earth is the body of Goddess... the female body and the earth, which have been devalued and dominated together, are re-sacralized. Our understanding of divine power is transformed as it is clearly recognized as present within the finite and changing world.’³⁴ The influential Goddess worshipper, Starhawk (aka Miriam Simos), similarly states in *The Spiral Dance* (1979, revised edition 1999) – a source-book which has since become a neo-pagan bible for many feminist witches – that ‘the model of the Goddess, who is immanent in Nature, fosters respect for the sacredness of all living things. Witchcraft can be seen as a religion of ecology.’³⁵

During the pre-feminist 1950s Norton similarly drew attention to the sacred qualities of Nature, but ascribed them instead to Pan, whom she regarded as an embodiment of the divine essence of Nature, as noted above. When I interviewed Norton in 1977 she emphasized that Pan was very much a deity for the present day, and not simply an archetypal figure from antiquity. For her, Pan was the creative force in the universe that protected the natural beauty of the planet and conserved the resources of the environment. Like Starhawk, who for many years has combined Goddess spirituality with political activism, Norton believed that magic had political consequences. For her, Pan was alive and well in the anti-pollution lobbies, and among the Friends of the Earth.³⁶

That being so, it is reasonable to argue that in addition to being a trance-magician and visionary explorer Norton was also a significant precursor of those feminist witches and practitioners of Goddess spirituality who would later proclaim, from the late 1970s onwards, that the Earth was innately sacred and should be honoured as a manifestation of deity. Vivienne Crowley, a well known advocate of Wicca in Britain, maintains that the Earth should not be symbolised by the Goddess alone, pointing out that witchcraft ‘worships the Great Mother Goddess and Horned God as representations of all Goddesses and Gods that the human heart has worshipped.’³⁷ Crowley adds the further observation that ‘many people are attracted to the Earth Traditions because the Divine is found in the form of Goddess as well as God.’³⁸ These are sentiments which Norton would surely have shared.

In summarising Norton’s unique contribution to the 20th century Western esoteric tradition, one additional point should perhaps be emphasized: Rosaleen Norton is the only woman, either pre- or post- Golden Dawn, to have formulated a magical cosmology based on her own, personal trance-explorations of the ‘inner planes’ of the psyche and to have depicted these deities in her art. This, it seems to me, will be her lasting legacy to the Western esoteric tradition, and she is likely to gain wider international recognition in the future as her contribution is better understood.³⁹

By way of a final observation, I would like to conclude by noting that while Norton is best known for her visionary imagery she was also an evocative poet. She regarded the following poem, *Dance of Life*, as an expression of her magical credo:⁴⁰

*In the spiral horns of the Ram,
In the deep ascent of midnight,
In the dance of atoms weaving the planes of matter
is Life.*

*Life spins on the dream of a planet,
Life leaps in the lithe precision of the cat,
Life flames in the thousandth Name,
Life laughs in the thing that is ‘I’.*

*I live in the green blood of the forest,
I live in the white fire of Powers,
I live in the scarlet blossom of Magic,
I live.*⁴¹

¹ See artist statement in the catalogue *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Rowden White Library, 1-23 August 1949. Here she writes: 'Surrealist? Certainly not...' She also observes that 'the work in this exhibition is remarkable in its uninhibited return to that storehouse of timeless archetypal imagery on which the visionaries of all ages have drawn, a return which owes nothing to contemporary fashion...' Norton agrees that perhaps Herbert Read's expression 'Superrealism' is closer to the mark.

² R. Norton, introduction to *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Walter Glover, Sydney 1952: 12.

³ Ibid: 13.

⁴ See *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 24 January 1957: 14.

⁵ See *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 6 October 1955: 3 and *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 7 February 1957: 11.

⁶ See fn. 1.

⁷ Anon. 'She Hates Figleaf Morality', *People*, Sydney 1950: 30.

⁸ In the concise bibliography in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (Walter Glover, Sydney 1952: 79), Norton lists such works as Dion Fortune: *The Mystical Qabalah*; Aleister Crowley: *Magick in Theory and Practice*; Papus: *The Tarot of the Bohemians* and Eliphas Lévi, *A Treatise on Magic* under her heading 'Esotericism'. Norton's Lévi reference appears mis-titled. She is probably referring to A.E. Waite's anthology of Lévi's writings, *The Mysteries of Magic*, or alternatively, to Lévi's *The History of Magic*. Norton also includes Theosophical writings like Alice Bailey's *A Treatise on White Magic* and H.P. Blavatsky's *Stanzas of Dzyan* and *Isis Unveiled* in this section of her bibliography. However, the key point is that she first began exploring self-hypnosis twelve years earlier, when she was only 23 years of age.

⁹ See fn. 1.

¹⁰ See M. Stavish, 'Assumption of the Godform', published on-line at www.hermetic.com/stavish/godform.html. Stavish's article describes Golden Dawn ceremonial procedures.

¹¹ M Aquino, *The Crystal Tablet of Set, selected extracts*, Temple of Set, San Francisco 1983, revised 1986: 36.

¹² Ibid: 16.

¹³ Ibid: 10.

¹⁴ R. Norton, 'Witch Was No Class At School', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 24 January 1957: 15.

¹⁵ The transcript was forwarded by Mrs Raphael-Oeser, widow of the former Professor of Psychology at the University of Melbourne, to Walter Glover, in 1982. A section of the transcript was in turn passed to me by Glover. However, the full text did not come to my attention until November 2006.

¹⁶ Extracts were published in N. Drury, *Pan's Daughter*, Collins, Sydney 1988 (Chapter Three) but the complete text was not available to the author at that time.

¹⁷ As noted earlier, Spare's new-found recognition is based primarily on his inspirational role in the birth of Chaos Magick. See D. Evans, *The History of British Magick After Crowley*, Hidden Publishing, London 2007.

¹⁸ Norton utilised a sigil related to Thoth – see Chapter Four.

¹⁹ See I. Law, introduction to A.O. Spare, *A Book of Automatic Drawings*, Catalpa Press, London 1972. The automatic drawings date from 1925.

²⁰ See 'Some bat's blood please!' *The Sun*, Sydney, 26 September 1955.

²¹ *The Sun*, Sydney, 22 September 1955. The front-page headline read: "'Black Masses" in Sydney, says girl.'

²² *The Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 3 October 1955.

²³ See *The Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 31 May 1956 for a report of court proceedings related to the Honer/Ager obscenity charges which included her defence of witchcraft. See also Chapter Three

²⁴ The following observations are included in the introduction to the 1952 edition of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*: 'There is...a similarity of attitude to Norman Lindsay, but no similarity of style. Lindsay's Pantheism is of a different kind; his is a Daylight world and the satirical element is used as a foil rather than admitted as another form of beauty. The vision of Rosaleen Norton is one of Night; she dislikes any of the stereotypes of beauty and finds the "Daylight" world in general does not make good subject matter.' See R. Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc cit: 12-13.

²⁵ Plate XXXI, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc cit: 77.

²⁶ Plate XVII, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc cit: 49. This is a graphic re-working of the painting exhibited in Melbourne under the title *Witches' Sabbath*.

²⁷ Shortly after Anna Hoffmann made her false 'Black Mass' claims in September 1955, two Sydney newspaper reporters published a detailed eye-witness account of how they had visited a Black Mass in Kings Cross and observed a gowned witch and wizard performing a mock imitation of the Christian

Mass during which a rooster was sacrificed. It later emerged that the incident had been totally fabricated : the participants in the 'Black Mass' were university students who had donned ceremonial robes and used specimen bones from the Anatomy Department to create a bizarre, satanic atmosphere of 'sacrifice'. Such episodes only served to fuel public interest in Rosaleen Norton, and newspaper coverage of alleged 'witchcraft and black magic' activities in Kings Cross continued to appear.

²⁸ See D. Barnes, 'Rosaleen says she could be a Witch', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 9 October 1952: 7.

²⁹ In her autobiographical article 'I was Born a Witch,' (*Australasian Post*, Sydney, 3 January 1957:5) Norton writes: 'Instinctive kinship and sympathy with animals...is an inherent part of me. I hate to see them abused in any way, while cruelty to them is one of the few things that literally makes me see red.'

³⁰ In 1956 Norton was asked by journalist Dave Barnes : 'Have you ever attended ceremonies at which there have been blood sacrifices?' Her response was: 'No, and I've never drunk bats' blood either.' D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch!' *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 20 December 1956: 9.

³¹ In the sense that she did not align her spiritual beliefs with any major religion, eg Christianity.

³² Both the Church of Satan, established by Anton LaVey (1930-1997) in San Francisco in 1966, and its major offshoot, The Temple of Set, employ an inverted pentagram as their defining symbol.

³³ C.P. Christ, *Rebirth of the Goddess: Finding Meaning in Feminist Spirituality*, Routledge, New York 1997:90

³⁴ Ibid: 91.

³⁵ Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance*, revised edition, HarperCollins, San Francisco 1999: 34-35.

³⁶ N. Drury, *Pan's Daughter: the Strange World of Rosaleen Norton*, Collins, Sydney 1988: 142.

³⁷ V. Crowley, *A Woman's Guide to the Earth Traditions*, Thorsons, London 2001:1.

³⁸ Ibid: 2.

³⁹ Norton is not unknown in international occult circles, although her profile is substantially lower than Spare's. A British edition of my book, *Pan's Daughter*, was published by Mandrake of Oxford (UK) in 1993, and Norton's image *Nightmare*, depicting her 'astral projection' technique, was reproduced alongside an image by Austin Spare in Robert J. Wallis' *Shamans /Neo-Shamans*, Routledge, London and New York 2003: 27.

⁴⁰ R. Norton, 'Hitch-hiking Witch', loc cit: 11.

⁴¹ Ibid.

APPENDIX A

Transcript of the interview between Rosaleen Norton and L.J. Murphy at the University of Melbourne, 27 August 1949

Name: Miss R. Norton

Age: 31 years

Interviewed by L.J. Murphy 27/8/49

Mother: Died, not certain when, but some time ago – she thinks about 15 years ago. ‘She was a very difficult woman, hysterical, emotional and possessive.’

As a result of probing the following picture emerged:

She hated her mother because she felt that her mother wanted to possess her; the mother would not fight fair, but used to cry and weep and say how much she loved her daughter, and try to make her do things that way.

The father is still alive. Relationships with him are now quite good. ‘He fights clean.’ ‘What do you mean by this?’ ‘Well, if I disobeyed him he would smack me when I was a child, and make me do what he wanted me to do without all the emotional upsets that I had with my mother.’

Siblings: Two sisters, both older. Relationships with them have been and still are very good. She visits and stays with them when she goes to Sydney. During her early childhood she states that she was moderately happy, but has very little clear recollection of events.

School: Started school at the age of four – always in trouble. ‘I was deliberately disobedient.’ ‘Why?’ ‘I disliked school, and I disliked the other children; I hated the way they crawled to the teacher. I used to love making the teachers mad by getting the other children to do naughty things. They used to follow me but I don’t think they liked me.’ ‘Why do you think they followed you?’ ‘Because I always took the blame when anything went wrong.’ ‘I left ordinary school when I was 15 because I wanted to become an art student.’ Entered the Sydney Tech. as an art student; remained there for two years; liked it very much. ‘I then got a job with *Smith’s Weekly* as a junior artist; I liked the work very much, the people were very good, but I didn’t like the artistic standing of the group, so I left after 8 months. I ran away from home when I was 18.’ ‘Any particular reason?’ ‘Yes, my mother died just before this.’ RN lived with an artist at Kings Cross, and in the daytime she herself was a pavement artist. Got tired of this and became a studio model, mainly nudes. From here on her economic security depends upon free-lance modelling, and free-lance painting, exhibitions, selling occasional pictures.

Emotional History: First thing she can remember is being scratched by a cat; she says she was about one year old when this happened, and she will never forget the feeling as the cat scratched her arm. The second thing that stands out in her memory is being

smacked by her mother for refusing a biscuit; she thinks this happened when she was about four years of age, it was the first time she can remember being hit. She hated her mother for it, and she was determined she would not eat the biscuit, and the mother forced it into her mouth, and she was so disgusted that she became violently ill.

Mystical experiences commenced at the age of 23 – feeling of disintegration and ecstasy, a sort of ‘myself all going out into the air and then coming back in a new plastic body’.

Sex History: First sex experience at the age of 12 years – ‘rather accidental, in that a boy of my own age suggested that we do it. I found it very painful and did not try again.’ Next at 17 years of age – ‘this was a cold-blooded decision on my part; I wanted to find out what it was like.’ After it was all over there was a feeling of relief at having done it, but no strong sex sensation. Further probings revealed that she had been thinking about sex from the age of 11 onwards; very curious about the sex act itself. Sex life has been continuous since the age of 17.

First period: excessive but normal heterosexual relationships. About the age of 23 she was more interested in male homosexuals – she still prefers S.I. with male homosexuals because she can take a more active role – ‘these men are soft and rounded and they let me do what I like with them – I enjoy most of all their hands softly running up and down my back – sometimes they use pencils and leaves.’

After about three months of male homosexuals she likes a period of female homosexuals (manual and oral manipulation). With both male and female homosexuals there has been a considerable amount of masochistic and sadistic practices. She likes very much to be tied up, beaten, then have S.I. when her partner hurts her by forcing her back against the pole to which she is tied.

Sadism: ‘I enjoy very much beating men with a strap and then having S.I. I think all-in-all my most complete pleasure is through the active role I can play.’

Also been a considerable amount of fellatio; the main pleasure there is in giving the man pleasure. I feel this is in part the basis of her lesbian role too – giving pleasure to the partner, stroking and being stroked, kissing and being kissed, but all the time taking the dominant role. She did say that during lesbian S.I. she often felt that she would like to have a penis of her own to insert into the woman. She was probed very considerably on just how she felt during sexual stimulation, but she could not reply to this for she said she does not remember anything at all except body pleasure – just does not think: tenseness, a building up, a relief of tension, and no thinking at all.

[The following text was written by Norton herself, probably following a request from L.J.Murphy. Where capital letters are used within the text I have followed Norton’s original style and emphasis.]

Eventually I decided to experiment in self-induced trance; the idea being to induce an abnormal state of consciousness and manifest the results, if any, in drawing.¹

My aim was to delve down into the subconscious and, if possible, through and

beyond it.


I had a feeling (intuitional rather than intellectual) that somewhere in the depths of the unconscious, the individual would contain, in essence, the accumulated knowledge of mankind: just as his physical body manifests the aggregate of racial experience in the form of instinct or automatic reaction to stimulus.

In order to contact this hypothetical source, I decided to apply psychic stimulus to the subconscious : stimulus that the conscious reasoning mind might reject, yet which would appeal to the buried instincts as old as man, and would (I hoped) cause psychic 'automatic reflexes' (Religious cults use ritual, incense etc. for the same reason). Consequently, I collected together a variety of things such as aromatic leaves, wine, a lighted fire, a mummified hoof, etc... all potent stimuli to the part of the subconscious that I wished to invoke. I darkened the room, and focusing my eyes upon the hoof I crushed the pungent leaves, drank some wine, and tried to clear my mind of all conscious thought. This was the beginning (and I made many other experiments which were progressively successful).

Following a surge of curious excitement, my brain would become emptied of all conscious thought: my eyes would shut, and I was merely aware that I was drawing on the blank sheet of paper in front of me. The drawings were quite different in form from previous ones, and full of symbols, many of which were previously unknown to my conscious mind, prominent symbols being crescent, fish, ram-headed mask, cornucopia, swastika, 6-pointed star, triple sign, tower etc.

Each of the drawings at this period were compositions having another significance not realised until much later, since they prophesied in symbolic form a future subjective experience for myself. Numerous other things took place which I need not record here: my consciousness, however, was extremely exalted over the entire period – about five months in all.

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

One night I felt impelled, quite apart from conscious volition, to perform a kind of ritual of invocation; after which I executed a peculiar waking 'automatic' drawing, the composition of which assumed the form of the symbol .

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

Two years later, I decided to attempt some more investigations, this time with the object of discovering whether life continues after bodily death and, if so, in what form. To this end, I began by attempting to communicate with a dead friend by means of automatic writing. After several unsuccessful attempts, the pencil began to move quite freely, although for some days I obtained only subconscious ramblings and symbolism.

Unexpectedly, however, a great change took place: there was a strong awareness of another presence, and the sensation of the writing altered completely, as though someone apart from myself were guiding my hand. The writing became clear, concise, and altered completely. It altered, in fact, into the handwriting of the friend with whom I was attempting to communicate. Moreover, the answers to my questions became definite and coherent. Soon, and during the following nine or ten months, I gained the rough outlines of a philosophical and metaphysical conception of the Universe and life beyond death which by no stretch of the imagination could I attribute to my normal self, since it embodied knowledge of a type which my studies had never encountered, such as those which dealt with highly abstract propositions entering the realms of higher mathematics. I should make it clear that my previous reading in occult lore had dealt almost exclusively with medieval demonology and witchcraft, this being the side of such matters which chiefly interested me. Inspired by the previous occurrences, I had also studied a certain amount of symbolism, but I had never touched upon either physics, philosophy, or metaphysics, as such. Oddly enough, while actually receiving super-normal information I quite easily comprehended theories which when reviewed later were often difficult to grasp (heightening of faculties).

In this way I also learned something of various other subjects, including the structure of the subconscious mind, comparative symbolism, etc. Meanwhile, without realising it, I was becoming highly sensitised psychically, and soon could communicate almost at will, without any effort of concentration. Much of the data was, of course, fragmentary and incomplete owing to the crude method of communication. Other information, particularly that dealing with life on other planes of Being, was misinterpreted owing to lack of standards of comparison on my part: since one can only visualise any image in relation to something in one's own experience, my understanding was necessarily limited. Now, however, I am able to correlate and apply the missing factors to things that were merely hinted at during this period. (I have appended a condensation of the more important questions and answers received during automatic writing.)²

Meanwhile, one subject had become paramount in my mind. I had heard that it was possible to achieve transition to a different Realm of existence and live consciously the type of life that is generally experienced after physical death. This became my supreme desire, for a number of reasons. The idea, above all, appealed to me as a type of adventure and exploration more fascinating than any other. There were, too, things that I wished to know which I realised would be impossible without first-hand experience; for I felt that entities who had had the experience of death would have passed into a different and perhaps more advanced state of being, entailing conditions of life which would be almost incomprehensible according to our concepts. As soon as communication was firmly established, therefore, I asked if such a thing were actually possible. The reply was in the affirmative. It seemed that co-operation of will from two planes of Being was necessary for safe accomplishment of the process. I was told, also,

that I would have to wait for a few months, presumably to gain the necessary psychic training.

My excitement can be imagined; and during the following months becoming impatient and often sceptical of ever accomplishing any such thing, I made several attempts at separating myself from my body. My conception of the process was a hazy one and very different from actuality, since I imagined that my physical body would temporarily have to die, later to be re-animated on my return.

Once during one of these attempts I succeeded in inducing a type of cataleptic trance. Gradually over the space of about an hour my heart beat became slower and slower – I was very aware of this in a detached fashion – and I could feel my breathing lessening until both heart-beat and breath had practically ceased; and then an extraordinary sensation ran over my entire body, which I can describe only as ‘cessation’. There was an inward hush as though my body’s mechanism had come to a pause – and then a light frothing bubbling sensation spread through my veins as though my body were dissolving into foam. I do not know what the result would have been had I not been disturbed. However, at this moment my husband³ entered the room. Thinking I was ill, he felt my pulse and exclaimed in alarm. The dissolving stopped, there was a sense of shock, and with a slight jerk my breathing started again very slowly. I tried to reassure him, but could not speak at first, as my lips and vocal organs seemed extraneous and difficult to control. It took me another hour to resume normal functioning, after which he told me that my skin had felt icy and slightly damp (I had not been aware of this).

The next step of importance was clairaudience – a clear and coherent form of thought transference which eliminated the cruder medium of automatic writing. The first indication of this occurred under the very prosaic circumstances of washing clothes one afternoon. Possibly for the very reason of lack of conscious concentration my brain was in a receptive condition. I suddenly became strongly aware of another presence. I realised that it was C. (the person with whom I had been communicating) and then unexpectedly, as though my brain were a tuned-in wireless set, I could hear her speaking; which so thrilled me that mentally I positively shouted at her.

‘Yes, it really is me,’ came the reply. ‘I am able to communicate with you directly now.’ I was told later that there are numerous cells in the brain which do not normally function. During this conversation I was told, amongst other things, that inter-Plane transition would occur for me in about a month: and so it did, almost to the day.

I doubt if any impression of the actual initial experience could be conveyed in words, so I shall not attempt to describe it, beyond saying that there was a sensation of ecstasy, during which my entire being seemed to dissolve and disintegrate, then gradually re-form into a new whole. The experience was so overwhelming that at first it was difficult to realise what had happened; for simultaneously with this an entire change of consciousness and focus had been effected. My body felt as though it were formed of warm golden light; the physical body had become merely an appendage, and all my sensations were centred in the plasmic body. I had gained new and different senses – and here I must comment upon something concerning which the popular conception of ‘discarnate life’ is the absolute reverse of reality. Far from being devoid of sense enjoyment, a plasmic body of this type contains the very essence of sensuousness to a

degree that renders the physical sensory organs utterly negligible by comparison. As a rough and very inadequate parallel, compare the difference between touching something of delicate texture with naked hands, and with hands encased in heavy leather gloves. 'There' the body is completely a reflection of the mind, so that any type of pleasure, whether emotional or intellectual, engenders as a part of itself a corresponding sensuous enjoyment. (This also applies in the opposite direction so that misery of any description is accompanied by excruciating pain.) Contrary again to the usual idea of such states, sexual sensation still exists in an equivalently more advanced and intensified form.

I have been asked how a purely intellectual activity such as abstract thought could be attended by sensual enjoyment. It is, nevertheless, for instead of feeling interested one 'becomes' an embodiment of Interest itself. It is rather different to explain what I mean by this since a sense or state of Consciousness peculiar to the other realm is concerned. To begin with, 'thought' in those realms is very different from that which is normally understood by the word. There, 'thought' – or rather the energy generated by such – is felt as a tangible thing, a current of living force which assumes palpable and visual form. I had been told, earlier, that 'entities in the Plane assumed form at will'. This is literally true; one actually changes shape very frequently, since the new 'sense' referred to is that which could be described as 'being'. Just as one can see, feel, hear a thing, state or person; and when this occurs one realises and is the very essence of its nature. This sense, if one can call it that, covers a vastly wider field than anything comparable to human life; for in addition to becoming the essence of male, female, or neither, and beings of other orders of Existence, one can 'become' a living embodiment of abstract Ideas of all descriptions.

One of the strangest experiences I had was 'becoming' an embodiment of an Idea of the Universe. This Idea was not anthropomorphised into Entity, as is usually the case with such embodiments. Consequently, although my consciousness existed, there was no consciousness of entity at all. I am not referring to the personal 'I' consciousness, for naturally that alters completely with each form assumed; I have used a capital letter to differentiate between personal ideas and Ideas, which are representations to the consciousness of Group interpretations of Universal facts, according to order of Existence and sub-divisions therein. (By 'other orders of Existence' I mean different classes of Being from Man; highly evolved unhuman intelligences)....

Many of these things, of course, happened much later; however, these examples indicate the complete unity of mind and fluids in the plasmic body, also the sensory tangibility of the thought-force. The manipulation of the latter (to return to my previous statement) in any kind of abstract thinking, is also a sensory skill and actually feeling the keen precision of directed force. In the emotional sphere, there is a different type of awareness. When one feels wonder, serenity, etc., one does not exactly become a representation of these states; rather, there is a sensation of complete unity with that which is causing their manifestation, and yet another sense which is a blending of the familiar five senses into a super-intensified one, plus an indefinable essence.

Another activity could be compared with simultaneously watching and taking part in a play in which all art-forms such as music, drama, ritual, shape, colour and pattern blend into one. These 'plays' were either allegorical or symbolic and generally represented

something which had a personal bearing upon my own life in addition to their general significance.

Orthodox occultists occasionally describe the Plane of 'dense' matter as the 'Realm of Form', which to my mind is a complete misnomer. The name should be applied to the realm of which I speak, since things There are seen in their archetypal essence. There, all forms whether abstract or actual appear in their real perfection as part of the very essence of Form itself, which is omnipresent. In speaking of abstract form I refer to System and the pattern of things in general, which interblend in all directions into infinity. As I have remarked elsewhere, the fact of chaos anywhere appears to be only a part of form and system, and as such purely relative.

The realisation of the essential Form of things occurs in various ways... one sees things such as the pattern of a life, for instance, as a complete and perfect thing in itself, yet forming against relationship to other lives part of another wider pattern; which again forms part of another yet larger... and so, ad infinitum. Similarly, with things such as Dimension – Time, Plane and Space – one literally sees the perfect interblending of their relationship to one another and to the Universe as a whole. Here again, the vehicle of realisation of this type of knowledge is greater and more comprehensive than intellectual understanding, although it includes the latter. Many of these Abstract forms appeared as vast animated patterns blending in a kind of geometrical harmony which we felt as well as observed, and into which the consciousness merged. The shapes and manifestations were not those of Euclidean geometry; cosmic mathematics manifesting as an immense art-form is the best analogy I can find.

Concerning 'other types of Existence' and form assumed by such, there are several aspects to be considered. In some of my drawings I have attempted to convey an impression of some of these 'other Realm' shapes and experiences; in some a general and in others a specific impression. With regard to the former, I have used visual forms seen during extra-sensory experiences supplemented where necessary by other, more familiar symbols. Concerning the latter, however, I have endeavoured as far as possible to reproduce accurately the actual visual images only.

Recently, the factual validity of some of these portrayed forms was queried on the grounds that they were apparently 'anthropomorphised'. One of the drawings objected to, for instance, showed a horned being with a comparatively human face – a fawn [sic].⁴ Another depicted a being roughly corresponding to one of those known as Djinnns. Both of the drawings fall into the latter, or sheerly factual category.

The grounds of the objection were:

1. That, as form follows function in animate nature, a non-human intelligence would not assume a form based upon a human concept, such as the idea of a fawn – which is, superficially, an idealised combination of two phenomena in the natural world. The objection was not to the drawing of a fawn as a symbolic representation of a different state of intelligence, but to my claim of its objective reality.

2. That the concept of such beings was familiar to my personal mind through study of mediaeval demonology etc. and also to the cultural mind of the racial group to which I belong, and that they were therefore more likely to be the result of hallucination or self-deception than actual objective realities (objective on the Astral Plane – not necessarily so on the physical plane). Why, he asked, had I not encountered phenomena familiar to, say, the Zulu Group mind.

All this is a particularly interesting point; for in his grasp of the implications of a type of life essentially different from ours, the sceptic was quite right. Yet in that very difference are embodied the conditions of existence whereby such an apparent irrationality as the objective existence of an ‘ectoplasmic’ fawn body becomes logically possible. The explanation lies in the nature of the difference between the two Realms (Planes of Being).

The most vital and essential distinction exists more in the way the life manifestation itself functions than in any particular visual form it may assume. On the physical plane, for instance, compare two completely dissimilar forms of life – a plant and a human being. They are totally different in appearance, structure and mode of functioning, yet their material vehicles are both subject to the same Dimensional law. They cannot change form. A plant will undergo only such changes as are normal, ie. inherent in the plant nature, and a man according to those inherent in humanity. They cannot exchange, or vitally change, their physical form outside their respective genus limit, and the life cycles of both follow a broad [sic] similar pattern of birth, growth, maturity, degeneration and death.

In the other Realm, the structure of phenomena is based on other lines. Intelligences are not confined to one form as here; also the consciousness pertaining to each type of form bears a far closer relationship to its material vehicle. The latter, as I have said, being fluid plasmic matter, can and does alter its form to any image appropriate to circumstances. Since, however, the form assumed is a direct reflection of the content or state of consciousness, it is an automatic result of the latter. So, in this Realm also ‘form follows function’, but in an utterly different way; as function in this sense is synonymous with ‘being’ or content. Now, what are some of these forms, and how did they originate – such as that of a fawn, for instance? I think I partly answered, or rather, supplied a clue to this in an earlier paragraph (previous section); wherein I defined ‘Ideas’ as ‘Representations’ (or embodiments) of group interpretations of Universal facts. Myths and legendary allegories fall into this category.

The myth-making (and image) faculty of the unconscious mind forms a concept of life (relative to the self) which is often embodied as an idealisation – a Being, such as Nature, Phantasy, Power etc. – and which the unconscious mind conceives of as a ‘God’, or in other words, the motivating powers of Existence relative to himself, as they appear to him. The Symbolic Being is also Self, since it represents the sum of his own experiences and reactions to such; and being therefore a creation of his own Mind, reflects its creator. Yet it is also an embodiment of the forces which have spiritually created or moulded him, and is therefore a personification of God in relation to himself. Generally, the more primitive the mind, the more it anthropomorphises the attributes of its God, since it is less capable of a detached survey.

So with the group: in fact the individual subconscious God-conception generally flows along the group thought channel most appropriate to it, hence all of the Gods of man. Hence also all the demons, spirits, and other representations of forces that have influenced him.

I have spoken of individual mind working upon and moulding plasmic material. Consider the power, then, of this unconscious mass-concentration of human beings, throughout the ages, upon certain idealisations of forms – the God-forms (a generic name for all such forms, including Demons, Faery creatures, ‘angels’ etc.). This unconscious creative thought concentration has built up images in the aether, moulding raw plasmic matter to the form of these images, and providing vehicles for other intelligences to manifest through, relative to humanity. I do not mean that these intelligences are either confined to any or all of these forms, or that they are the product of human thought, conscious or otherwise. The vehicles, or God-forms, yes, or largely so, but not the intelligences themselves. These vehicles, however, form a useful medium of communication, but naturally their visual form is, to a certain extent, anthropomorphic. Taking the abstract state of consciousness known as ‘Humanity’ or Human Consciousness (including all Uni-Planal variations) as belonging to one Realm of Being – and the next level of consciousness (ie. Deva consciousness; I have used a Sanscrit [sic] term, failing any English equivalent) as belonging to another Realm of Being, and as such, completely different from state one, the God-forms comprise a link, or half-way state between the two. Human consciousness, then, can move up into these God-forms during trance, or other exceptional conditions; likewise, Deva consciousness can descend into the same form. The inhabiting, or temporary animation of these forms by entities can be likened to an ectoplasmic ‘incarnation’, during which the entity assumes both the form and the mode of intelligence and perception associated with that form. So then, with the fawn depicted. This, I think, answers the first objection.

Concerning Objection 2: Here again a logical but incomplete conclusion has been reached through not allowing for the missing factors in the case. The statement concerning the ‘faun’ shape being familiar to myself through both personal and racial associations is quite true. For that reason, it is logical to suppose that I should encounter such ‘God-forms’ as interest me as an individual., and belong to my racial group, particularly since I had earlier opened a channel of communication to these particular manifestations through study and meditation. Since I had not done this with regard to Zulu culture and beliefs, and having no particular interest in them, no contact was made. This is not surprising, considering that there are endless planes within Planes; consequently in either Realm one only sees those things which are in some way relevant. No-one, for instance, walking along a crowded street sees, or even registers, every face – he only sees those which touch his subjective awareness in some way. He may notice those types of faces which have a personal interest for him, or anyone outstandingly peculiar, or different, from the crowd. If he is interested mainly in the buildings, he will probably notice neither. This automatic selective faculty is equally operative, and necessary, in the other Realm, where one can not only move through planes in space, but also through planes in time. Obviously, one could not see all things at all times, and though consciousness is extended enormously the result would be chaotic, were details in too many different parts of time and space to impinge upon one another simultaneously. This factor of ‘relevance’ explains why it is practically

impossible to prophesy or know what anyone else will see or experience upon the other Plane of Being, despite many books asserting the contrary.

To conclude my discussion of these points, I have commented several times that Forms etc., having no parallel in life as we know it, are utterly impossible of delineation; consequently I have necessarily selected only such shapes and happenings as are to some extent recognisable, for my drawings. (The 'God-forms' probably link up with Jung's 'Archetypes' subjectively, in the Plane of Being.)

¹ Mrs Raphael-Oeser, who sent the present transcript to Walter Glover in 1982, added an annotation of her own, namely that she presumed that Norton had been asked by L.J. Murphy to provide her own personal account of her beliefs and cosmology and also that one preceding page at least, appears to be missing from Norton's account.

² The whereabouts of this document on automatic writing is unknown – it was not forwarded to Glover in 1982.

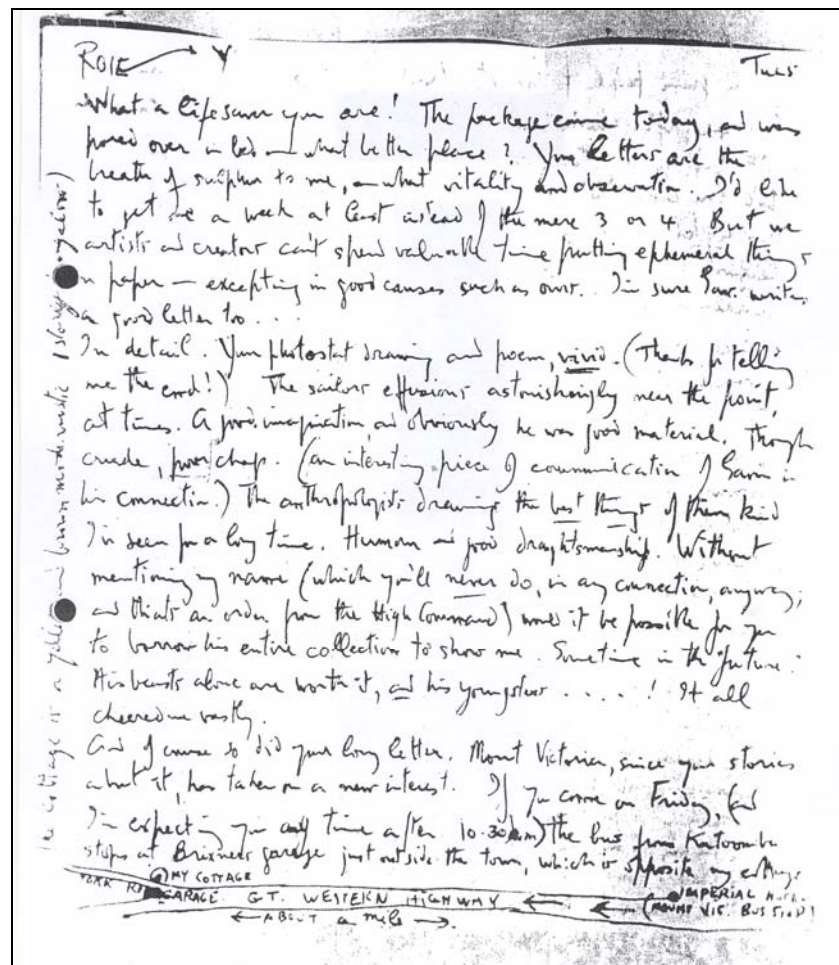
³ Norton was married to Beresford Conroy at this time. See Chapter One.

⁴ Presumably Norton means 'faun' and not 'fawn'. She refers to the 'faun shape' later in her account.

APPENDIX B

Selected personal correspondence between Eugene Goossens and Rosaleen Norton relating to magical ideas and processes

The following letters, all of which are undated, are digital scans of copies that were originally in the possession of Vice Squad detective Bert Trevenar. The original letters were taken from Norton's Kings Cross flat in October 1955. The originals are now lost and may possibly have been destroyed by the police when they failed to gain permission to prosecute Sir Eugene Goossens on the additional charge of scandalous conduct. The latter charge was dropped following the intervention of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Mr R.R. Downing, who instructed the Commissioner of Police to take no further action against Goossens (see M. Johnson, 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc. cit: 23 fn.). For an analysis of the significance of these texts in relation to the *Goetia*, ritual sex magick, the use of magical unguents and 'astral meetings' see Chapter Five.



This page contains a small map with directions to Goossens' cottage at Mount Victoria in the Blue Mountains - where Goossens proposed to instruct Norton in the sex-magical use of demonic seals from the *Goetia*

You're grand people to take the trouble to come; I'll be alone till 4.30, after which time I'll be surrounded again! The atmosphere of the cottage is utterly wrong for our purposes, but anyway I don't think I'll love each other...

How right is your idea of concentrating on getting both the room and leisure time to occupy it. Obviously a fixed-in time is necessary, hidden and private. Fortunately, come July or end of June I'm a free agent, and virtually everything in the way of meeting will be possible at that time, subject always to the heavy claims on time and energy arising from my schedule. Since last week's note, there's no question but that these must be at least weekly. That however will only be regularly possible from June onwards.

But it's worthwhile and important to wait for... Meantime then, let's we can build up. Yes, I'll instruct you in the primitive. The diagrams are necessarily crude but none the less effective, being all from unimpeachable sources. You will be my best - and only - pupil, and I shall appoint you keeper of the seals (You're nearly but the nail on the head in your list about A.C. and self in your letter!) Unfortunately, I didn't bring the books, but shall bring it to you next week for leisure use. Can you trace the headiness, illustrated in enclosed, worn at an astro ball. (I think in K's X) recently. As the ASHTAROTH came and is for you, and no one else. I'm thrilled about the drawings. By the way, it's useless to remind you to look everything up at 179 before you see the photo is good, I will take some snapshots on Friday. Reminds me. Much more to tell you, but must stop. Deep emanations and the S.G. 1920 to G.H. ...

Highlighted sections include references to the 'hidden and private' nature of the secret meeting place and to Norton as Goossens' 'one-and-only pupil' (in *Goetia*) and 'keeper of the seals'. Goossens also alludes to 'A.C. (Aleister Crowley) and self', and to the demon Ashtaroth

It's hard to say - just how I think it was better so from the economic standpoint. I need your physical presence very much, for many reasons. We have many rituals and indulgences to undertake, quite apart from S.M. And I want to take more photos. In which connection:-

(a) please ask your neighbour whether the excessive light in the pictures is due to under-exposure or over-exposure (of the film, not of you!!) and tell him to get some ~~exposure~~ ^{exposure} ready for George. (The incorporation of the 12 years, in super-imposed shells, sounds attractive)


(b) I think it wise that you don't send any of your small drawings by mail (except if you can anything in a monster package). I will wait for them on Saturday. So don't send anything except in a m-p

(c) Tell G. - I'm thrilled by the conclusion of H. of U. It's better even than I had hoped for!! Also I'm equally thrilled by his drawings, which will go in the wild book.

(d) I don't know yet when I'm returning. It may be very late Friday, or else Saturday a.m.

(e) Did you find Gray??

(f) Am bringing back some masks...




'We have many rituals and indulgences to undertake, quite apart from S.M. [sex magick]. And I want to take more photos...' Note the demonic motif, bottom right

No, I don't know the person (assistant C. of the P.) you mention, who is collaborating with Gav. Extreme caution will be necessary lest a chance remark reveal aught!
 I long to hear from beautiful Gav.; tell him I have started sketches of H. of V.
 You don't know what your long letters mean to me; understanding and eloquent they are and happily satisfying to my nature, oceanic, obscene and of other worlds and beings.
 I am mastering many things; in all of which you figure and help. Even now my bat wings envelop and lift you, as yours often enfold me into Arimanic spheres.
 Let me know you get this fourth measure.
 More follows: feed me constantly with yours; the milk and essences of your emanations be always within me, and G. too.
 My black familiar takes this to you

This postcard refers to 'beautiful Gav' – a reference to Gavin Greenlees – and to Goossens' 'bat wings' which enfold him into Arimanic [sic] spheres'. There is also an allusion to Goossens' 'black familiar', or magical helper-spirit

Gladly make up. Which resembles my own. I'll show you a castle to and all castles. You probably received a stupid human dress the colour of which I liked. Throw it away if it bores you. It may do to paint in. Also a transparent oil skin (which you can also wear when it rains, just wait!!) with which you which we'll need for a ritual later.
 Oh yes, R. had a wife who killed him; he had a first and a mistress in London, of tremendous charm and knowledge of my job in particular. He said R. had a tongue twice the length of my normal being. This was the secret of his attraction to women. He was so smart, he was so smart, almost constant. So the tongue was a more the... substitute, in the minds and... of his lucky friends!
 I got to from this evening early Thursday. Perhaps not too late to at least call you, when we can decide on when I can get to my heart! But the next two weeks will from a sore throat in the matter of suitable dates. Patience, and the coming of June is now an "itching and comfort".
 ALL THE LOWEST AND MOST HELPFUL FAMILIARS TO YOU, AND ASSISTANTS FOR SEANCES.
 SHALL PROBABLY LOOSEN FOR A SECOND THURSDAY
 WOULD YOU BRING ME 100 DASHES IN MIDJOURN END OF JUNE - I GO THERE THEN AND TO THE BRICKS WITH YOU - PUT MY



This letter contains references to Hecate and spirit-familiars as well as a drawing of a winged demon, bottom right

USE HALF LEVEL TEASPOONFUL, MASSAGE
 CREAM INTO SKIN OVER WIDE AREA ON
 INNER ~~FACE~~ FACE OF THE THIGH (BETWEEN
 CROTCH AND KNEE) OR ON ABDOMEN. USE ON
 UNWASHED SKIN. DONT BATHE ANOINTED
 AREA ONE HOUR BEFORE OR THREE HOURS
 AFTER. DONT USE DURING MENSTRUAL PERIOD.
 NO MAN MUST USE THIS UNGUENT
 IT WOULD BE MORE THAN DANGEROUS

REC. CREME D'EGYPTE
 PREPARED BY ANNA (PARIS)
 HERB OINTMENT - DONT BAKE

DJINN
 FOR

APPLY ONCE A DAY FOR 3, 4 OR 5 DAYS

Here Goossens is providing instructions for Norton's use of the magical unguent
 'Crème d'Egypte'. He has signed the note 'Djinn' – his magical name

SAT
 SALAHM, ROIE -- 10-50
 I CALLED THIS A.M. HOPING
 MIGHT COLLECT THE FINISHED
 A. DRAWING. KNOCKED 3-TIMES
 BUT ALAS NO ANSWER. SAW A
 LIGHT AND KEY IN YOUR DOOR
 BUT GUESSED YOU WERE OUT
 FOR A SPELL. I LEFT THE
 SECOND HAND COPY OF THE G.B.
 PROPPED AGAINST YOUR DOOR, AND
 HOPE YOU FOUND IT SAFELY
 THERE ON YOUR RETURN.
 I FOUND IT AT THE OFFICE
 AFTER LEAVING YOU TH
 OTHER DAY; HAVE SINCE REA
 ND AND IT CONFIRMS ALL I
 NEW OF AC. THOUGH

EXAGGERATES CERTAIN
 THINGS OVERMUCH.
 I EXPERIMENTED ON ONE OF
 THE CAKES OF LIGHT (PG. 64)
 (NOT SUCCESSFULLY) HOPE YOU WILL
 HAVE BETTER LUCK WITH
 THE UNGUENT

I AM FREE FOR 1/2 AN HOUR
 ABOUT 11:30 A.M. WEDNESDAY
 MAIL ME A LINE TO SAY
 IT WILL SUIT YOU BOTH IF I
 CALL THE THREE GREETINGS GO TO
 YOU IN THIS.

IN HASTE

In this note to Norton, Goossens mentions that he has been experimenting with
 'cakes of light' – a specifically Crowleyian reference to sex magick (see Chapter Five).
 Goossens also refers to the magical unguent he has sent previously

What an extraordinary person you are: our rapport is amazing, and I am
 shocked by that chart you drew of our time-plane relationships.
 Undoubtedly it applies to all our astral meetings. I am however working
 on an unguent (with the one you have as basis) to perfect and bring about
 our physical transportation. Asmodeus is incised, and
 the deep growl you mentioned as coming from As. could emanate very truly
 from the pictured one enclosed. I have been possessed by others, but never
 hitherto by As. Usually it is in the form of a subtle —
 most pleasant and stimulating
 Yes I knew P.H. in both phases: — remind me to tell you about our
 doings together!
 Is the original of Black Magic really for me? How wonderful of you.
 Your account of the ^{dreamlike} Arimanes is amazing, but I am concerned a bit
 about their heart attacks. They sound to me rather the after-effects
 of Benzodrine pills, which would produce just those symptoms especially
 when you're eating nothing. Please take no more till I've discussed
 it with you. It may have occult origins, but I can't imagine
 the beings retaliating on you for any reason in that fashion!
 The whole thing is disgusting. I am anxious to hear whether there's
 any alteration in the status quo: it would be too bad if you lost it,
 though it's ignominious to think that you should have to have recourse to it.

Goossens refers here to 'astral meetings' and a new magical unguent capable of perfecting their 'physical transportation'. Goossens also advises Norton that he is sending her a picture of the demon Asmodeus. He expresses his delight that Norton has offered to give him her drawing *Black Magic* — Plate XVII in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*. Goossens also writes: '... I knew P.H. in both phases: remind me to tell you about our doings together!' This is presumably a reference to Philip Heseltine, who is thought to have provided information on Crowleyian sex magick to Goossens at an earlier period — when they were close friends in England

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