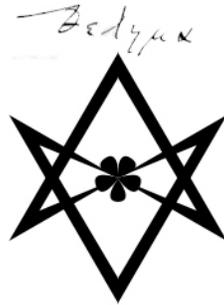


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Table of Contents

Introduction by the Editor.....	3
Thelemic Atheism and the Revaluation of Virtues by Los.....	6
“The Magus Revealed” by Hettie Rowley.....	16
One Becomes Many: On the Manifestation of the Divine by Isaac Aurelian.....	18
“Trinity 93” by Frater A.....	31
Thelema in the Classroom by Soror L.V.X.N.O.X.....	32
“The Gateway of Aquarius” by Hettie Rowley.....	41
Thelemic Crime & Punishment by Krymetrion.....	43
“The Master Therion 666” by Hettie Rowley.....	62
Contributors	64

Introduction

by the Editor

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. Aleister Crowley once wrote in his essay “Duty” that, “Combat stimulates the virile or creative energy; and, like love, of which it is one form, excites the mind to an orgasm which enables it to transcend its rational dullness.” Going by the first part of this quotation, *The Journal of Thelemic Studies* has been a source of much creative energy. If we are lucky, it “excite[d] the mind to an orgasm” once or twice too. The intellectual combat, with the thrust by the authors of the articles and the inevitable parries by the readers, enshrined in this *Journal* has stimulated some interesting discussion. I often get e-mails both praising and complaining about the same article – sometimes two people will mention the very same line in an article yet have diametrically opposite reactions.

I want to extend and open invitation to all readers to submit responses to various articles in any past issue of *The Journal of Thelemic Studies*: the responses may be included in a later issue of the *Journal*. We informally abide by the motto “As brothers fight ye!” (*Liber AL III:59*), acknowledging that complex and controversial issues may be tackled aggressively but with respect for others’ opinions. Ideally we can engage in intellectual combat as “one form” of love (as Crowley mentions in the quotation above), where we can assert, compare, contrast, discard, and synthesize opinions “to bring out saliently the differences between two points-of-view [which] is useful to both [points-of-view] in measuring the position of each in the whole” (“Duty”).

These are interesting and changing times in the world of Thelema. Recently, a class at UC Berkeley was started by a student titled “Thelema: Aleister Crowley’s Psycho-spiritual Philosophy for a New Aeon.” Hopefully this is only the start of Thelema being accepted as a viable subject for academic study. Thelemic Studies has continued maintaining its forums on its website <http://www.ThelemicStudies.com> and its YouTube video series, “Thelema Talk” (<http://www.youtube.com/HeruTV>). Also, a new effort has formulated, focusing on the promulgation of the Law of Thelema; this organization is called “The Army of Ra-Hoor-Khuit” and more information can be

found at their website: <http://ArmyofRHK.proboards.com> ... The Army extends its invitation to any Thelemite who wishes to help in spreading the Law of Liberty, "Do what thou wilt." In the O.T.O., three Bay Area bodies have consolidated into a new "Blazing Star Oasis" and the next N.O.T.O.C.O.N. will take place August 7-9 in Seattle of this year (see <http://vii.notocon.org/> for more information). Hopefully both of these events, and the less-noticed ones, will allow for increased productivity, creativity, and joy in the Thelemic community. (Note: *The Journal of Thelemic Studies* maintains the stance of its Mission Statement, "The subject matter of the Journal of Thelemic Studies will not be that of a certain ideology within Thelema, but will give equal voice to those of divergent and perhaps even conflicting viewpoints. *The Journal of Thelemic Studies* is not affiliated in any way with the estate of Aleister Crowley, or any formal organizations including Ordo Templi Orientis and College of Thelema.")

With this fourth issue of *The Journal of Thelemic Studies* we complete the second Volume of this spiritual-academic endeavor. ... We begin with an article on "Thelemic Atheism" which argues that atheism is not only compatible with the philosophy of Thelema, but conducive to an individual's liberation from a limited, dualistic notion of a "self" that is conceived as completely separate from the universe. To demonstrate this claim, the article focuses on a close-reading of "Liber LXV," V: 34-40, noting the ways in which atheism allows for the cultivation of the three Thelemic virtues that reevaluate St. Paul's virtues and free the individual from the bonds of restrictive and false beliefs. Next we have an article by Isaac Aurelian about the unity of various Creation myths and Thelema's various symbolic stances on how "One Becomes Many." The third essay by Soror L.V.X.N.O.X. explores how Thelema is currently treated in the academic field and presents the "DeCal" class on Thelema taught at UC Berkeley, as mentioned above. Krymetrion's essay about "Thelemic Crime & Punishment" finishes this second volume of *The Journal of Thelemic Studies*. This essay is a presentation of apparent contradictions in part C of "Duty", and an attempt to investigate, or at least to pose meaningful questions, to these contradictions, in the light of Liber OZ and other writings by Crowley. Focus is especially put on the old tradition

of "Eye for an eye", and its place in relation to Crowley's philosophy.

Interspersed throughout this issue are four beautiful pieces of artwork. There is an image called "Trinity 93" by Frater A. which depicts his "vision of the Stele [of Revealing] in the astral." Also there are three pieces by Hettie Rowley of "Thelema Trust" called (in order of their appearance), "The Magus Revealed," "The Gateway of Aquarius," and "The Master Therion 666." After each piece, a short quotation by Hettie Rowley appears on the next page explaining the inspiration and content behind it. Prints of the pieces "The Magus Revealed" and "The Gateway of Aquarius" are available on request, numbered and signed by the artist, at the website <http://www.magick.co.za/OccultArtworks.html>, and prints of the piece "The Master Therion 666" are on sale at <http://www.magick.co.za/ThelemaPrints.html> ...

This *Journal* is largely a communal endeavor, an interweaving of the paths of varying stars. Therefore I must emphasize that *The Journal of Thelemic Studies* could never exist without the contributions of individuals, so I would like to express my undying gratitude to all authors and artists who have taken the time to submit their work to the *Journal*. Also thank you to all of the readers of *The Journal of Thelemic Studies*, and those who have taken the time to submit feedback to me. That being said, I hope you enjoy this fourth installment of *The Journal of Thelemic Studies*, and as always...

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

Love is the law, love under will.

There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.

Please send all potential submissions of content for *The Journal of Thelemic Studies*, all questions, comments, concerns, etc. to admin@thelemicstudies.com

Thelemic Atheism and the Revaluation of Virtues

by Los

In the Qabalistic "Essay Upon Number" in *The Equinox*, Vol. 1, No. 5, Aleister Crowley asserts that there are three types of atheists. The first he describes as the "mere stupid man," who, though possibly intelligent, lacks the ability to see beyond his limited perspective; the second he calls the "despairing wretch," who seeks God but cannot find him; the third espouses the kind of atheism that Crowley endorses: this atheist is the "philosophical adept, who, knowing God, says 'There is No God,' meaning 'God is Zero,' as qabalistically He is." In support of this third kind of atheist, Crowley cites the adepts from *Liber 418*¹, Aethyr 5, who use the password "There is No God," inflected so as to stress the first word. Shortly thereafter, Crowley summarizes these three atheistic positions, and translates the stance of the admirable "philosophical adept" atheist into Hebrew, using a term that calls to mind the highest veil above the Tree of Life: "Ain Elohim." In saying "There is no God," this atheist aspires to "Not," non-dual consciousness.

For Crowley, an atheist (in the most positive sense of the word) is one who is capable of perceiving and participating in non-dual consciousness. For the purposes of this article, I will be using "non-dual consciousness" to denote any state of mind characterized by an absence of "self" or an absence of the notion that Crowley describes as the "radical error" of the non-initiate: "defin[ing] 'self' as irreconcilably opposed to 'not-self'"². The dualistic worldview of the non-initiate strives to preserve the self at the expense of the non-self; this dualism is exacerbated by beliefs that sunder spirit and matter -- beliefs in gods, the supernatural, or another world -- beliefs that place value on imaginary worlds rather than reality. Hindered by such false beliefs, the

¹ Also known as *The Vision & the Voice*

² Crowley, Aleister. *Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapter XII

non-initiate frequently acts from "lust of result." Without such beliefs, an individual is freer to lose the self in the non-self, to understand and participate in the flux of reality, that which Crowley calls "the perfect fluidity of the 'Becoming' of Nature" in the New Commentary to *Liber Legis*³.

Such a concept of non-dual consciousness in which "God is Not" is a negation of typical ideas about "God." Crowley's position is somewhat like that of Percy Shelley, who in his 1813 revision of his treatise *The Necessity of Atheism* argued that the non-existence of God or gods does not preclude the "hypothesis of a pervading Spirit co-eternal with the universe"⁴. However, Crowley goes further than Shelley. Rather than suggesting a "pervading Spirit" or other dubious metaphysical claims, Crowley appears content, in many of his writings at least, to locate the "divine spirit" in humanity and the human will, abolishing any need to speak of this spirit as somehow separate from Man. At the outset of "Liber Oz," for example, Crowley boldly declares, "There is no god but man," suggesting that the document regards humanity on the level formerly reserved for "god." Indeed, as Crowley would write in his Old Commentary to *Liber Legis*, "To admit God is to look up to God, and so not to be God. The curse of duality"⁵. An individual must become god in order to conquer duality.

The position advanced here is not far from one of William Blake's more heretical declarations: "The worship of God is: Honouring his gifts in other men, each according to his genius, and loving the greatest men best [...] for there is no other God." As "Liber Oz" would suggest, if there is no god but Man, "god" (insofar as we can speak of "god" at all) lies entirely in man's willed actions. Man must become god by accomplishing his own will, acting from non-duality, without attachment to the results of his actions. In short, through the act of will, free from duality and its attending lust of result, an individual achieves the third kind of atheism spoken of in "Essay Upon Number." It would seem that to accomplish his will, man must not worship or put faith in dubious hypotheses or entities; he must act from a consciousness in which *he* is

³ *Liber AL vel Legis* I:22

⁴ Shelley, Percy. *The Necessity of Atheism*, pg.31

⁵ *Liber AL vel Legis* II:23

god, thereby eliminating the idea of "god" entirely.

What is required, then, is the overcoming of the belief in God or gods, an overcoming similar to that advocated by Friedrich Nietzsche when he declared that "God is dead" and enjoined readers to vanquish the shadow of God that still lurks over all things, to "de-deify" nature⁶. Even today, this shadow is far too much with us, and it persists in many forms of belief: gods, spirits, the supernatural -- any concept of the non-physical as somehow separate from the physical, any form of dualism.

In this article I intend to advance an argument that atheism (the lack of belief in gods) and skepticism (the refusal to accept claims without sufficient evidence; the resolve to "doubt even if thou doubtst all," as Crowley advised) are the tools that can free humanity from bondage to these restrictive beliefs. To illustrate this point, I will argue that atheism and skepticism are most conducive to the cultivation of the virtues extolled in "Liber LXV," V:34-40. In this passage, the scribe records a vision in which a "parricidal pomp of Atheists" reevaluate the theological virtues cited by Paul in First Corinthians 13:13 -- Faith, Hope, and Love/Charity -- and fashion them into what I would like to call the three Thelemic virtues: Doubt, Splendor, and Ecstasy. It is atheism, and specifically Thelemic atheism, that facilitates the destruction of these old values and the construction of the new.

The passage from "Liber LXV" reads as follows:

34. *Also I was in the spirit vision and beheld a parricidal pomp of atheists, coupled by two and by two in the supernal ecstasy of the stars. They did laugh and rejoice exceedingly, being clad in purple robes and drunken with purple wine, and their whole soul was one purple flower-flame of holiness.*
35. *They beheld not God; they beheld not the Image of God; therefore were they arisen to the Palace of the Splendour Ineffable. A sharp sword smote out before them, and the worm Hope writhed in its death-agony under their feet.*
36. *Even as their rapture shore asunder the visible Hope, so also the Fear Invisible fled away and was no more.*
37. *O ye that are beyond Aormuzdi and Abrimanes! blessed are ye unto the ages.*
38. *They shaped Doubt as a sickle, and reaped the flowers of Faith for their garlands.*
39. *They shaped Ecstasy as a spear, and pierced the ancient dragon that sat upon the stagnant water.*
40. *Then the fresh springs were unloosed, that the folk athirst might be at ease.*

⁶ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*, pg.34-40

Verse 35 details the means by which these atheists have acquired the ability to institute the Thelemic virtues: "They beheld not God; they beheld not the Image of God." Earlier in "Liber LXV," of course, the scribe had been instructed not to be "contented with the image [...] Debate not of the image, saying Beyond! Beyond!"⁷. These lines occur in the context of urging the scribe to pass through the paths on the Tree of Life and move towards the "smooth point" of Kether. The atheists of V:34-40 appear to be a vision of those who have already achieved this smooth point and who have begun to move further beyond it. Lifted into the supernal abodes of the Tree, they have surpassed all images of God; aspiring towards the veils above the Tree (which are Not), they have left behind God himself.⁸

The Thelemites depicted here are atheists in the sense that they are "without God," the meaning of the Greek *A-Theos*. They do not hold a belief in any image of the One (the gods of various cultures) or in the One (any kind of essence beyond these images, such as that signified by Kether.). As participants in non-dual consciousness, they do not have a belief in god; for them, god is Not: the very consciousness from which they act to reevaluate virtue. The text goes on to detail the three Thelemic virtues, depicting them as weapons wielded by atheists for the destruction of Paul's virtues.

I'd like to begin with Doubt, as it reevaluates the faith so fundamental to Christianity and other superstitious religions. Crowley defines the religious variety of faith in *Magick Without Tears*, Letter LXVII, as "the acceptance of any statement as true without criticism, examination, verification, or any other method of test." This kind of faith he condemns as the "main symptom of the moron, the half-wit, the village idiot." Believers who accept a claim on faith typically do not verify its veracity independently, as the claims of religions are usually of the kind that cannot be so confirmed. As such, believers cannot know how accurately these claims reflect reality. Further, the kind of faith prized by superstitious religions almost always involves belief in a world of "spirit" separate from matter, an unsubstantiated belief in a world of the "beyond" that denies

⁷ Liber LXV I:7,9

⁸ Grammatically, it is clear that "God" and the "Image of God" are two separate items (the latter does not rename the former).

and devalues this world. In short, faith in the religious sense is faith in what Nietzsche called "opposite values," in dualism. Under it, the world, the will, reason, and science become devalued in favor of a fantasy world of the "beyond."

Against such blind faith, Crowley advises doubt of all propositions and a confidence in one's own will. From his first definition of faith, it is clear that Crowley favors subjecting one's beliefs to tests and criticism. As Soror Virakam notes at the beginning of *Book 4*, "Others say, 'Believe me!' [Crowley] says: '*Don't* believe me!' [...]. He wants an independent and self-reliant body of students to follow out their own methods of research." His desire was for his students to gain personal experience of the phenomena he discussed. And even personal experience is not immune to critique. As he argues in the "Preliminary Remarks" to Part 1 of *Book 4*, even some of the "great teachers" of the world -- Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, et al. -- misunderstood the nature of their spiritual experiences⁹. They each saw their experiences as result of various supernatural forces when in fact those experiences well may have had their origins in physiology. Thus, personal revelation is not sufficient to confirm a belief -- independent verification is always necessary, and even after obtaining such confirmation, one must continue to doubt. As Nietzsche notes, a pernicious effect of faith is the production of "convictions," a codified form of the fundamentally false position that religion takes towards the world¹⁰. What is required is a continual resolve to doubt and question all convictions.

In *Liber 333*¹¹, Chapter 51, "Terrier-Work," Crowley explicitly endorses the process of doubting all convictions, identifying this process with the metaphor of the "health-giving and fascinating sport of fox hunting." Crowley thus depicts skepticism as a life-affirming process. In his commentary on this chapter, he references his essay "The Soldier and the Hunchback," which uses the images of the exclamation point and the question mark to signify assertions and doubts. During this chapter of *Liber 333*, these marks of punctuation (appearing in various symbolic forms) become

⁹ Crowley, Aleister. *Book Four*, Part I, pg.14

¹⁰ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Anti-Christ*, pg.55

¹¹ Also known as *The Book of Lies*

interchangeable as the speaker approaches the consciousness beyond the abyss.

"THAT" which is sought by this process is, of course, the non-dual consciousness of the supernals, and the road to THAT is paved with a vigorous doubt of even the surest certainty. It is from this supernal position that the will springs -- and it is here that faith has its place. It is not a blind faith, but the second kind of faith Crowley discusses in Letter LXVII: confidence in one's own will.

The Thelemic atheists of "Liber LXV" wield this doubt as a sickle, an agricultural tool (linked to the druids by Tacitus) by which grain and crop are harvested. The implication is that doubt is the means by which a belief can be converted into something useful for humanity. With the sickle of doubt, the atheists in this passage "reaped the flowers of Faith for their garlands." Evidently, this harvest has yielded not nutrition, but decoration. The convictions that comprise faith can no longer be regarded as true. The gods once worshipped by mankind are now entries in the columns of *Liber 777*, decorations that hang on the wall of our magical alphabet; the notion of God as unity has been overcome (see *Liber 418*, Aethyr 21 in which the "loneliness of the First" is declared "not"); the spirits of the goetia are but the "portions of the human brain," as Crowley affirmed in his "Initiated Interpretation of Ceremonial Magic."¹² Thelema has converted the convictions of the past into symbols that we might usefully employ without having to believe as literally true. In short, Thelema has replaced the dualistic faith that blindly accepts a world of "spirit" (apart from the physical) with a non-dual acceptance of reality as it is, as it becomes. The faith of the past is now but an ornament of this achievement.

These "flowers" that the Thelemic atheists have gathered are similarly but an outgrowth of themselves: for "their whole soul was one purple flower-flame of holiness." See *Liber 418*, Aethyr 7, in which Crowley beholds the vision of a fantastic rose of flame, each "flower of flame" being one of the great love stories of the world; and in total, the flames form the Woman from the *Book of Revelations*, and Crowley

¹² From Aleister Crowley's edition of *The Lesser Key of Solomon*

hears the Biblical quote, "The Fool hath said in his heart 'there is no God.'"¹³ In "Liber LXV," the atheists are united by a flower-flame, as the convictions of the faiths of the past have been harvested and gathered into Man, for there is no god but Man.

Faith has been called by St. Paul the substance of things hoped for -- and with the destruction of faith comes the destruction of the hopes built around its unjustified premises, the hopes of another world. Superstitious religions offer their otherworldly lies as hopes to sustain the existence of those who suffer and to keep them content to endure their suffering passively. Believers are taught to accept their condition in this life and to accept blindly that they will be happy in the "next life," in another world. Rather than seek to overcome suffering and press it into service of a will that seeks to rise above it, these believers remain content with it. Christianity, in fact, tends to fetishize suffering and persecution -- take, for example, the famous Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5), in which the "poor in spirit" and those "persecuted for righteousness" are declared "blessed." In addition to its ability to prolong suffering by providing the false comfort of another world, hope proves deleterious to humanity by provoking fear. At the same time that believers are taught to hope for another world, they are taught to fear that they will be unable to reach this other world, that their wills are not in accord with the Divine Will. The belief in a god is often accompanied with a belief in a form of teleology -- the idea that the universe is moving towards an "end" willed by God, that the world is imbued with a divine "purpose" and is ruled by a system of morality imposed on it from "beyond." In such a scheme, the believer desires to conform to the divine will and is thus constantly in a state of "lust of result," striving towards some particular end exterior to the self. The entire endeavor is predicated on a division between the human and divine will.

In "Liber LVX," the atheists conquer Hope from a position in the "Palace of Splendour Ineffable" by means of their non-belief. From that position, a sword strikes at the "visible" Hope, the false promises offered by faith. As this hope falls, so flees the "invisible" fear, the often unspoken ramifications of belief in a teleological divine will

¹³ Note that the fool is the Fool of the Tarot, who is 0, non-dual consciousness

separate from the self. It is most appropriate that a sword, a weapon of war, destroys these values of old: unlike faith, there is nothing in the religious hope that we can harvest. Hope in the supernatural must be crushed, and its attending fears must be chased away. Splendor, though typically attributed to Hod on the Tree of Life, has become transfigured into "Ineffable Splendour" -- that is to say, the word here designates a non-dual consciousness, beyond hope and fear. The splendor spoken of here is the splendor of the world freed from the dualistic notions of supernaturalism. And in the same way that they have passed beyond hope and fear, Thelemic atheists are also beyond the duality of good and evil, the Zoroastrian "Aormuzdi and Ahrimanes" of verse 37. The choice of Zoroastrian godforms is appropriate, as Zoroaster, under the name Zarathustra, appears as a character in Nietzsche's works to expound the concept of "beyond good and evil."¹⁴

Thelema conceives of the will as beyond hope and fear, good and evil. Rather than looking forward to a future paradise or hoping for one outcome over another, Thelemites hold that the will is complete in the moment, delivered from the lust of result. The will is thus "aimless" -- not in the sense that it does not have goals, but that the willing subject is not attached to these goals.¹⁵ The will is complete in its exercise of powers in the here and now, as it acts and adjusts itself to conditions as they arise. As it is later expressed in "Liber LXV": "Is there not joy ineffable in this aimless winging?" The liberation from aim also frees the will from fear -- there is no need to worry about a negative outcome, as all experiences are, in one sense, necessary. As Crowley aptly expresses in Letter XVII of *Magick Without Tears*, "One can never be sure what is right and what is wrong, until one appreciates that 'wrong' is equally 'right.' Now then one gets rid of the idea of 'effort' which is associated with 'lust of result.' All that one does is to exercise pleasantly and healthily one's energies." To the indifferent universe, without a god willing a particular "end," there is ultimately no outcome preferable to another. As such, the individual is free to follow the course best suited to him or her by

¹⁴ This is hardly the first time Crowley has borrowed this concept from Nietzsche: see also the *Book of Lies* chapter 2: "Deliver us from Good and Evil."

¹⁵ Ideally the willing subject should be delivered from the idea of "subject" as well

nature and nurture. In doing so, the notion of "effort" is eliminated (Importantly, this elimination of effort does not mean that an individual simply acts from impulse -- rather, an individual must train the impulses so that one follows the path of one's will without needless effort. As Crowley also wrote, Thelema is, at a guess, 90% self-discipline)¹⁶. This course of action is not a pre-ordained plan to which one must conform, but rather the natural, aimless course that one pursues without lust of result.

It is the will that is signified by the unloosened springs in verse 40, and the means by which this energy is freed from the constraints of a dualistic worldview appear in verse 39. Ecstasy is the virtue that the atheists form into a spear, a weapon with a clear sexual connotation. With it, they pierce the "ancient dragon" who guards the "stagnant water." That is to say, they employ this new weapon to destroy Paul's concept of "Love," which represents either the imagined love of a non-existent spirit (God) or a kind of impotent jealousy masquerading as love. The word *caritas* has alternately been translated as "charity," and in this context it takes on the connotations of all of the worst kinds of pity; it is an emotion that looks down upon others, that multiplies the suffering in the world, that enlarges one's own ego (prompting the kind of escapism from the world into the fantasy world sustained by faith). That this "Love" is signified by a dragon is noteworthy -- not only does the image summon up ideas of eld and greed, it calls to mind the dragon Nietzsche uses to symbolize tradition in "The Three Metamorphoses" from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. There, the dragon bears the fell commandment "Thou Shalt" on every scale. In short, it corresponds to the external codes of behavior that prompt hope and fear. In Nietzsche's elaborate metaphor, it is the task of the individual to become a lion and slay this dragon -- only then can one transform into the child, capable of will, who creates freely from the depth of self.

I am pleased to note that atheism today is growing, thanks in part to the wide availability of information on the internet. As noted above, atheism is *A-Theos*, being without a belief in gods. It is not a belief or belief system -- it is simply the rational position to take in light of the absence of any evidence whatsoever of the supernatural.

¹⁶ Crowley, Aleister. *Magick Without Tears*, chapter LXX

It seems likely that non-belief will grow even further in the coming years.

As I've demonstrated in this article, atheism is not only compatible with Thelema, it is highly conducive to freeing oneself from dualistic restrictions, and it is the position from which the Thelemic virtues may be cultivated. Given the growing popularity of atheism, and the compatibility between this position and our philosophy, Thelema is in a unique position to influence the future of humanity in a positive way. Rather than existing as a small, fringe religion, Thelema could potentially serve the purpose of a secular philosophy, providing a system to satisfy the human desire for metaphor and inspiring the growth of freedom. Concentrated as it is on the will of the individual and the place of the individual within the whole, Thelema would make a useful philosophy for the increasingly godless world. I would suggest the next step for modern Thelemites is to begin a thorough skeptical examination of our own tradition and to re-evaluate various supernatural claims and practices that have been tied to it by Crowley. Not only might these claims currently drive away intelligent seekers, they may, as I have suggested, further a dualistic view of the world in which the shadow of God - the "spirit" -- is uncritically revered.

“This portrait of Aleister Crowley is overwritten by snippets of *AL*, but also by some of the Buddhist teachings so loved by Crowley's early teacher Allan Bennett, which were to some extent rejected by The Beast. In counterpoint to those words, the painting also contains the rejection of sorrow as the light of Babalon permeates Crowley's image. And yet all of the color and movement serve only to focus Crowley as Hadit in the sky of Horus' new aeon.”

—Hettie Rowley on “The Magus Revealed”

One Becomes Many: On the Manifestation of the Divine

by Isaac Aurelian

Almost all religions seem to be united in having some sort of Creation myth: how did the world come to be as it is today? Interestingly, many follow the same symbolic process of some primordial, un-differentiated Something splitting up or differentiating into the various parts of the world. This short essay will look at some various examples of "Creation myths" of different religions which fit this symbolic template with special focus on Thelema.

The main thesis of this essay is that all of these "Creation myths" are really symbolic depictions of human awareness, of consciousness itself. In this sense, the "Creation" spoken of here is not of the physical universe and therefore these "Creation myths" should not be taken as empirical hypotheses. Rather, they are poetic-symbolic expressions of the human experience of becoming aware. Creation myths are about the "creation" of consciousness.

It can be immediately acknowledged by all people that we are conscious. We must be conscious of everything that we can know of in the world from the smell of a freshly cooked meal to our most intimate emotions. In short, what we know of the world is our consciousness of the world. If a man is knocked unconscious, a symphony might be playing around him but it would not "exist" for him. I am certainly not asserting that the symphony does not exist at all but rather that, for the unfortunate individual involved, the music does not *subjectively* exist at all... The question now is "How did this consciousness come about?" There are essentially two ways of going about answering this question. The first method is that of introspection: one might ask oneself, "how did it appear or feel to me when consciousness formed?" The second method is rather recent and it is the empirical method which science uses... The question would be answered not by looking "inside oneself" but using objective instruments to measure objective occurrences (such as neurons firing in the brain or

radio waves traveling through space). This essay asserts that all of the "Creation myths" are a result of using the former method, that of introspection, in order to detail the "beginning of it all." This means that these "Creation myths" are actually relating psychological experiences and not making empirical hypotheses about the nature of the creation of the world (or, if they are, they are obviously not accurate or could be considered crude representations of the Big Bang process).

When we are infants we start with an un-differentiated consciousness: it takes a while for the infant to distinguish between itself and its mother. Slowly we develop to the sort of differentiated consciousness that most adults are familiar with: We are aware of our "selves" by which most people mean their thoughts, memories, desires, etc. In any case, there is a sense of separation between ego and non-ego, between one thing and all the other "things." This differentiation of consciousness, where "I" am "in here" and "the world" is "out there," is mirrored symbolically in the creation of the universe (since it is the first appearance of any kind of existence for that consciousness).

When someone experiences the dissolution of the ego and union with All Things, the ego is then reformulated. Hindus taught that the "ahamkara" or "ego-making faculty" always eventually kicks back in which holds a truth: consciousness maintains a non-dual or un-differentiated state only for a finite amount of time and then the ego inevitably reconstitutes (although altered by this experience of non-duality). The ego-dissolved state would be the un-differentiated state corresponding to the lack of self-awareness in a newborn infant; the ego-reformulation would be the differentiated state corresponding to adult awareness with an ego. This ego-reformulation process corresponds psychologically to both the idea of physical birth of the individual and the idea of the birth of the entire universe mentioned above. All three cases (ego-reformulation after ego-dissolution, birth, creation of universe) mean the same thing to the individual: the formulation of Existence (more technically, an awareness of something) out of Darkness (or, unconsciousness). All "Creation myths" are in fact symbolic depictions of this slow differentiation of consciousness.

Different religions and philosophies have had different views on this

'separation.' Most view it as fundamentally hostile, as a "Fall of Man," as the immersion in Maya or illusion, as the world of Samsara where all is suffering, etc. Thelema is unique in that it embraces the sense of separation as a chance for union, which brings joy. The Law of all Stars is therefore "love under will," where each experience is not "dukkha" or "suffering" but a union of a point-of-view with one of infinite possibilities whose only result could only be "pure joy."¹⁷

Thelema symbolizes this process which I will call "Manifestation" by the idea of 0 becoming 2, or the Limitless becoming differentiated into Many [Thelema's "Creation myth" will be treated later in this essay]. This same idea of the One (called "None" in Thelema because It is Continuous¹⁸) becoming All things/Many things occurs throughout many religious and mystical traditions. Whether that One Thing is a primordial ocean, chaos, a cosmic egg, or some other object, the idea is the same: the diffused, undifferentiated, united and homogenous becoming crystallized, differentiated, divided and heterogenous. Taoism, Hinduism, and Neoplatonism all have clear parallels to this symbolic template.

In Aleister Crowley's translation of the *Tao Teh Ching* (called *Tao Te King* by him) the Taoist account of "Creation" can be found in chapter 42,

*"The Tao formulated the One. The One exhaled the Two.
The Two were parents of the Three.
The Three were parents of all things.
All things pass from Obscurity to Manifestation, inspired harmoniously by the Breath of the Void."*

Here we have the entire process encapsulated in one phrase: "All things pass from Obscurity to Manifestation." This means that consciousness or awareness proceeds from an un-differentiated state without self-reflection or division ("Obscurity") to a differentiated state allowing for self-reflection, categorization, multiplicity, etc. ("Manifestation"). In this chapter we see the Homogenous Object, the Tao, formulating the One which produces the Two which produces the Three which

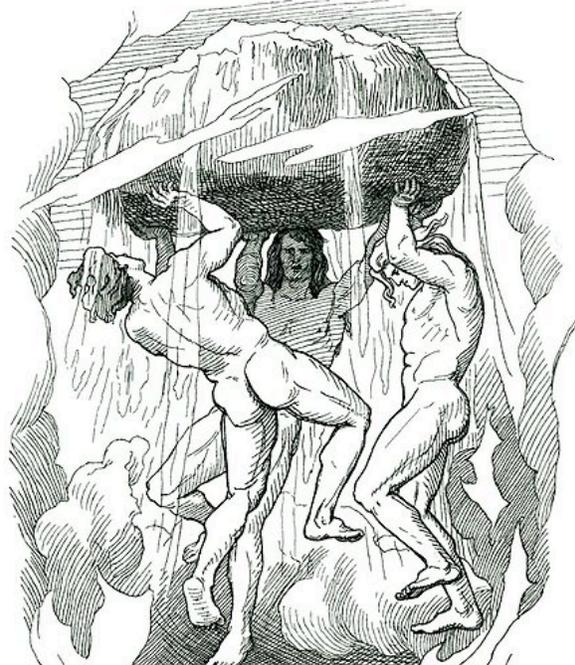
¹⁷ *Liber AL vel Legis* II:9

¹⁸ A reference to *Liber AL vel Legis* I:27

produces "all things." Things essentially proceed from simplicity or homogeneity to complexity and heterogeneity. This numerical-symbolic understanding parallels Thelema and Neoplatonism/Emanationism (which will be addressed later in the essay) in an interesting way.

In the *Rig Veda*, one of the spiritual scriptures of Hinduism, the creation of the world through the differentiation or "sacrifice" of the body of Puruṣa is described:

"A thousand heads hath Puruṣa, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet. On every side pervading earth he fills a space ten fingers wide. This Puruṣa is all that yet hath been and all that is to be... From that great general sacrifice the dripping fat was gathered up. He formed the creatures of-the air, and animals both wild and tame. From that great general sacrifice Rcas and Sāma-hymns were born: Therefrom were spells and charms produced; the Yajus had its birth from it. From it were horses born, from it all cattle with two rows of teeth: From it were generated kine, from it the goats and sheep were born... The Moon was gendered from his mind, and from his eye the Sun had birth; Indra and Agni from his mouth were born, and Vāyu from his breath. Forth from his navel came mid-air the sky was fashioned from his head Earth from his feet, and from his car the regions. Thus they formed the worlds."¹⁹



Ymir is slain by Borr's sons as depicted by Lorenz Frølich, a Danish painter

In short, the body of Puruṣa was divided up as a sacrifice: the sacrifice necessary for Manifestation or consciousness. Here Puruṣa represents the Homogenous Object which contains all things in Itself, which must differentiate in order to allow for self-awareness or experience. This idea of Divinity sacrificing itself for Manifestation has its parallel in some ideas in Thelema explained later.

Neoplatonism is a form of Emanationism which basically holds that all things

¹⁹ "Hymn XC" in "Book Ten" of *Rig Veda*, 1896 trans. by Ralph T.H. Griffith

have emanated, often in successive stages or "hypostases" or "aeons" or some other name, from the One. The Pythagorean, numerical symbolism is prevalent in emanationist views and has interesting parallels in other traditions (for example, the excerpt from the *Tao Teh Ching* above uses almost identical symbolism). The most familiar form of Emanationism to people today comes from the Hermetic Qabalah and the symbol of the Tree of Life which depicts the ten Sephiroth or emanations. Qabalah symbolizes the process of Creation by the Flaming Sword or Lightning Flash, where the "Ray of Creation" travels from the One ("Kether" or the "Crown") to Ten ("Malkuth" or the "Kingdom"). In Pythagorean symbolism, ten (10) represents completion and so represents the full manifestation of the One. The Hermetic Qabalah has an interesting parallel with Thelema, which is the idea of the Negative Veils symbolized by the number 0. In this scheme, even the One has its source in the None or in Zero (this is actually similar again to the chapter quoted above from the *Tao Teh Ching* where the Tao begets the One before the One becomes Two). The process of the un-differentiated, non-dual Zero emanating the One which emanates Two all the way to Ten is the same process of "pass[ing] from Obscurity to Manifestation" (Taoism) and "all that yet hath been and all that is to be... form[ing] the worlds" (Hinduism).

There are certainly other parallels than Taoism, Hinduism, and Neoplatonism. The first verses of Genesis in the Old Testament can be understood in such a way (the "formless and void" becoming night & sky, heavens & earth, etc.), the *Chaldean Oracles* speak of a "Creation story" very similar to the Emanationist account, and more. All of the parallels could not possibly be mentioned in a short essay like this, so hopefully these three traditions that were specifically examined helped show the diverse expression of the same idea: that of the "creation of the world" by the differentiation of One Homogenous Thing (consciousness without differentiation) into all things (differentiated consciousness where things are seen as separate, sense of ego forms, etc.).

Now we come to Thelema. In the central text of Thelema, *Liber AL vel Legis*, there occurs a very concise synopsis of Thelema's "Creation myth:"

*"O Nuit, continuous one of Heaven, let it be ever thus; that men speak not of Thee as One but as None; and let them speak not of thee at all, since thou art continuous! None, breathed the light, faint & faery, of the stars, and two. For I am divided for love's sake, for the chance of union. This is the creation of the world, that the pain of division is as nothing, and the joy of dissolution all."*²⁰

The act of Creation is therefore 0 becoming 2. It is the continuous, undifferentiated Something becoming all things. Nuit, a symbol of the Homogenous Substance and the "continuous one of Heaven," divides herself to allow for "the creation of the world." This separateness is not understood as some kind of Fall of Man or sinister Illusion but rather allows "for the chance of union." Zero (homogenous) has become Two (heterogenous), so that the Two may become None again. Crowley explains this Nothing from which the world is created in his early essay "Berashith,"²¹ "When we say that the Cosmos sprang from 0, what kind of 0 do we mean? By 0 in the ordinary sense of the term we mean 'absence of extension in any of the categories'... Nothingness is that about which no positive proposition is valid. We cannot truly affirm: 'Nothingness is green, or heavy, or sweet.'" This gets into the ineffability of the Homogenous or Unitary Substance. Since the mind, thought, and reason work in dualities and since Zero is beyond duality, the Nothingness "is that about which no positive proposition is valid." That is why it is said in *Liber AL vel Legis*, "let it be ever thus; that men speak not of Thee as One but as None; and let them speak not of thee at all, since thou art continuous!" Further, Zero or None is an apt symbol of the Homogenous Substance because it can be numerically expressed as $1 + (-1) = 0$; this symbolically shows that Zero is the result or equilibrium resulting from the cancellation of opposites ("opposites" being only apparent in the realm of Manifestation or heterogeneity or duality).

Another interesting relation to other traditions comes in the 28th line of the first chapter of *Liber AL vel Legis*, "None, breathed the light, faint & faery, and two." The fundamental idea is "None... and two" but in the process of None becoming Two,

²⁰ *Liber AL vel Legis* I:27-30

²¹ Written by Crowley in 1903, and available both in his *Collected Works* and *The Sword of Song*

there is “breathed the light, faint & faery.” This idea of “breath” accompanying the Creation of the world, the process of Zero becoming Two (or One becoming Many) is paralleled in the quotation from the *Tao Teh Ching* that was already mentioned: “All things pass from Obscurity to Manifestation, inspired harmoniously by the Breath of the Void.” The process of passing “from Obscurity [Zero] to Manifestation [Two]” is “inspired harmoniously by the Breath of the Void” just as None becoming Two is accompanied by the phrase “breathed the light, faint & faery.”

The goal of all mystic traditions is the reversal or complementation of this process of Creation: 2 becoming 0. Thelema enjoins each person to perform the Great Work which has many names but essentially requires consciousness to become One, where there is a "consciousness of the continuity of existence"²² and there is "no difference made among you between any one thing & any other thing."²³ This idea is touched upon in Crowley's unfinished essay called “Antecedents of Thelema” where he writes, “A man must think of himself as a LOGOS, as going, not as a fixed idea. "Do what thou wilt" is thus necessarily his formula. He only becomes Himself when he attains the loss of Egoity, of the sense of separateness. He becomes All, PAN, when he becomes Zero.” This is related to the idea that the sense of self while in the world of Manifestation or multiplicity or heterogeneity is the ego-self. “I” am in here and “the world” is out there. The sense of self while in the world of Obscurity or unity or homogeneity is different: there is a necessary process of ego-dissolution and re-identification of the “self” with all things. Now there is no separation between “I” and “world” so one can say, “I am That which contains all things” in the sense that one “becomes All, PAN...” When the ego-sense of self is lost, one passes from the world of Manifestation or duality to that of Obscurity or unity (or Nothingness in Thelemic symbolism). The same idea appears in chapter 8 of *The Book of Lies* where Crowley writes, “...mind, never at ease, creaketh ‘I.’ This I persisteth not, posteth not through generations, changeth momentarily, finally is dead. Therefore is man only himself when lost to himself in The Charioting.” The idea of “The Charioting” may be understood as

²² *Liber AL vel Legis* I:27

²³ *Liber AL vel Legis* I:22

the state of mind wherein Two has become None – there has been ego-dissolution and then the accompanying “consciousness of the continuity of existence” – and one acts naturally out of that understanding, the Chariot being an image of the dynamic nature of the Will that is inspired by Godhead. It is the reversal of the psychological process of Creation; it is the *Solve* to Creation’s *Coagula*.

As mentioned before, Thelema is rather unique in that it embraces not only the One (or None) but also embraces the Two (or Many). Many other religions and philosophies view the realm of Manifestation or Many as something evil or unreal or illusory. While duality may be an illusory construct of the mind, the “illusion” can be embraced or rejected as hostile. Whereas the Buddhist condemns the realm of multiplicity to the Wheel of Rebirth and suffering (“dukkha”), the Thelemite embraces the realm of division as an opportunity for “love under will,” “for the chance of union” wherein each experience (even that of duality) is “pure joy.”²⁴ This idea that both the Homogenous/un-differentiated and heterogeneous/differentiated are embraced is expressed beautiful in *The Book of Lies*,

*"The Many is as adorable to the One as the One is to the Many. This is the Love of These; creation-parturition is the Bliss of the One; coition-dissolution is the Bliss of the Many. The All, thus interwoven of These, is Bliss."*²⁵

The immediate idea is that all forms of consciousness are “adorable:” both “the Many” and “the One.” The formula of “the One” or “Zero” or the un-differentiated is that of “creation-parturition;” the formula of “the Many” or “Two” or the differentiated is that of “coition-dissolution.” Both of these processes are “Bliss” (going back to the idea that all experiences are “pure joy”). Crowley comments on this chapter, “the universe is exhibited as the interplay between... these two formulae, Solve et Coagula... This also explains the statement in Liber Legis I, 28-30.” Firstly, Crowley connects this chapter of *The Book of Lies* directly to the lines in *Liber AL vel*

²⁴ *Liber AL vel Legis* II:9

²⁵ Crowley, Aleister. *The Book of Lies*, chapter 3

Legis that we were discussing above. Secondly, the idea that this represents two simple, fundamental ideas at work, namely *Solve*, or Two becoming Zero, and *Coagula*, or Zero becoming Two.

Thelema actually has another depiction of “Creation” that is symbolically different from the idea of Nuit or Zero dividing to produce Two but which is functionally equivalent. This idea is essentially that of Divinity (understood as That which contains all things, the Homogenous Substance) manifesting into Existence (duality, heterogeneity, etc.) by taking on the “garments” of Matter and Motion or Form and Force. Let’s look at the occurrence of this idea in “Liber Samekh” first. Thelema. This ritual begins with an invocation of “the Bornless One” or the Augoeides, which are symbols of the homogenous, Zero, un-differentiated, etc.

1. *Thee I invoke, the Bornless One.*
2. *Thee, that didst create the Earth and the Heavens.*
3. *Thee, that didst create the Night and the Day.*
4. *Thee, that didst create the darkness and the Light.*
5. *Thou art ASAR UN-NEFER ("Myself made Perfect"): Whom no man hath seen at any time.*
6. *Thou art LA-BESZ ("the Truth in Matter").*
7. *Thou art LA-AOPHRASZ ("the Truth in Motion").*
8. *Thou hast distinguished between the Just and the Unjust.*
9. *Thou didst make the Female and the Male.*
10. *Thou didst produce the Seeds and the Fruit.*
11. *Thou didst form Men to love one another, and to hate one another.*

Here we are invoking “the Bornless One” that created “the Earth and the Heavens,” “the Night and the Day,” and “the darkness and the Light;” essentially it is the Zero which formulated the various dualities (along with Just/Unjust, Female/Male, Seeds/Fruit), much like Nuit as an image of the Continuous Substance divides herself into the duality of experience. On this Crowley comments, “He asserts that His Angel has created (for the purpose of self-realization through projection in conditioned Form) three pairs of opposites: (a) The Fixed and the Volatile; (b) The Unmanifested and the Manifest; and (c) the Unmoved and the Moved. Otherwise, the Negative and

the Positive in respect of Matter, Mind and Motion.” The purpose of the One becoming Many in this idea is for “self-realization through projection in conditioned Form.” Consciousness, self-reflection, and awareness are contingent upon a differentiated, dualistic world and so Unity requires Duality as its means of self-realization. In a very real sense, humanity represents the Universe becoming self-aware through various spatial-temporal vessels (the human nervous system). As Nietzsche once said, “A discerning one might easily regard himself at present as the animalization of God.”²⁶

Now let’s focus on lines six and seven of this passage from “Liber Samekh” where we encounter “IA-BESZ (‘the Truth in Matter’)” and “IA-APOPHRASZ (‘the Truth in Motion’). Crowley comments, “He hails Him as BESZ, the Matter that destroys and devours Godhead, for the purpose of the Incarnation of any God... He hails Him as APOPHRASZ, the Motion that destroys and devours Godhead, for the purpose of the Incarnation of any God. The combined action of these two DEVILS is to allow the God upon whom they prey to enter into enjoyment of existence through the Sacrament of dividual ‘Life’ (Bread - the flesh of BESZ) and ‘Love’ (Wine - the blood or venom of APOPHRASZ).” Essentially IA-BESZ and IA-APOPHRASZ are symbolic names for Matter and Motion, which are understood as “devils” which “destroy and devour” Godhead (Unity/Zero/un-differentiated) so that it may Incarnate or Manifest or become dual (Many/differentiated).

Now this may seem violent and hostile but this process of Matter & Motion “devouring” Godhead so that it may Manifest allows for “the God upon whom they prey to enter into enjoyment of existence through the Sacrament of dividual ‘Life...’ and ‘Love.’” This may be a different set of symbolism than that of *Liber AL vel Legis* I:27-30 but the idea is the same: The Homogenous Substance, whether Godhead or Infinite Space or the Continuous One of Heaven, is divided to allow for the possibility of experience, which implies manifestation, differentiation, and duality. It should also be mentioned that lines nine and ten of the Bornless Invocation refer to “Involution”

²⁶ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good & Evil*, Aphorism 101

or Two becoming Zero (*Solve*) and “Evolution” or Zero becoming Two (*Coagula*), which mirrors the idea that the All contains both “creation-parturition” and “coition-dissolution.”²⁷

Very similar symbolism to that of “Liber Samekh” occurs also in “Liber LXV:”

- “4. *Stooping down, dipping my wings, I came unto the darkly-splendid abodes. There in that formless abyss was I made a partaker of the Mysteries Averse.*
5. *I suffered the deadly embrace of the Snake and of the Goat; I paid the infernal homage to the shame of Khem.*
6. *Therein was this virtue, that the One became the all.”*²⁸

This passage is spoken from the perspective of Godhead. The Unity/Godhead undergoes “the Mysteries Averse” or Zero becoming Two (*Coagula*, Manifestation, differentiation, etc.). Crowley comments on this saying, “The Godhead, in order to realize itself, must involuntarily submit to undergo the experience of imperfection. It must take the Sacrament which unites it with the dark glamour of ‘Evil,’ the counterpart of that which exalts the ‘Sinner’ to Godhead.” This is decidedly Old Aeon symbolism with its mention of “imperfection,” “evil,” and “sinners.” We have seen that Zero becoming Two is not “undergo[ing] the experience of imperfection” but “creation-parturition” is the natural, blissful formula of the un-differentiated. The only “imperfection” is to understand this process as an “imperfection.” Manifestation is not “Evil” and the counterpart of Manifestation/*Coagula* is not exalting “the ‘Sinner’ to ‘Godhead’” but is the natural recognition of each star’s fundamental identity with the Zero, the Homogenous Substance (*Solve*, Two becoming Zero, etc.) To speak in such a way may be more familiar to those stuck in Old Aeon ways of thinking but I think it would be best to insist upon the Solar Standpoint: both uniting and dividing are bliss, both None and Two are necessary parts of the All.

²⁷ A reference to *The Book of Lies*, chapter 3

²⁸ Crowley, Aleister. “Liber LXV,” II:4-6

Continuing on with the symbolism in “Liber LXV,” Godhead must “suffer the deadly embrace of the Snake and of the Goat” to allow for Manifestation in duality. Crowley explains this when he writes,

“It [Godhead] accepts the formulae of:

(a) Duality, i.e., life as vibration.

(1) Death.

(2) The illusion of Knowledge.

(b) Exile.

(1) The Hunger of Lust.

(2) Labour.”

In this sense, “the Snake” represents Duality and “the Goat” represents “Exile” or the fact that manifestation implies desire, work, etc. These two ideas are represented in two Tarot cards, Atu XIII: Death which is attributed to the Hebrew letter “Nun” which means “serpent” and Atu XV: The Devil which is attributed to the astrological sign Capricorn (which is associated with the symbol of the goat). Interestingly, these two Tarot cards are the two paths extending downward from Tiphareth on the Qabalistic Tree of Life. Symbolically, one could understand these two paths – represented by the two Tarot cards of Death (Snake/Duality) and The Devil (Goat/Desire/Work) – as the means of manifestation of the Sun (which is a manifested symbol or glyph of Kether, “The Crown,” which is the One which contains All things). Essentially, Godhead must undergo the “deadly embraces” of duality and desire in order to Manifest. Again, the symbolism is nearly identical to that of the Bornless One invocation in “Liber Samekh” and is functionally equivalent to the “Creation myth” of *Liber AL vel Legis* I:27-30... The Homogenous Substance/Godhead must divide itself or take on the dualistic vestments of Matter & Motion in order for existence or consciousness to manifest.

Essentially, we end where we Began... all “Creation myths” are attempts at describing the formulation or differentiation of consciousness in birth and after an ego-dissolution experience. The Taoist account of Creation in chapter 42 of the *Tao Teh*

Ching, the Hindu account of Puruṣa in Book 10 of the *Rig Veda*, the Emanationist account depicted symbolically in the Qabalistic Tree of Life, and the Thelemic accounts in *Liber AL* (Nuit or None becoming Two), *Liber LXV* (Godhead undergoing the “deadly embrace” of Duality & Desire), and *Liber Samekh* (Godhead being “devoured” by the “demons” of Matter & Motion in order to Manifest) all appear to reflect the same basic process: that of passing from Obscurity to Manifestation, from None to Two, from One to Many, from One to Ten, from One to All, from Homogenous to Heterogenous, etc. Hopefully this essay will allow people to recognize the symbolic parallels across traditions of this universal human experience, and embrace the symbolic simplicity and joy of understanding the Universe as the interplay of *Solve* (“coition-dissolution”²⁹) *et Coagula* (“creation-parturition”³⁰).

²⁹ Crowley, Aleister. *The Book of Lies*, chapter 3

³⁰ Crowley, Aleister. *The Book of Lies*, chapter 3



“Trinity 93”

by Frater A.

Thelema in the Classroom

by Soror L.V.X.N.O.X.

Thelema is largely ignored as a valid religious or philosophical system within the academic community. Recent attempts have been made to combat the omission of Thelema from the academic sphere, however, the largest of which comes from the University of Amsterdam's Western Esotericism sub-department, founded in 1999.

The undergraduate Religious Studies department at the University of Amsterdam offers a course on "Western Esotericism since the Enlightenment", taught by Dr. Marco Pasi, in which one class day is devoted to "Aleister Crowley & later occultism." Dr. Marco Pasi also teaches one of two courses offered by the University of Amsterdam's "Mysticism & Western Esotericism" Masters program, titled "Occult Trajectories I", which spends, again, only one day exploring the inspiration that esotericism had on Crowley's artwork, which most likely does not speak of Thelema *per se*, however may mention it, if it is reflected in Crowley's art. The second course taught in the Mysticism and Western Esotericism program is titled "Contested Knowledge I: Altered States of Consciousness and Western Esotericism", and is taught by Prof.dr. Wouter J. Hanegraaff. Again only one class day is spent on the methods Crowley provides to attain altered states of consciousness.

In 2007 a conference titled "20th Penn State Conference on Rhetoric and Composition" was held at Pennsylvania State University, and one speaker, Hayes Hampton, gave a lecture titled "Transformational Chaos: Towards a Rhetoric of Nonsense." She used the "Bornless Invocation" as an illustration of nonsensical rhetoric that is meant to alter consciousness, specifically mentioning Aleister Crowley's interpretation of the text. Penn state has also offered a course in the past cross-listed in both the Chemistry and English departments titled "Chemistry and Literature", which mentions Crowley as one author who has elaborated concepts of chemistry in his literature.

Of course there is also Professor Lawrence Sutin at Hamline University who

wrote “Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley”, although I do not know of any courses that he has taught on the subject.

Although, not strictly academic, the Center for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR) has helped garner attention to Thelema as a worthy subject of academic discussion, most notably at its 2008 International Conference, which featured “Twenty Years of Studies on Aleister Crowley”, and contained the lecture “Painting Dead Souls: New Discoveries on Aleister Crowley and Art” by Marco Pasi of the University of Amsterdam, “The Scientific Aeon: Magic, Science and Psychology in Crowley’s Scientific Illuminism” by Egil Asprem of the University of Amsterdam, “The Initiatory System of the A. :A. :” by Henrik Bogdan of Göteborg University, “The Bhikku and the Magus: Exploring Allan Bennett’s Influence on Aleister Crowley” by John L. Crow [Editor’s note: John Crow’s essay “The Missing Calls to the Great Work” was published in *The Journal of Thelemic Studies* I:2] of the University of Amsterdam, “Crowleyan Echoes: Baraka and Fantasy” by Dave Evans of Bristol University, and “Legitimization Strategies and Charismatic Control in Thelema” by Martin P. Starr of the University of Chicago.

There are also a few universities with impressive collections of Crowley’s artwork, manuscripts, notes, and correspondences, most notably Syracuse University and the University of Texas.

Although some headway has been made at infusing Thelema into the academic community, it has been largely sporadic and unsatisfactory. I believe that entire courses should be dedicated to Thelema, either in Religious Studies or Philosophy departments, not just single class days within larger courses. There is also no reason that Thelema should be exclusively considered "esoteric", "occult", as a means to alter consciousness, or as part of organizations such as the OTO or A.’A.’.. Thelema should also be considered as a theoretical and practical framework for Self-discovery, and can be largely divorced from any religious organizations or "occult" practices.

Out of my respect for Crowley and his system of Thelema, as well as a desire

for Thelema to be seriously taught and discussed in an academic context, I created and am currently teaching a DeCal on Thelema at the University of California, Berkeley. A DeCal is a student created and run course, which other students may take for academic credit. My goal was threefold: To dispel images of Crowley and Thelema as "satanic" and mysterious, to put forward the central tenets of Thelema and show how they apply to everyday life, and to engender discussion about Thelema.

My class meets once a week for one and a half hours, and this seems to be just enough time for my 15 students and I to discuss the topic for that day. My students are very diverse in their focuses of study at Berkeley. I have students who study Classics, Dutch, Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy, American Studies, English, Comparative Literature, Math, History, Computer Science, and Electrical Engineering. I compiled a course reader of about 300 pages, containing works mostly by Crowley but also by contemporary Thelemic authors such as IAO131, Erwin Hessle, Stephen J. Ash, Isaac Aurelian, and Lon Milo DuQuette. The readings correspond to the topics of each of the following 14 classes this semester. At the time of writing, we just completed class 8.

1) Introduction to Thelema

In this class I discussed whether Thelema is better considered as a Religion or a Philosophy. We discussed what the characteristics of each of these categories are, and applied them to Thelema. The conclusion was that Thelema is both of these, but also contains elements that do not fit into our contemporary conceptions of Religion and Philosophy. Thelema can also be seen as a Way of Life.

2) The life of Aleister Crowley

I introduced the Prophet of Thelema, discussing his life and influence on his era.

3) Will

This class was one of the most fun to put together, because I had to draw from

so many sources. I created a list of main aspects about the Will, including that it is historically controversial, dynamic, not necessarily what you want, free from restriction, the “strictest possible bond”, beyond Reason, unassuaged of purpose, and delivered from the lust of result. I also mentioned that there is supposed to be no conflict between Wills, that knowledge of one’s True Will is necessarily linked to knowledge of one’s True Self, that one must also be ready to surrender ones Will, and that in a certain sense we are all always doing our Wills to a certain degree.

4) Love, The Great Work

This class was also fun to put together, for the same reason as above. The main points I concluded are central to the Thelemic conception of Love are: love means union, love is not just “sentimental”, love is related to change, love should be under Will and aimed towards equilibrium, love requires freedom and liberty, sex is one form of love, love results in joy, division/duality is necessary for love, and that the Great Work (uniting of Ego & Non-Ego) is the apotheosis of Love.

5) Ethics, Morals, The Method of the Child

In a sense, there was really only one thing to mention about the Morals and Ethics of Thelema: that there are none. Thelema holds that there are no absolute standards of right, and it was quite interesting to discuss the repercussions of this with my class, particularly whether this ethical system would lead to chaos or not. I also mentioned that Thelema sees Evil as a relative term and that the only notion of “Sin” in Thelema is mentioned in *Liber AL*: “The Word of Sin is Restriction.”

Although there are no objective standards or right or wrong, there are certain virtues in Thelema that can be seen within *The Book of the Law*. These are strength, beauty, joy, pride, not pitying others, and adopting the mindset of the Child, that of ever continuing growth and moral independence.

6) *The Book of the Law*: Its "reception" and content

This day was spent discussing the story of the reception of *The Book of the Law*, the inconsistencies in the story and controversy surrounding Rose's additions to the book, as well as whether Aiwass is to be considered an intermediary between Crowley and his unconscious during an occurrence of automatic writing or whether Aiwass is a discarnate intelligence who dictated *Liber AL* to Crowley. We also examined the title *Liber AL vel Legis sub figura CCXX, as delivered by XCIII=418 to DCLXVI*" and the Key to *Liber AL*. I introduced the concepts of Nuit, Hadit, and Ra-Hoor-Khuit, and mentioned the New Aeon. And although I may be considered a center of pestilence, I answered questions from students about lines that they found confusing, and we also discussed some of the ideas implicit within the lines of *Liber AL*.

7) The Holy Guardian Angel, Union, Death

In this class I mentioned that, in Thelema, the Holy Guardian Angel is considered in two main ways by Crowley. One is the way exposed in "Liber Samekh" and "Temple of Solomon The King," where the HGA is recognized as ones True Self. The other way is explained in *Magick Without Tears*, where the HGA is regarded as an external entity. As a class we agreed that the lines between "internal" and "external" are not so clear cut, and that the experience of Knowledge and Conversation can be likened to an experience of Union with God.

I also discussed the notion of Union in Thelema, which can be conceived of as One, but also as None, and discussed the $0=2$ equation. We examined the notion of Death in Thelema, how in one sense there is no death, but also how we are instructed to "Die Daily."

8) Practices of Thelema, Magick

In this class, we examined the word Magick and what it meant to Crowley, and why it is spelled as it is. We will also examine various practices of Thelema and what it is we try to accomplish by performing them, such as *Liber Resh*, *Liber Jugorum*, the

saying of Will before meals, Liber E, Liber O, and The Mass of the Phoenix. We also watched a performance of The Lesser Ritual of the Hexagram from the Rite of Luna Rock Opera, which the class thoroughly enjoyed.

9) Thelema in relation to other religions, historical context

This class is meant to examine similarities and differences between Thelema and other religious traditions such as Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Mystic Traditions, and Satanism. I also will examine Thelema's roots in St. Augustine and Francois Rabelais.

10) Thelema and Western philosophies

This day features a guest lecture by IAO131, who will discuss Thelema in the context of the philosophies of Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Heraclitus, and will also touch on Thelema's approaches to philosophical problems such as One vs. Many, Rationalism vs. Empiricism, Pragmatism, Morality, Free Will and Consciousness.

11) Thelemic Symbols, Thoth Tarot

I will examine important symbols commonly associated with Thelema such as the Unicursal Hexagram, the Star of Babalon, and the Rose Cross, as well as symbolic formulas such as IAO, LASH TAL, and ARARITA. I will also introduce the Thoth Tarot, designed by Crowley and Lady Frieda Harris. I will explain generally how the Tarot can be seen as a map of the universe, and how the Thoth Tarot specifically differs from the decks preceding it.

12) Thelemic Media

This day focuses on artistic works inspired by Thelema. We will watch segments of "Lucifer Rising" by Kenneth Anger, parts of the documentaries "Do what you want? Exposing Satanism in Society" and "Aleister Crowley: The Beast 666" by Donna Zuckerbrot, play music by Illuminaughty and Frater OZ, and segments of the reading

of the 3rd Chapter of *Liber AL* by Frater Hrumachis. I will also mention Crowley's influence on pop culture, such as his appearance on the cover of Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club band, his mention in multiple songs, and possible influence on characters in books and movies.

13) Thelemic Organizations, Initiation

Dr. David Shoemaker, Chancellor of the College of Thelema of Northern California and Prolocutor of the Temple of the Silver Star, has agreed to give a guest lecture on this day. It will focus on the OTO, A. :A. : and other Thelemic organizations, as well as what initiation means in Thelema and what the goal of initiation is.

14) Thelema in Society

The final class will focus on how Thelema can be applied to everyday societal matters such as education, gender issues and government.

Aside from just classroom discussion, we will also take "field trips" to partake in a Gnostic Mass and to perform Liber Resh together on a rooftop.

After each class I assign a study question related to the topic for the next class and ask each student to ask me a question that they have about the topic covered that day, or a general question about Thelema. This encourages the students to think critically about the subject and also helps me to understand Thelema better by thinking about their questions. I am truly amazed at the quality of responses to study questions that I have received from my students. Not only do they deal critically and intelligently with the material, but they are also very aware of the implications that the material has for their own lives, spiritual focus, and courses of study. I would like to provide a few sample responses to a question I assigned, asking them to pick 3 lines that stood out to them from *Liber AL*.

In response to the "The Comment called D" to *Liber AL* II:22, one student

wrote: “He also explains in this commentary the qualification that ‘They shall not harm ye at all’ as something which is true albeit improvable (cf. Gödel’s Incompleteness Theorem) – the point is who is taking the drug and for what effect (i.e., is it of pure intention?). It is also important to note that Crowley remarks on the inescapability of the point of view of the subject – a state of subjectivity as the human condition: if our point of view is always ours and never anyone else’s, why not explore the limits of the capacity of our subjective experience to their farthest extremes?...Only those who ascribe to life-denying belief systems have a desire to anesthetize their senses from the world itself – determining a drug to be a form of escapism, rather than exploration into an even more visceral and apparent reality. It is clear why our neurotic society has made many drugs illegal: they desire that their slaves remain slaves to their own empty signifiers of meaning (politics, religion, etc.) and wish to foreclose those of us who are free the possibility of gaining further freedom of consciousness. The war on drugs is a religious war.”

In response to *Liber AL II:76* another student writes: “Chosen from among some verses surrounding it that also deal with one of my other difficulties with Thelema (and actually with most quasi-religious systems in general): There is quite the assertion, many times, that the system offered simply ‘is’, and, moreover, cannot be defined by reason, and even further, that some things simply lie rightfully beyond understanding or cognition and must simply be accepted, first by faith and later by ‘spiritual experience’. I struggle, because of my own esoteric beliefs about the existing cosmology - I believe in a goddess who loves and sustains me, in a very personal sense. On the one hand, I’m pretty sure a lot of my ‘spiritual experiences’ could be considered insanity by modern psychological science, and I’ve no physical proof whatsoever that what I experience is ‘real’. On the other hand, I feel that in many ways, similar could be said of Thelema, or even ‘mainstream’ faiths like Christianity. I just happen to have chosen to believe in the spiritual being that in my experience has spoken to me, rather than in a sacred writing whose authorship and divine inspiration is much less directly knowable to me than my patron goddess actually bothering to speak to tell me more or

less that she wanted me for a maidservant and wasn't taking no for an answer.”

In response to *Liber AL I:29* another student writes: “When I first read it I was reminded of the idea that unity separates from itself so it can know itself, and that total knowledge is return to unity. And now I’m reminded of the idea that it forgets itself, or tricks itself cunningly into thinking it is separateness and not unity – that ‘we are all imaginations of ourselves’ (Hicks) – and we are in fact pure unity, God. Then I checked out the commentary and it’s getting all mathy on me...In fact, math very relevant to real analysis: the theory of calculus, a class I’m currently taking. Math of the continuum, of infinity. Math that sent Georg Cantor (who named the number of elements in order of countable infinity aleph) to a mental institution on repeated occasions. The commentary and my real analysis text both mention Dedekind (too bad we skipped it in class... maybe I’ll go back to it), and the Peano axioms, which define the counting numbers. According to the commentary, the set of all distinct thoughts satisfy the Peano axioms.”

In response to *Liber AL I:28* a student writes: “I thought this line was neat mostly because of the alliteration in the parenthetical, unfortunately there was no commentary on this line, online. However, the line could be paralleled to the Genesis creation myth, although different because the first thing to be created (light) is breathed instead of ‘said’ (I am not saying this book is a creation myth, but in a way, it sort of is creating the world of the text). There are two possible interpretations that I can think of, one the use of “breathed’ as a sort of whisper (e.g. she breathed the answer into his ear), or two, the use of breath which often appears in creation myths which imagine the world’s creation stemming from the exhaling of what is inside.”

It is really exciting to introduce and talk about Thelema with other interested young people. I hope that this class ushers forth a new understanding of Thelema, not as something incomprehensible, or mired in the supernatural, but rather a coherent and valuable system of personal freedom, joy, and beauty.



“The Gateway of Aquarius”

by Hettie Rowley

“This work was commissioned as the cover of Keith Rowley's book: *The Aquarius Key - A Novel of the Occult*. The painting illustrates the disused and almost forgotten gateway to eternity, illuminated by the light of The Law, paved by the sigil of the Master Therion: Aleister Crowley, the Prince of the Priests. Beyond the portal lies...nothing. For nothing is promised to those who tread this path. We take the Age of Aquarius to be synonymous with the latest aeon of Horus.

Keith has been an itinerant student of Aleister Crowley for some thirty years, and has become convinced of the rectitude and authenticity of the word of Aiwass the hard way - through walking the road of cynicism. Keith's wife Hettie is an artist with an incredible intuitive understanding of the meaning and interpretation of occult glyphs and symbols that are the basis of occult and Thelemic work. She makes no claim in this though, and generally gets embarrassed when her husband speaks of her in this way.”

–Hettie Rowley on “The Gateway of Aquarius”

Thelemic Crime & Punishment

by Krymetrion

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law

Introduction

Early spring this year, 2008 e.v., a question popped into my mind. The process coming out of that stray thought led to the essay that you are now about to read. The question was about apparent contradictions within Aleister Crowley's advice on how to deal with criminality, as he presents it in part C (Your Duty to Mankind) of the document "Duty". I went into discussion with other Thelemites about it. The discussion in itself taught me a lot about the problem in question – but it was not solved. It also taught me a lot about how hard it can be, to have a mere discussion about somewhat itching questions like these, in our Thelemic Community – this surprised me a lot. Hence, the purpose of this essay is twofold:

1. To present the contradictions that I speak of to the reader, as clear and simple as possible.
2. To argue for the importance of open discussions within the Thelemic Community.

The essay is divided in two parts, Part 1 and Part 2. Part 1 contains an overview, and to some extent an interpretation, of the different texts (all of them written by Crowley) and concepts that are involved in the chain of thought presented in this essay. For convenience, it is divided in two subsequent sections, 1a (texts) and 1b (concepts).

The point of Part 1 is *clarification*, not argumentation.

The point of Part 2 is that of the twofold purpose of this essay.

In Part 2, a lot of argumentation takes place. The attempt on clarification in Part 1, will hopefully make it easy for the reader to see my viewpoints on the matters in Part 2.

Part 1a: Texts relevant to the Essay

1a.I: “Duty”

A note on the chief rules of practical conduct to be observed by those who accept the Law of Thelema.

In my opinion, “Duty” is a great document. Only recently did I have anything to object to it, and my objections to the text are pointing **only** at section C: Your Duty to Mankind – on the second part of section C, to be exact. In this essay, I refer to that part as “Duty: Crime & Punishment”, or simply “Duty:C&P”. Quotes from every section of “Duty” is used in 1b to exemplify the concept of Organic Coherence.

1a.II: “Duty:C&P”

The following passage is the object of my critique. It is analyzed in Part 2:

“The essence of crime is that it restricts the freedom of the individual outraged. (Thus, murder restricts his right to live; robbery, his right to enjoy the fruits of his labor; coining, his right to the guarantee of the state that he shall barter in security; etc) It is then the common duty to prevent crime by segregating the criminal, and by the threat of reprisals; also, to teach the criminal that his acts, being analyzed, are contrary to his own True Will. (This may often be accomplished by taking from him the right which he has denied to others; as by outlawing the thief, so that he feels constant anxiety for the safety of his own possessions, removed from the ward of the State) The rule is quite simple. He who violated any right declares magically that it does not exist; therefore it no longer does so, for him. Crime being a direct spiritual violation of the Law of Thelema, it should not be tolerated in the community. Those who possess the instinct should be segregated in a settlement to build up a state of their own, so to learn the necessity of themselves imposing and maintaining rules of justice. All artificial crimes should be abolished. When fantastic restrictions disappear, the greater freedom of the individual will itself teach him to avoid acts which really restrict natural rights. Thus real crime will diminish automatically. The administration of the Law should be simplified by training men of uprightness and discretion whose will is to fulfill this function in the community to decide all complaints by the abstract principle of the Law of Thelema, and to award judgment on the basis of the actual restriction caused by the offense. The ultimate aim is thus to reintegrate Conscience, on true scientific principles, as the warden of conduct, the monitor of the people, and the guarantee of their governors.”

1a.III: “Liber Aba”, Part II: Magick (Elementary Theory: the Pantacle)

In this chapter of seven pages, an excursion is made through the principles of how to make the Pantacle. The reader is being guided between the different levels of perspective with ease. A point is also made about how Karma works, and how it does *not* work. That particular point is referred to with quotes, when discussing the concept of “Eye for an eye” in part 1b of this essay.

1a.IV: “Eight Lectures on Yoga”, Yoga for Yahoos, second lecture: Yama

In this six pages long lecture, emphasis is put on having a scientific approach in pursuing the Great Work. The ability to approaching reality with flexibility, avoiding rigid notions of right/wrong in all areas of activity, is argued for with elegance. Quotes from this lecture is used when presenting the concept “Organic Coherence” in part 1b. A quote from the lecture is also used in part 2.

1a.V: “The Scientific Solution of the Problem of Government”

This short text argues for Science as the way to gather humanity under intelligent leadership, in a time when old standards dissolves rapidly. “A scientific formula with an ethical implication, rigidly applicable to all sane men” is being called for, and “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law”, is claimed to be *it*. The concept of “Assertions” is taken from this text, explained to the reader in part 1b, and used in part 2 when analyzing “Duty:C&P”.

1a.VI: “Liber OZ”

The Thelemic Rights of Man. This document postulates the right of every person to live by his/her own law, to live, work, play, rest, die, eat, drink, dwell, travel, think, speak, write, draw, paint, carve, etch, mold, build, dress, love as s/he will, and to kill those who would thwart these rights. It is being related to throughout the present essay, especially when clarifying the concept of “Crime” in part 1b.

1a.VII: “Magick Without Tears” (Chapter 49: Thelemic Morality)

In this short letter, Crowley encircles the question posed to him: “does the end justify the means?” His associations lightly touches upon, and somehow relates to, the contents of this essay. Quotes from the letter in part 2.

Part 1b: Concepts relevant to the Essay

1b.I: “Eye for an eye”

Early sources of this classical principle of justice are the Law Tablets of King Hammurabi (1760 BC) and the Torah (Exodus 21:23-27, Deuteronomy 19:17-21). The principle is called Lex Talionis (“measure for measure”) It might have originated from a need to temper a common tendency of the people to execute too severe punishments, thereby causing instability. Lex Talionis differs in form throughout a long history. Early on, the practice of recording prescribed punishments for specific crimes developed. Among other variants, there is also the principle of the “mirror punishment”, which is more in the spirit of the original idea. That is also called “retributive justice” - to punish the offender in proportion to the amount of harm caused by the offense. The offender can also, in another version of “retributive justice”, be punished in proportion to the amount of unfair advantage that he has gained by the offense. Much more can be said about this. What matters for this essay is that the concept of “Eye for an eye” is in the roots of the law systems – and in most peoples general perceptions on justice – in the western world until this day.

What also matters for this essay is that although the concept might seem almost omnipresent, it is a human idea, not a cosmic law. Aleister Crowley shows this clearly, when discussing Karma -

“The idea of Karma has been confused by many who ought to have known better, including the Buddha, with the idea of poetic justice and of retribution;” “...Karma does not act in this tit-for-tat

*way. An eye for an eye is a sort of savage justice, and the idea of justice in our human sense is quite foreign to the constitution of the Universe. Karma is the Law of Cause and Effect. There is no proportion in it's operations. Once an accident occurs it is impossible to say what may happen; and the Universe is one stupendous accident; If we eat too much salmon we get indigestion and perhaps nightmare. It is silly to suppose that a time will come when a salmon will eat us, and find us disagree."*³¹

1b.II: "Crime"

In this essay, crime is interpreted as "a violation to the rights of Liber Oz". Crime is *not* interpreted as cracking the boiled egg on the wrong side if having breakfast in the country of Lilliput – or to crack it on the other wrong side if having breakfast in the country of Blefuscu. A criminal is interpreted as "an offender to the rights of Liber Oz". To make this clearer to the reader, I will here estimate the relevance to this interpretation of "crime", when it comes to the three traditional felonies mentioned in "Duty:C&P" - murder, robbery and coining -

Murder: Relevant – it is a human right to live.

Robbery: Depending – it is a human right to enjoy the fruits of one's labor. But not all robberies are committed directly against the freedom of individual stars. What about robbing a company that thrives on selling kidnapped girls as prostitutes? Companies are made up of individual stars, but it is hard to estimate on a general level what effect – positive or negative, great or small - the robbery of said company will have on the freedom of each employee. It is impossible to define the implications of each different robbery without looking into each different case. Shall Robin Hood be blamed for doing his will, when he steals back the fruits of the labor of the "poor" from the "rich" who stole them first? But his theft will certainly be declared a Crime by the Sheriff of Nottingham, who, by the way, also is an individual star.

³¹ Crowley, Aleister. *Liber ABA*, Part II, "The Pantacle"

Coining: Irrelevant – Coining is an indirect extension of the monetary system. The monetary system is good or bad for freedom, depending. It is a tool, developed during the most recent part of the very long history of the human race. About 99% of that history, humans were wanderers without a domesticated society in which to develop a monetary system. In this essay, the rights implied in Liber Oz is taken as being much more universal and eternal than any invented tool. Recently invented tools, like the monetary system, can take some time in showing their true worth or consequence to humanity. So, in this essay, coining is not considered a violation against the rights outlined in Liber Oz.

1b.III: “Organic Coherence”

Organic Coherence is a phrase invented for this essay to describe a concept, that is very present within the philosophical and magickal writings of Aleister Crowley. It can be described as the notion, that things always function the healthiest and the most efficient in fulfilling their true wills, when applied to reality according to their natural functions. It is exemplified in the following quotes -

A - Your Duty to Yourself: “Learn to understand clearly how best to manipulate the energies which you control to obtain the results most favorable to it from it’s relations with the part of the Universe which you do not yet control.”

B - Your Duty to other Individual Men & Women: “...studying the methods which determine their failure or success, acquire for yourself the wit and skill required to cope with your own problems.”

C - Your Duty to Mankind: “Governments too often exhibit the most deplorable stupidity...therefore incumbent on every man and woman to take the proper steps to cause the revision of all existing statutes on the basis on the Law of Thelema;” “...The ultimate aim is thus to reintegrate Conscience, on true scientific principles, as the warden of conduct...”

D - Your Duty to all other Beings & Things; “The inherent fitness of any thing for any proposed use should be the sole criterion;” “...violation of the Law of Thelema produces cumulative ills;” “The wise application based on... the Law of Thelema... is to work in conscious harmony with Evolution;” “...value is to be judged by their fertility as bearing witness to their harmony with the course of nature towards perfection.”

“Muscular power is based upon the rigidity of bones, and upon the refusal of joints to allow any movement in any but the appointed directions. The more solid the fulcrum, the more efficient the lever.”³²

...and:

“We start to penetrate the stratosphere; and we have to modify our machines in all sorts of ways which were not altogether foreseen. I wish to thunder forth once more that no questions of right or wrong enter into our problems. But in the stratosphere it is 'right' for a man to be shut up in a pressure-resisting suit electrically heated, with an oxygen supply, whereas it would be 'wrong' for him to wear it if he were running the three miles in the summer sports in the Tanezrouft. This is the pit into which all the great religious teachers have hitherto fallen, and I am sure you are all looking hungrily at me in the hope of seeing me do likewise. But no! There is one principle which carries us through all conflicts concerning conduct, because it is perfectly rigid and perfectly elastic: -- 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law'.”³³

Indeed, this seems to be an important aim for a Thelemite to keep in mind; the reaching of that *organic coherence* within any setting where s/he has an impact upon reality – to work in conscious harmony with Evolution.

1b.IV: “Assertions”

When advocating Science, Crowley states,

“There is only one hope of uniting the people under intelligent leadership; because there is only one thing in which everyone really believes. That is, believes in such a way that he automatically bases every action

³² Crowley, Aleister. *Eight Lectures on Yoga*, “Yoga For Yahoos,” Second Lecture

³³ Crowley, Aleister. *Eight Lectures on Yoga*, “Yoga For Yahoos,” Second Lecture

of his daily life on its principles... This universally accepted basis of conduct is Science. Science has attained this position because it makes no assertion that it is not prepared to demonstrate to all comers... The problem of Government is therefore to find a scientific formula with an ethical implication. This formula must be rigidly applicable to all sane men soever without reference to the individual qualities of any one of them.”³⁴

To repeat: “...it makes no assertion that it is not prepared to demonstrate to all comers.” In this essay, an “assertion” is meant, as a claim readily demonstrated as *at least* very probable. The demonstration must be “to all comers”, that is, the explanations and proofs is not supposed to be found in obscure, mystical explanations, but in plain demonstration to reason. In part 2, this method is used on “Duty:C&P”, which in that analysis is considered to consist of eight separate assertions.

1b.V: “Apologia”

An apologia is included in part 2. Not “apology”, but the Greek “απολογία”, meaning “a speaking in defense”. It is an attempt to meet with some of the most obvious objections to the essay, to filter away misunderstandings, thereby - hopefully - making the study of it more worthwhile to the reader.

Part 2: Questioning “Duty:C&P”

2.I: Claims and Assertions

The passage [“Duty:C&P”] gives outlines, on how to succeed in one part of the general plan to achieve the perfect Thelemic State: this is by annihilating both artificial crime and criminality with a few, well-planned, successive moves. The principles behind these outlines are claimed to be scientifically sound, firmly based in cosmic truth as it is being revealed in the *Book of the Law*. The passage contains eight assertions:

³⁴ Crowley, Aleister. “The Scientific Solution to the Problem of Government”

1. The essence of crime is that it restricts the freedom of the individual outraged.
2. It is then the common duty to prevent crime, by segregating the criminal, and by threats of reprisals; also, to teach the criminal that his acts, being analyzed, are contrary to his own True Will.
3. The rule is quite simple. He who violated any right declares magically that it does not exist; therefore it no longer does so, for him.
4. Crime being a direct spiritual violation of the Law of Thelema, it should not be tolerated in the community.
5. Those who possess the instinct should be segregated in a settlement to build up a state of their own, so to learn the necessity of themselves imposing and maintaining rules of justice.
6. All artificial crimes should be abolished. When artificial restrictions disappear, the greater freedom of the individual will itself teach him to avoid acts which really restrict human rights. Thus real crime will diminish automatically.
7. The administration of the Law should be simplified by training men of uprightness and discretion whose will is to fulfill this function in the community to decide all complaints by the abstract principle of the Law of Thelema, and to award judgment on the basis of the actual restriction caused by the offence.
8. The ultimate aim is thus to reintegrate Conscience, on true scientific principles, as the warden of conduct, the monitor of the people, and the guarantee of their governors.

With comments:

1. The essence of crime is that it restricts the freedom of the individual outraged.

No objection given.

(Thus, murder restricts his right to live; robbery, his right to enjoy the fruits of his labor; coining, his right to the guarantee of the state that he shall barter in security; etc)

Murder is a crime.

Robbery depends on the situation.

Coining is not a crime.

Also, not everyone feels that the State gives them any guarantees "to barter in security".

2. It is then the common duty to prevent crime

Through organic coherence.

by segregating the criminal, and by threats of reprisals;

These methods is what the world is used to. They have a tendency to create more crime. No organic coherence.

also, to teach the criminal that his acts, being analyzed, are contrary to his own True Will.

That his acts are violations of Liber Oꝛ; No other analysis stands a chance against the right of that star to freely explore it's own orbit, according to the Law of Thelema.

(This may often be accomplished by taking from him the right which he has denied to others; as by outlawing the thief, so that he feels constant anxiety for the safety of his possessions, removed from the ward of the State)

What about thieves without possessions? Not everyone sees the "ward of the State" as providing them with security.

3. The rule is quite simple. He who violated any right declares magically that it does not exist; therefore it no longer does so, for him.

When declaring magically that a right does not exist to oneself, the consequence will make itself known without human meddling. If the execution of said consequence is brought to a mundane level, maintaining the rule, the law of "Eye for an eye" is revealed. This is not a cosmic, but a human law, as has been shown. It has also been shown, that retributive punishment has nothing to do with cosmic law according to Crowley. If the outlines given in "Duty:C&P" are built on scientifically sound principles, firmly based in cosmic truth, then this "rule" has no place here.

4. Crime being a direct spiritual violation of the Law of Thelema, it should not be tolerated in the community.

No objection given.

5. Those who possess the instinct

“Instinct” curiously used in this matter, by a man who defends the right of everything natural to have a free existence. One would not expect him to trace the roots of criminality to an instinct-level, since that would make it a natural thing. Possibly, the word appears by mere habit of speech, as an echo of the general mentality in early 20th century Britain.

...should be segregated in a settlement to build up a state of their own, so to learn the necessity of themselves imposing and maintaining rules of justice.

This has been shown to function on small scale, when the individuals involved have chosen freely to cooperate. To gather a group of “criminals” (of any kind or category?) in a settlement is another matter. Rules of justice are unlikely to develop into anything like Liber Oz – more likely, brutality will emerge and its adherents will crush or enslave the idealists. For fear of ending up in such settlements, law-abiding citizens in everyday-society will feel compelled to follow the rules of the State – thus, a pattern already manifested today will simply be reproduced. No organic coherence.

6. All artificial crimes should be abolished. When artificial restrictions disappear, the greater freedom of the individual will itself teach him to avoid acts which really restrict human rights. Thus real crime will diminish automatically.

No objection given.

7. The administration of the Law should be simplified by training men of uprightness and discretion whose will is to fulfill this function in the community to decide all complaints by the abstract principle of the Law of Thelema, and to award judgement on the basis of the actual restriction caused by the offense.

By assuming that the structure of the perfect thelemic society will be a classical patriarchal State, Crowley restricts the possibilities of the thelemic philosophy a lot. He also assumes that many people will have a true will to be the Thelemic Police. That they will be able to decide on right and wrong, to interfere with the actions of other stars, and to measure just – retributive - punishments through their own philosophical interpretations of the Law of Thelema. This could develop into a corrupt priesthood

in less than a generation.

8. The ultimate aim is thus to reintegrate Conscience, on true scientific principles, as the warden of conduct, the monitor of the people, and the guarantee of their governors.

No objection given.

Assertions 2, 3, 5, 7 are not readily demonstrated to all comers, then. Now, how can this be so?

2.II: Attempting to grasp the idea

The main objections to these four assertions can be summed up as a doubt on the efficiency of using threats of reprisals and segregation as punishments, as a doubt on the efficiency of segregated settlements in regards to the spontaneous imposition and maintenance of rules of justice, and as a doubt upon the wisdom of developing a “Thelemic police”. All this in the light of that which in this essay is called Organic Coherence.

Also, the rule suggested in the third assertion, appears to be an irrelevant echo of the old, savage logic of “Eye for an eye”.

Aleister Crowley gives no clue on how he envisions the settlements to function. Done in the right way, it might perhaps work – by bringing up the question, the mind is trained to understand the concept, and this might bring it closer to realization.

Another good question, is how we, in an imagined Thelemic State, can be efficient in analyzing the actions of criminals, in order to make themselves see their own unwillingness of breaking the code of Liber Oz. Could prisons develop into educational institutions? Would that be the way to go, in order to attain that reintegration of Conscience on true scientific principles, that Crowley speaks of? About the training of “men of uprightness and discretion”...could it be worth considering to give *everybody* that training, if they asked for it? It would at least redefine the concept

“Police State”.

What about the rule in the third assertion? Does Crowley, forgetfully contradicting himself, use the logic of “Eye for an eye”? I do not pretend to have knowledge or understanding even near that of Aleister Crowley when it comes to cosmic law – but neither can I pretend to have blind faith in assertions 2, 3, 5, 7, just because they were made by him. It should be mentioned, that “Duty:C&P” is not the only place where the rule of assertion 3 is used; elsewhere he states, “My retort, however, is convincing and final. Robbery in any shape is a breach of the Law of Thelema. It is interference with the right of another to dispose of his property as he will; and if I did so myself, no matter with what tactical justification, I could hardly ask others to respect my own similar right. (The basis of our criminal law is simple, by virtue of Thelema: to violate the right of another is to forfeit one's claim to protection in the matter involved.)”³⁵

This was a returning viewpoint of his and not just something that he accidentally wrote in “Duty:C&P”. In regards to the Thelemic State, it could be that Thelema is unsuitable for, or not “meant to be” a doctrine for the forming of a State in a juridical sense at all. Crowley thought that it was, though, and for that reason, the Thelemic community will have to have some kind of relationship to that idea.

2.III: Is Crowley wrong?

Is it possible that he can have made a mistake when writing this passage? Was he always completely sharp of mind with all his faculties in perfect order? Of course not. The man could have made a mistake. He has been known to contradict himself before - why then all the fuss about this passage? Because: *Duty* is his most open attempt at giving guidelines to all Thelemites, on how they should conduct their lives. Not only is it an attempt at that – it is also being most successfully received as that by the Thelemic community of today. *Duty* is a very central document in the thelemic literature. Anyone that is attracted by the Thelemic philosophy is likely to get acquainted

³⁵ Crowley, Aleister. *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 49

with it at an early point in his/her search, and, since it is a profound document, serving the reader gems of wisdom by the spoonful, it is more than likely that the passage here called “Duty:C&P”, will be swallowed without second thoughts – especially given the fact that it does not appear until quite late in the read - in part C: *Your Duty to Mankind*.

Crowley lived in the years of 1875e.v – 1947e.v. He was born “old-aeon”, which he often pointed out himself. He was influenced by his times, like everyone else. It is possible to imagine, that Crowley when touching upon topics like juridical thought, crime & punishment, and the founding of the State, was more conditioned by the mentality of British Society, than when he was writing about more direct, personal or spiritual matters elsewhere in the same document. If nobody was there to point out apparent contradictions, it is quite possible that he overlooked them too. One can also speculate (boldly) about the jargon in “Duty:C&P”, as somewhat echoing the jargon of British high society, a world in which Crowley wanted to leave a respectable imprint.

2.IV: Conclusion

There are three possibilities on why Aleister Crowley uses the rule in the third assertion.

Either, he reasons out of a culturally conditioned gut-feeling, not giving it second thoughts. This is probably not so, considering that he also uses that rule in other places. More likely, he *has* given the question second thoughts.

Or, he understands that this rule will function well to make people abstain from crime, exactly because the rule is very familiar to their logic. He would then use “Eye for an eye” as a mere tool, for the efficiency of it, not considering the rule to be a cosmic truth in itself. This would rhyme badly, though, with his own idea of achieving a perfect Thelemic State, grounded in scientific assertions, readily demonstrated to all sane men.

A third option is, that the rule *is* a cosmic truth, and that Aleister Crowley knows it. But why is it then, that no one that I have discussed with is able to argument effectively to that point? What about the availability to all comers? If the third option is

the right one, (which is the general assumption in the Thelemic community), how are we supposed to make it work in reality? If we fail to understand it right, we fail to do it right.

The conclusion is therefore, that the outlines in “Duty:C&P”, to function in their entirety on a practical level some day in the future, needs to be expounded upon by some kind of officially recognized expertise. Not only the rule in the third assertion needs to be deeply examined, and the problem on how it can be demonstrated as a cosmic truth to the general public solved. An organically coherent way of considering the idea of criminal settlements must also be formulated. This also goes for the Thelemic police. Also, the concepts of crime and of criminals must be decided upon with clarity. It is not enough, just to manifest the ideas of Aleister Crowley in blind faith, without first applying the models to that other idea of his – that of the scientific examination. If the examination forces us to scramble the material examined as insufficient, then so be it.

It was never “the method of Religion, the aim of Science”, but the other way around.

2.V: Apologia

This essay is not an effort to smear Aleister Crowley or his works. Rather, it is written in that spirit of respect and enthusiasm for truth and human reason that he inspires by both text and example. Nor is this essay an effort to provoke the reader. Nor is it meant as a political statement. The essay is presented to you as an effort to find solutions to the problems it describes. This in the hope, that some readers will find the contents to be worth a serious and open-minded discussion with whoever they wish to discuss it with.

The essay does not argue that anyone should commit to robbery or coining, nor does it argue that the monetary system should be abolished. The concept of crime is kept simple in this essay, in order to separate the universality of Liber Oz from the confusion of cultural diversity. When pondering a perfect Thelemic State, philosophical

free-space is a necessity. The reader is hereby asked to receive questions like these with an open mind.

To the reader who finds the concept of Organic Coherence too sentimental, is pointed out, that the term merely refers to an important tendency in the writings of Aleister Crowley.

It can be argued, that this topic calls for a general review of what other relevant thinkers in history has to say on Justice, compared to Crowley. But that is out of scope in this essay. The first purpose of it is merely to point out the contradictions in “Duty:C&P”.

In regards to the perfect Thelemic State, it could be, that Thelema is unsuitable as doctrine for the forming of a State in a juridical sense. But since Crowley thought that it was, the Thelemic community will have to have some kind of relation to the idea.

If *Duty* is to be kept in high esteem as a document of wisdom, we ought to get to terms with the contradictions in it - if we can see them. If the reader do not see them, he should keep following that orbit of his, and happy travels to him.

2.VI: Importance of Open Discussions within the Thelemic Community.

“The exercise of liberty means that you have to think for yourself, and the natural inertia of mankind wants religion and ethics ready-made. However ridiculous or shameful a theory or practice is, they would rather comply than examine it.”³⁶

It could be assumed that Aleister Crowley would like the principal scope of this essay, considering his inclination to science rather than faith. It could be equally assumed, that he would not share all the conclusions in it, considering the following quote –

³⁶ Crowley, Aleister. *Eight Lectures on Yoga*, “Yoga For Yahoos,” Second Lecture

“As to Neschamah, we nearly all of us (Thank God!) have a secret sympathy, with the nobler type of criminal, whence the universal appeal of Arsène Lupin, Black Star, Raffles and Stingaree. When they can make some show of justice-on-their-side, it is easier still: Scarlet Pimpernel and his tribe. We are now almost within the marches of those heroes of romance that enchanted our adolescence: Hereward the Wake, Robin Hood, Bonnie Prince Charlie. And there are, on the other hand, few of us who do not secretly gloat over the discomfiture of "Money-Bags." My retort, however, is convincing and final. Robbery in any shape is a breach of the Law of Thelema. It is interference with the right of another to dispose of his property as he will...”³⁷

But the importance in this case is not, in whether he would have liked or disliked the essay or the contents of it. The importance is in asking the questions anyway. To pursue unsentimental investigations, even into much respected doctrines like those found in “Duty”, is important. It is equally important, that suspicion is not laid on those who do pursue such investigations, and speak of it openly. To avoid the questioning of accepted doctrine, and to put automatic suspicion upon those questioning accepted doctrine, is a very familiar social pattern in cultures all over the world, especially within religious and philosophical communities. But Thelema, and hopefully also the Thelemites, stands out with honor: “The method of Science, the aim of Religion”!

As inheritor of this fairly young doctrine, the Thelemic community in all its diversity has a responsibility to keep itself healthy. This can be achieved partly by being open to discussion on various topics of a kind, which in most other systems of belief are considered to be too controversial, too offensive to the community, too “far-out” or simply too bad mannered to mention openly. Topics for discussion, as related to the topic of this essay, could be:

1. How flawless are we supposed to assume Crowley to be, when reading texts that are not of “Class A or B” - like f.ex *Duty* or *Liber Oz*?
2. Thelemites of today questioning Crowley – our responsibility as inheritors and developers of a new philosophy. What is our relation to his status – as Prophet –

³⁷ Crowley, Aleister. *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 49

considering his own antiauthoritarian doctrine, in which he stresses our right to act by our own natures and viewpoints?

3. Thelemic tendencies in different aspects of modern culture – within martial arts, literature, politics, law, warfare, art, culture, music, science, religion, philosophy, mass-movements and so on – how can they be described and how can they meet? Can a capitalist and an anarchist meet in fellowship by expounding to each other how Thelema is expressed within their different ideologies? Can a musician and a microbiologist achieve mutual benefits of wisdom by mediating Thelemic philosophy through experimental dialogue between their respective topics? Are the potential benefits of such exchanges of viewpoints being restricted, by an among Thelemites all too generally decided one-pointedness in the interpretation and use of the works of Crowley?

4. How would “Duty”, (especially parts C and D) and “Liber Oz” actually be implemented in a grand-scale Thelemic society? What would be the different models in answer to that question, and is it possible for them to meet? Does Crowley present the best model, even though he has been dead since 1947e.v?

5. How much is the mentality of the aeon of Osiris mixed into the perspective, when one as a Thelemite perceives the everyday-world? For example the question of monogamy/sexual freedom, or ideas like “goodness” and “innocence” in a Thelemic universe well rid of “grace & guilt”. What kind of compromises are we getting pushed towards accepting – and should we accept them, out of respect for contemporary society – or should we absolutely not do that?

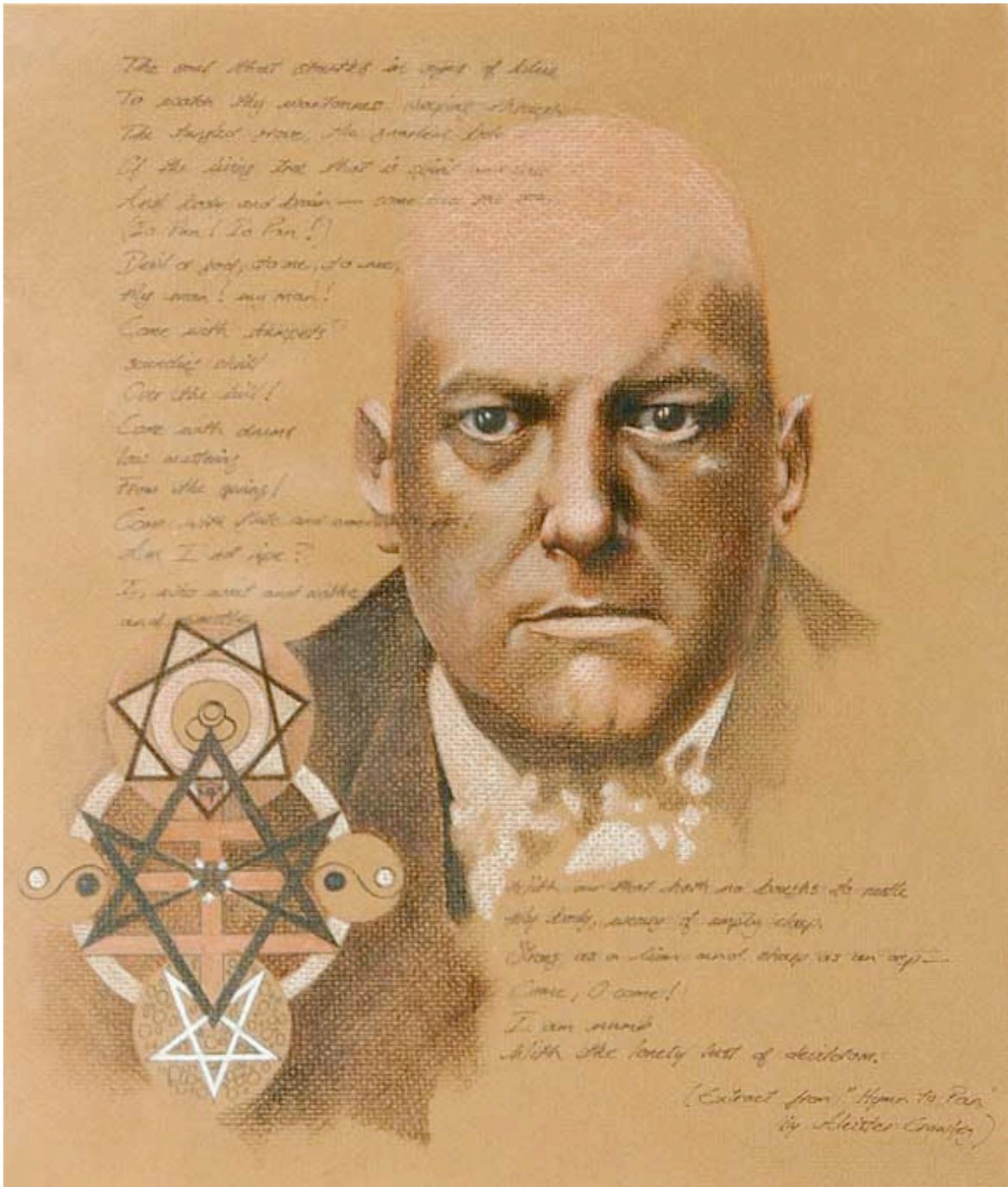
6. To which degree is it our duty as Thelemites to establish Thelema as a global world order? What means are we justified to put in use in order to reach that end?

7. Is Thelema even suitable for, or “meant to be” a doctrine for the forming of a State in a juridical sense at all, as Crowley thinks that it is? Or does the doctrine simply describe an internal, cosmic process of creation in the omnipresent core of every individual, (as in the ritual Liber Reguli) with all that this would imply to everyday life, without forcing us to put the doctrine into any specific structure of social law, apart from Liber Oz?

By being open to ask ourselves questions like these, we avoid inertia to fall upon the Thelemic current. Instead, we are keeping it healthy, allowing Evolution to continue its wonders. The concept of organic coherence comes on handy once more: it is obvious that the Thelemic community will loose touch with the vitality of it’s own current, if it starts to behave like most other religious or philosophical groups of old. It has to keep a fresh spirit to all things and impressions, even unto it’s own most sacred writings and traditions, or else it will be a Thelemic community by name only.

Historically speaking, it would be quite silly, if the Thelemic community was to become one of the most short-lived of all spiritual movements that have come and gone through the ages. The picture would be that of a solar-phallic symbol growing soft in seconds. What a tragedy, what a waste.

Love is the law, love under will



"The Master Therion 666"

by Hettie Rowley

“Of all the currently available Thelemic works of Thelema trust, this is the most heartfelt. Created as a labor of love, as a gift from Hettie Rowley to her husband, this work is the one that most accurately captures our beloved prophet. It is overwritten by an excerpt from (possibly) Crowley's greatest poetic work, 'Hymn to Pan!'.”

– Hettie Rowley on “The Master Therion 666”

Contributors

- *Isaac Aurelian* – “One Becoming Many: On the Manifestation of the Absolute”
 - One star among many, Isaac Aurelian is a proud card-carrying member of the *homo sapien* species. Aurelian creates what he wills as he Goes his Way;” he maintains a blog at <http://iaurelian.blogspot.com>
- *Krymetrion* - “Thelemic Crime & Punishment”
 - Krymetrion is a self-described “Scandinavian male born in the 1970’s [who] has been consciously involved in Thelema during the last 10 years.”
- *Los* – “Thelemic Atheism and the Revaluation of Virtues”
 - Los is a Thelemic atheist and skeptic who is primarily interested in the philosophical and aesthetic elements of Thelema. As an academic who studies literature professionally, he would like to continue to explore Crowley's contributions to literature and philosophy in the hope that they have much to offer modern thought. Currently, Los is preparing to open a blog on Thelema, atheism, skepticism, and various musing about culture (both high and low) at <http://joyofearth.blogspot.com> ... All are invited to participate in discussions there.
- *Soror L.V.X.N.O.X.* – “Thelema in the Classroom”
 - Soror L.V.X.N.O.X. is the creator and facilitator of the Thelema DeCal course at UC Berkeley (<http://thelemadecal.gq.nu>). She loves her students!
- *Frater A.* - “Trinity 93”
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- *Hettie & Keith Rowley* – “The Magus Revealed,” “The Gateway of Aquarius,” “The Master Therion 666”
 - Keith and Hettie's work is produced and sold under the aegis of the Thelema Trust of South Africa, which they founded as a small business primarily dedicated to producing Thelemic works of Art and literature. Their website can be found at <http://www.magick.co.za>