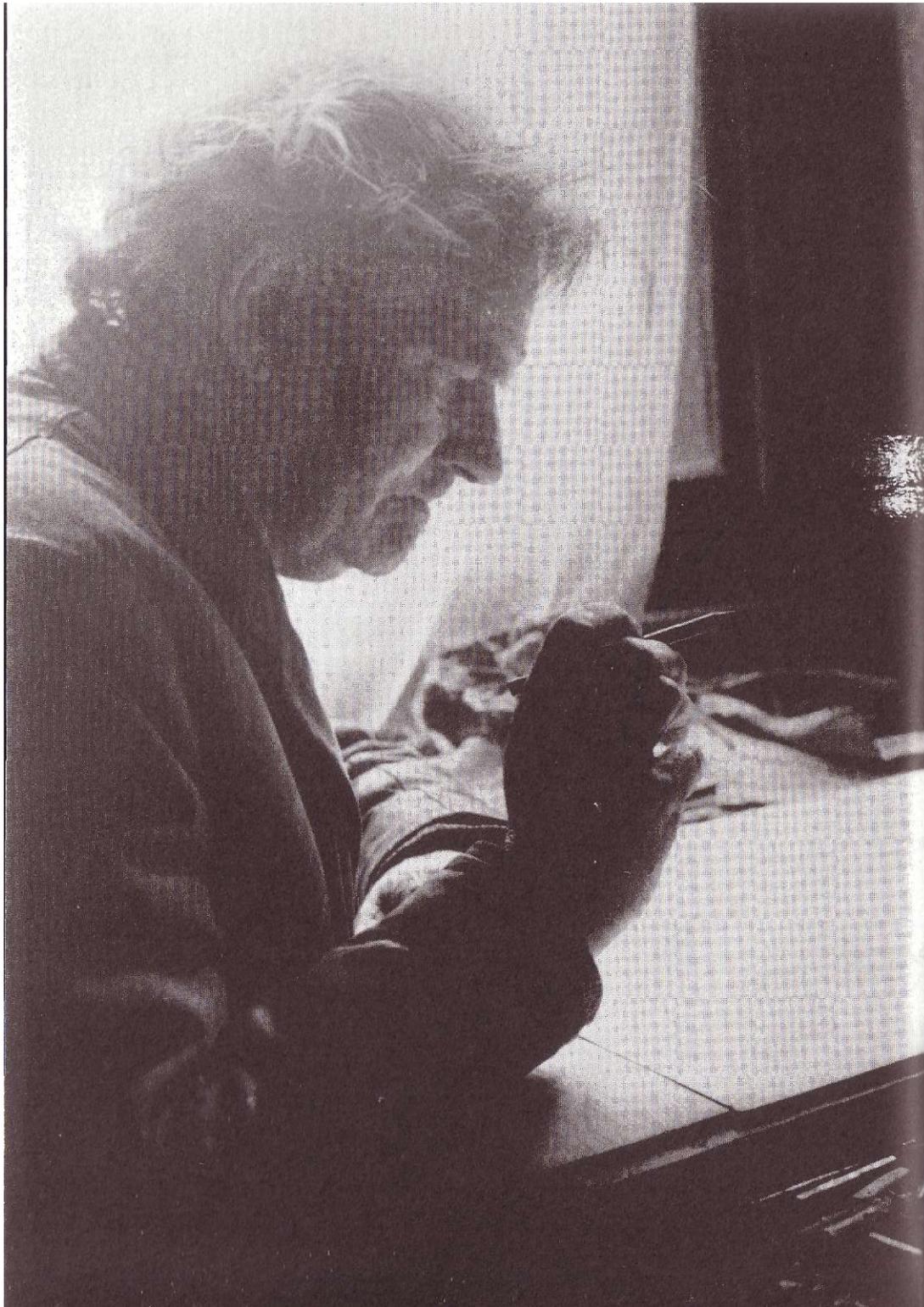


# ZOS-KIĀ



By Gavin W. Semple





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An Introductory Essay on  
the Art and Sorcery of  
Austin Osman Spare

*by*

*Gavin W. Semple*

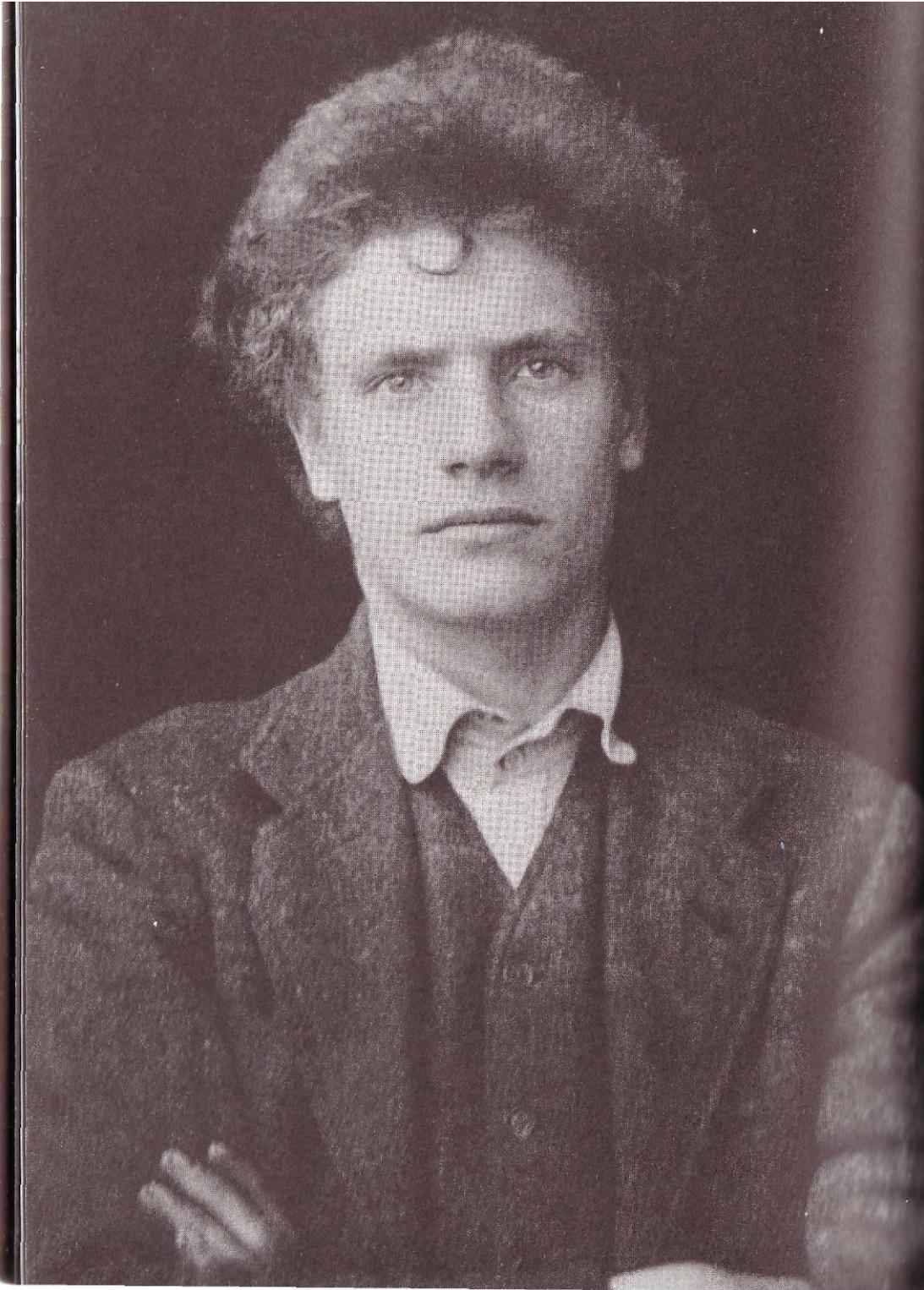
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*for Astrid*

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## YOUTH UNMASKS

*"But alas! on entering to the consciousness of my real being,  
to find fostering 'The all-prevailing woman,'  
And I strayed with her, into the path direct."* EARTH: INFERNO

That Austin Spare was possessed of a rare creative gift became evident during his early childhood. His mother recalled that from the age of four he would happily spend all day with a pencil in his hand, drawing **anything** placed before him. His parents were fortunately sympathetic and allowed him to follow what seemed to be his vocation. In 1894, when Austin was seven, the Spare family moved from the City across the Thames to South London, and - apart from brief forays into other areas

Spare would live for the rest of his life within a few square miles of his childhood home in Kennington.

**Here** it was that young Spare came into contact with the great influence of his life - the enigmatic figure of Mrs. Paterson, whom he claimed was an avowed initiate of the Sabbatic Tradition. Spare revealed little about this woman, even to his intimates; in his old age she assumed almost mythic proportions within his own mind. Where memory falters, poetic myth may render a more perfect truth. Talking in 1950 to his friend Hannen Swaffer, the renowned journalist, critic and Spiritualist, Spare divulged:

*"As for a glimmering of a knowledge of the occult, I have always had it in me from my childhood. It developed most just before the 1914 war and afterwards... The ability to 'read the cards' first came to me when I was a boy, through an old lady. She lived to be a hundred and one. A friend of my PARENTS, she used to tell my fortune when I was quite young... She impressed me as a person. Even when she died, she seemed no older than when I first met **She** was a natural hypnotist. She would say, 'Look in that dark corner,' and, if you obeyed, she could make you visualise what she was telling you your future."*

Spare claimed that he had witnessed with his own eyes the old woman's power to project thought-forms. On at least one occasion she cast upon **herself the** glamour of a nubile young woman, creating a vision of profound sexual intensity and revelation that shook him to the very core, and left an impression which he carried to the end of his days. The full truth of the friendship between the artist and the 'witch' may be wanting, YET, WHETHER through a formal 'passing on of power', or by an osmosis of glamour and inspiration, it was she who drew Spare into the magical Current which would motivate and pervade his life, ethos and artistry.

At age eleven Spare took up evening drawing classes at the Lambeth Art School, where he received his first proper training. By a combination of talent and a certain admixture of luck he was offered a scholarship to the Royal College of Art in 1902, where he continued his training, while his striking looks, flamboyant attire and aura of other-worldliness earned him an impressive, even slightly sinister, reputation among his fellows.

A comparison of Spare's work from 1902 and 1904 shows that between these years he made a fundamental creative advance, both technically, and in the maturity of his conception and choice of themes. He had found his focus, stylistically, and, having constellated his personal mythos, began to produce allegorical drawings deeply imbued with its obsessive mystique. The precocious intensity of his work enabled Spare to make an entree into the art world - to be feted at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition in May, 1904, when a bookplate, drawn when he was sixteen, was displayed. As 'the youngest exhibitor in the history of the Academy', and a promising one at that, Spare attracted the praise of renowned artist contemporaries and a great deal of press attention.

At this point Spare was engaged in his first attempt to refine and define a new metaphysic; within his art lay incubating the visionary philosophy of the Kia and Zos. A glimpse of insight into this effort is given by his comments to a journalist in May, 1904, on the subject of religion:

*"All faiths are to me the same. I go to the Church in which I was bom - the Established - but without the slightest faith. In fact, I am devising a religion of my own which embodies what we were, are and shall be in the future."*

The reporter observed; "...this curious religion is an important factor in the youth's personality. He is writing it out and illustrating it with glaring terrible plates, the whole to be contained between two covers of wood emblazoned with symbols, the one called 'Power' - an elephant head with human arms outstretched on either side - and the other some frowning deity, apparently after the manner of the Egyptian Isis."

*"It is the cover for the writings of a new religion I have dreamed about," explained the artist. "I go to church near here, but I don't believe in their doctrine. I have my own ideas of what we are and what we may become, and all my sketches are alive with my religion."*

Perhaps this strange volume was indeed the 'Book of the Kid' to which Spare alludes in *Earth: Inferno*, his first privately printed book, which he composed during 1904 and published the following Spring. Its potent images of death, sensuality and the grotesque exude an aura of elusive

mystery and revelation; cryptic juxtapositions of word and image amply convey the mood of his burgeoning philosophy. Spare had now divined his pathway, and determined its twin polarities which he first names in *Earth: Inferno*: the Kia and the Zos. In the drawing entitled 'Chaos' (p.21) he portrays the moment when, *"the perpetual youth of man arises, draws aside the curtain - Faith (a token of humanity's LIMITED knowledge), and exposes the inferno of the NORMAL. Oh! come with me, the KIA and the ZOS, to witness this extravagance..."*. The book's vision is primarily one of existential negation and despair; it is the angst of youth reluctantly coming of age and entering the domains of adulthood. The Hell which held such fearful sway over the Victorian mind is realised as the modern world itself. Spare's experience of this unwelcome transition came through the public interest which followed his acceptance at the Royal Academy, when critical opinion intruded into his private realm, forcing an early and abrupt self-appraisal. His response was a deeper incursion into his developing self-myth (p.22):

*"...When we gaze into the mirror of our-SELF,  
And see our works as others judge them,  
Then we realise our insignificance to the incomprehensible intellect  
Of the Absolute KIA (the omniscient),  
And find how subcutaneous our  
Attainments are.  
Alas! we are children of EARTH."*

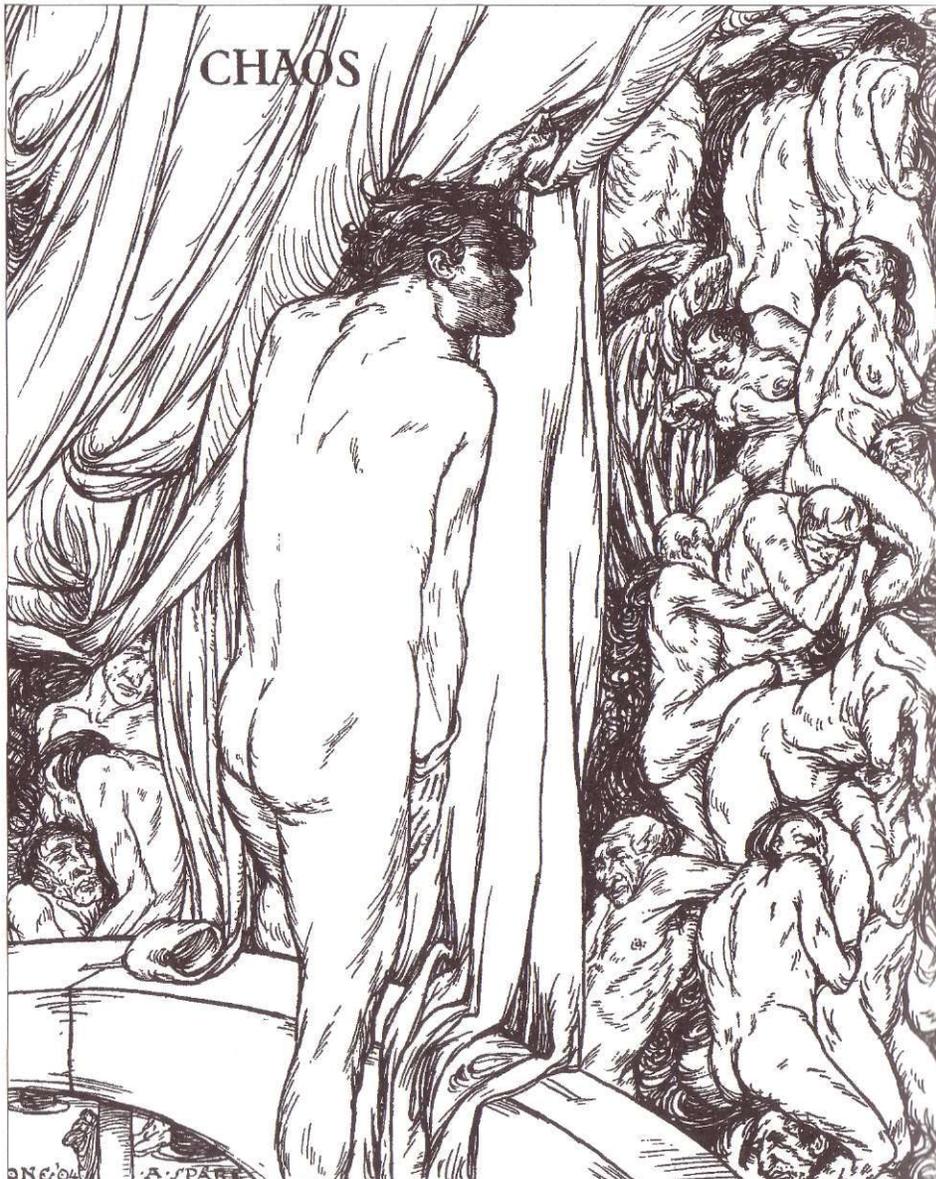
And again on page 18:

*"Revere the Kia and your mind will become tranquil."*

*Earth: Inferno* gives few further clues to the connotations of Kia and Zos, however, in *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love) - the Psychology of Ecstasy*, his essential *grimoire* published privately in 1913, Spare makes clear exactly what the terms are intended to convey. The page of 'Definitions'<sup>1</sup> describes 'Kia' as:

*"The absolute freedom which being free is mighty enough to be 'reality' at any time: therefore is not potential or manifest (except as its instant possibility) by ideas of freedom or 'means,' but by the Ego being free to receive it, by being free of ideas about it and not believing. The less said of it (Kia) the less obscure*

<sup>1</sup> This page was to be omitted, according to the note beneath Ernest Collings' introduction, but was re-inserted by Spare at a late stage of production, possibly on the advice of Collings.



Thus warned I shall pass quickly on, to page 45 of the book and the drawing reproduced thereon. Here Spare states, "*The body considered as a whole I call ZOS*"; Zos therefore designates all that which is embodied or manifest - the apperceptive or conative Ego that 'receives' Kia, and is **Indeed** the bodying forth of the Absolute into being. "*What is unmanifest is Absoluteness; what is manifest is reality as all differentiations of that*" (*The Logomachy of Zos*). This dualism of Being and Non-Being, Illusion and **Reality**, I and All-Otherness is a fundamental doctrine of gnostic philosophy, and Spare had seized upon it before he was out of his teens, at a period when he claimed the works of Homer, Dante<sup>2</sup> and Omar **Khayyam** comprised his only literary education<sup>3</sup>.

Yet between the first fugitive glimmerings of youthful revelation in *Earth: Inferno* and his presentation of a creed of ecstasy in *The Book of Pleasure* Spare was not content merely to philosophise. Through Mrs. **Peterson**, his contact with a vital occult tradition had supplied an impetus and essential keys to knowledge and power; between 1904 and 1913, besides his commitments as a student and later as a professional artist, Spare was exploring ways of applying in a practical manner the knowledge conferred by Illumination.

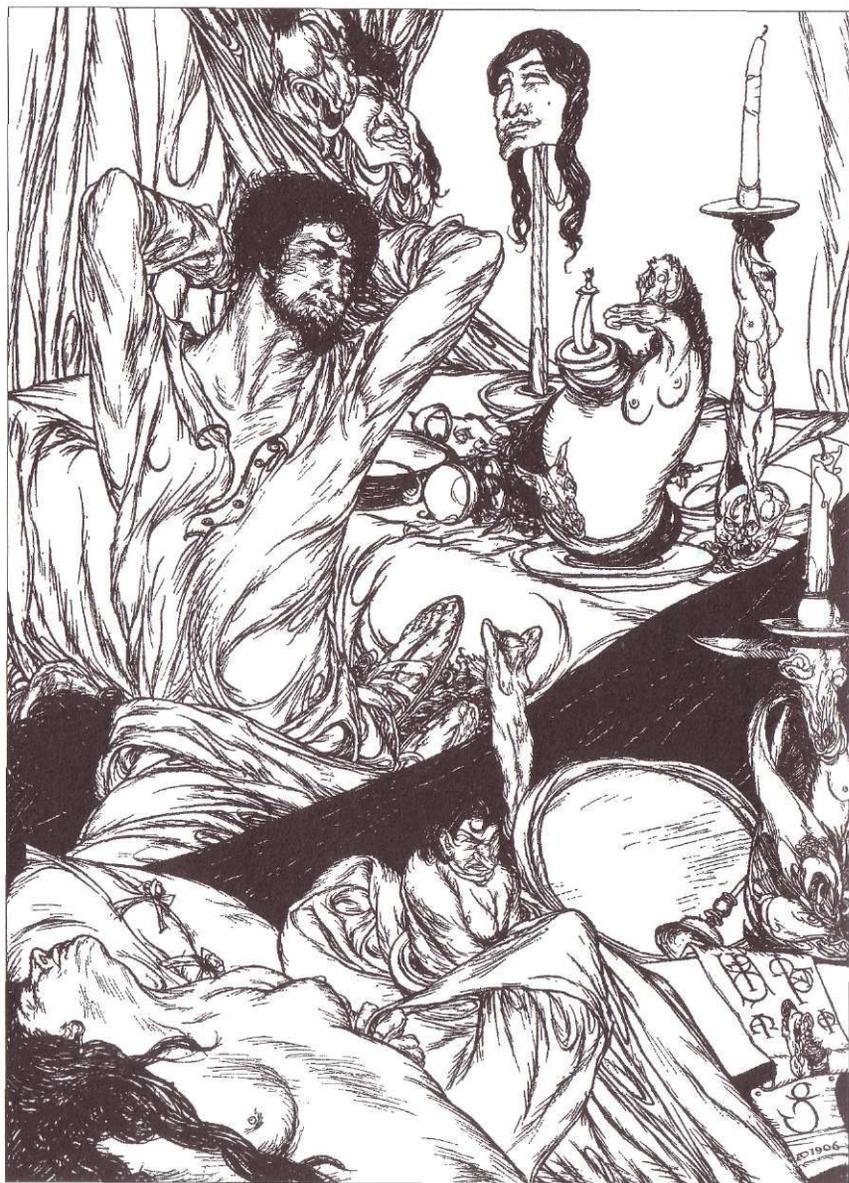
### THE SACRED ALPHABET

*"Who doth know what his own subconsciousness contains?  
Still less his own Arcana. They are the great who allow  
its operation by silence."* THE FOCUS OF LIFE

The art of ancient cultures held a perennial fascination for AOS. As a student at the Royal College of Art between 1902 and 1905, he had the **College** library with its wealth of illustrated and historical material at his **disposal**, and like students past and present he visited the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum to sketch. Imagine if you will the **effect** of primal scripts from the ancient kingdoms of Egypt, Assyria, Sumer, upon the young artist responsive to their arcane beauty and aware **that**, although the original meanings were largely forgotten, these glyphs had survived through time, carrying the exotic ambience of the cultures **which** gave birth to them, their powers yet latent within. In early civilizations, the secrets of writing were conveyed only to initiates of the

<sup>1</sup> Whose *Inferno* cycle naturally lent the inspiration for *Earth: Inferno* in 1904. AOS was re-reading Dante in the Spring of that year, marking passages suitable for illustration, but seems to **have** contented himself with quoting and paraphrasing the poet.

<sup>1</sup> Although the later development of the Zos-Kia doctrine resolves this dualism into a bipolar **monism**, as will be demonstrated.



monarchy and priesthood, and to the scribes whose work adorned the monuments, books and tombs. These alone knew the keys of the 'words of power'.

The first Sigillic formula to appear in Spare's published works can be seen in his second volume *A Book of Satyrs*, conceived and drawn during 1906, and privately printed in 1907, when the artist was twenty years of age. In the drawing titled 'Existence' five combined letter forms are inscribed upon a scroll; this is the first visible evidence of his experiments with sigils, and it is highly likely that these were the very first example of the technique to be presented to the public gaze. During this period Spare signed his work with a monogram conjoining his initials - variations of which may be seen in 'Officialism' and 'Advertisement and the Stock Size' (*A Book of Satyrs*) - styled in emulation of the monogram used by Albrecht Durer (1471-1528), an artist whose fine pencil drawing and portraiture Spare greatly admired - indeed, his own work was often compared with that Master's. The similarities are especially evident in Spare's mature pencil work of around 1909-1910. The idea of an artist signing his work with a monogram was familiar to Spare from his studies; monograms were especially popular among artists of the late nineteenth century, and assuredly the young student saw many examples.

Spare derived from these his idea of using sigils as a magical method. Between 1905 and 1910 his pictures are signed with several variations of a personal glyph, then, during 1910, he replaced this Sigillic monogram with the italic initials 'aos', which he would retain as his trademark signature. The distinction was necessary as the Sorcerous application of the sigil became apparent. In the Spring of 1910 Spare began work on the text which forms the chapters of *The Book of Pleasure*, in an effort to set out the methods and terminology of his peculiar magical technique; the book had originally been planned as a *mutus liber* of illustrations only - "*the Wisdom without words*". His co-incident employment of Alphabetic forms which would later appear in *The Book of Pleasure* is indicated by certain sketchbook pages of experimental ciphers, which also date from 1910. In addition, the sketchbook contains exemplars of letter-forms from a variety of ancient alphabets, which would find their way into *The Book of Pleasure* illustrations alongside Spare's personal calligrams and sigils. Stylised Hebrew, Greek, Coptic and Cuneiform letters appear, as well as geomantic figures and letters from the Enochian script of Dr. John Dee, an eclectic re-alignment of earlier traditions to Spare's intent. It is worth noting that Spare had contributed two automatic drawings to 'A Handbook of Geomancy' published by Aleister Crowley in *The Equinox* Vol.1, No.2 (September 21st, 1909), and the diagrams on pages 275 and 283 of the same issue. The Enochian Alphabet was pictured in 'Liber LXXXIX vel Chanokh', a brief outline of Dee's Angelic magic contained



IN *The Equinox* Vol.1, No.7 (March 21st, 1912), but may well have been shown to him by Crowley, who was in 1909 about to resume his work with Dee's system.

That in 1910 Spare ceased to sign his work with a monogram and **adopted** a simple initialling, whilst conjoined letter forms, now termed 'Sigils' (*"Sigils are monograms of thought, for the government of energy..." The Book of Pleasure* p.50) became the foundation of his method of sorcery is certainly no coincidence. Clues scattered throughout the extant **material** indicate that from using sigil forms as stylistic devices, he had **come** to realise their true potential as a tool. Discovered almost serendipitously, the sigil now became the fulcrum of his sorcery, and consequently disappeared from his purely decorative work to reappear, in its full flowering, in his occult drawings.

Observing that Spare was a member of the Argenteum Astrum, and **that** *The Book of Pleasure* was conceived and created subsequent to his Contact with Crowley, several commentators have described Spare as a 'follower' of the Beast, and assessed his work accordingly as that of a lapsed *protege*. Whilst the influence of Crowley undoubtedly bore upon **the** young artist, *The Book of Pleasure* betrays a marked reaction against his erstwhile mentor, and suggests that what Spare learned from Crowley was the way he did not want to go:

*"These Magicians, whose insincerity is their safety, are but the unemployed dandies of the Brothels. Magic is but one's natural ability to attract without Hiking; ceremony what is unaffected, its doctrine the negation of theirs... Self condemned in their disgusting fatness, their emptiness of power, without even the magic of personal charm or beauty, they are offensive in their bad taste and motivering for advertisement..."* THE BOOK OF PLEASURE PP.2-3

This broadside - launched directly at Crowley - was, significantly, added late on in the book's production. The tone of biting irony which runs throughout gives a further indication of Spare's feelings by 1913 towards the occult clique through which he had moved. The fact is that Spare had already been engaged in his revision and redefinition of magical praxis for at least three years *before* he met Crowley. Having impressed The Beast as a potential asset to the A.-. A.-., Spare signed the Oath of a Probationer in his presence on July 10th, 1909, taking 'Yihoveaum' as his magical *nom de guerre*, but failed to prosecute the Great Work according to Perdurabo's scheme and was not initiated into the Order. On the 30th December, 1912 - coincidentally Spare's birthday

Crowley assessed each member's status, and inscribed damningly on Spare's A.:A.: form, "An artist, can't understand organisation, or would

have passed" - a comment that nevertheless acknowledges his abilities as a magician. It was left for Spare to have the last word:

*"Therefore know the charlatans by their love of rich robes, ceremony, ritual, magical retirements, absurd conditions, and other stupidity, too numerous to mention. Their entire doctrine a boastful display, a cowardice hungering for notoriety; their standard everything unnecessary, their certain failure assured. Hence it is that those with some natural ability quickly lose it by their teaching."* THE BOOK OF PLEASURE PP.48-49

Confident that he had superseded the foremost magician of the period, Spare offered his quintessential system to the world in *The Book of Pleasure* with the sigil method enshrined as its keystone<sup>4</sup>.

Although sigil construction is often regarded as the major element of Spare's work<sup>5</sup>, he devotes only half a page of *The Book of Pleasure* (p.50) to the subject<sup>5</sup>, summarising:

*"Sigils are made by combining the letters of the alphabet simplified... The idea being to obtain a simple form which can easily be visualised at will, and has not too much pictorial relation to the desire... Verily, what a person believes by Sigils, is the truth, and is always fulfilled."*

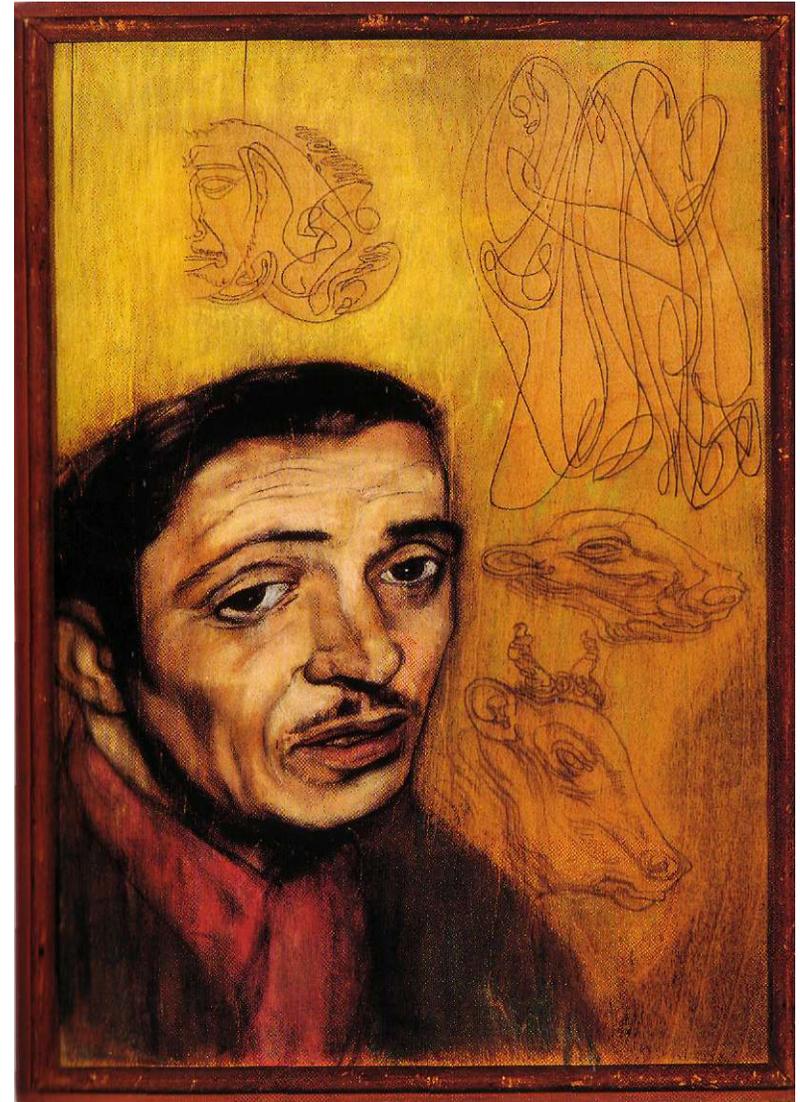
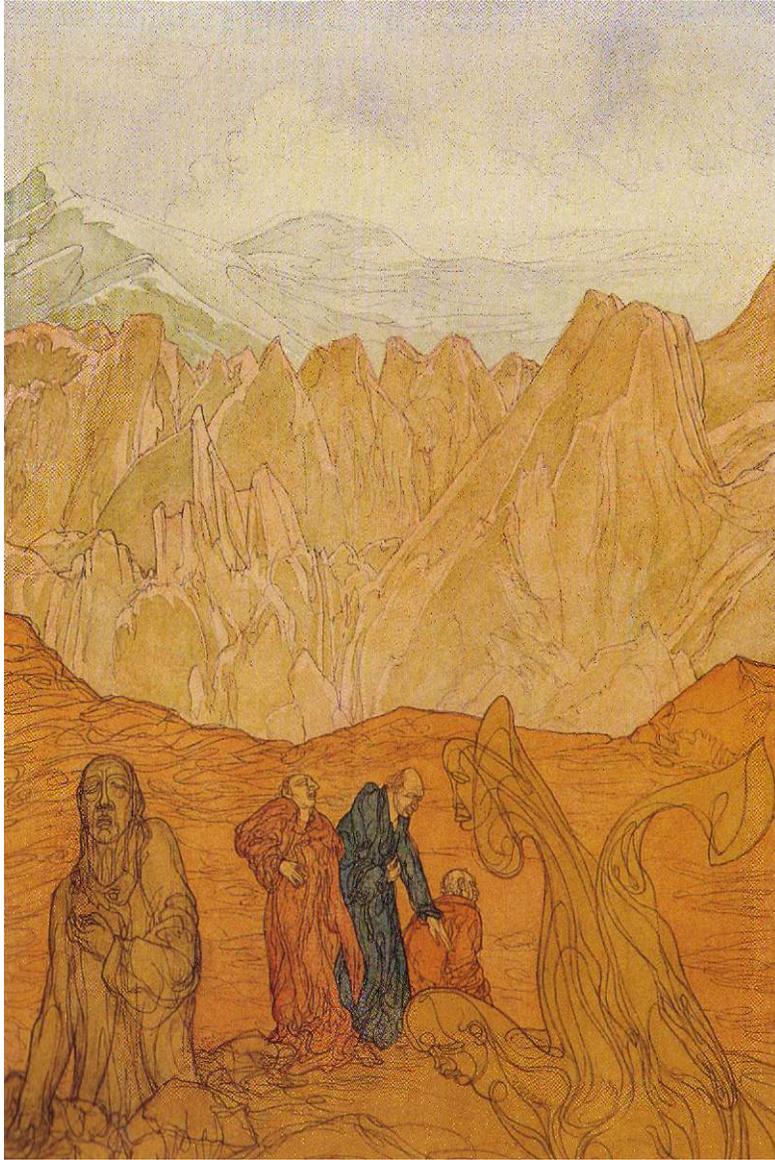
The conjunction of letters as a method of creating telemata was not entirely new; Angelic names were sigillated in a similar fashion by Medieval sorcerers and Renaissance High Magicians - and from early times in Northern Europe the Rune letters were bound together to create certain magical alignments. What was peculiar to Spare's eclectic and pragmatic system was his dismissal of all ritual, trappings and dogma in favour of the use of sigils in conjunction with divertive techniques and control of the dreaming body via the Death Posture. He evolved a creative formula of initiation not predicated upon any religious basis and requiring no faith in any particular pantheon or hierarchy. Identifying the source of magical power as a triune essence of Will, Desire and Belief, Spare claimed the only requirement as being sufficient Belief on the part of the magician to permute Desire according to his Will. Thus, the magical Current is ever at hand, and may be realised at any moment by a spontaneous and immediate apperception through aesthesis.

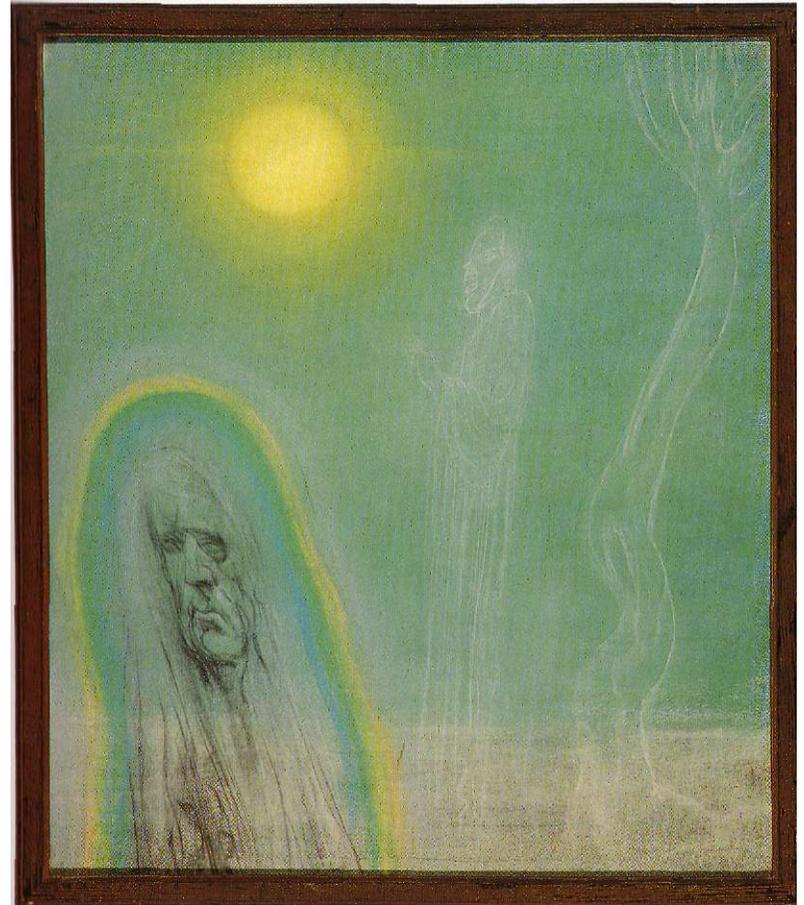
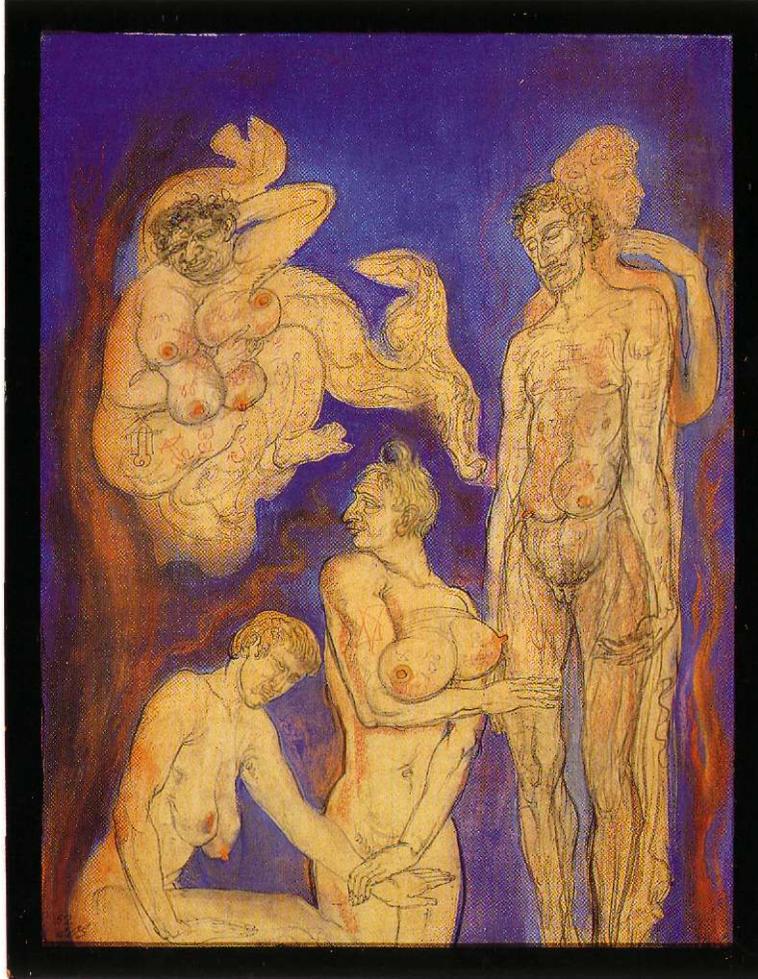
Spare emphasises the necessity of creating, or discovering, one's own **Arcanum** of sigils as he himself had done. Six methods of sigil-crafting

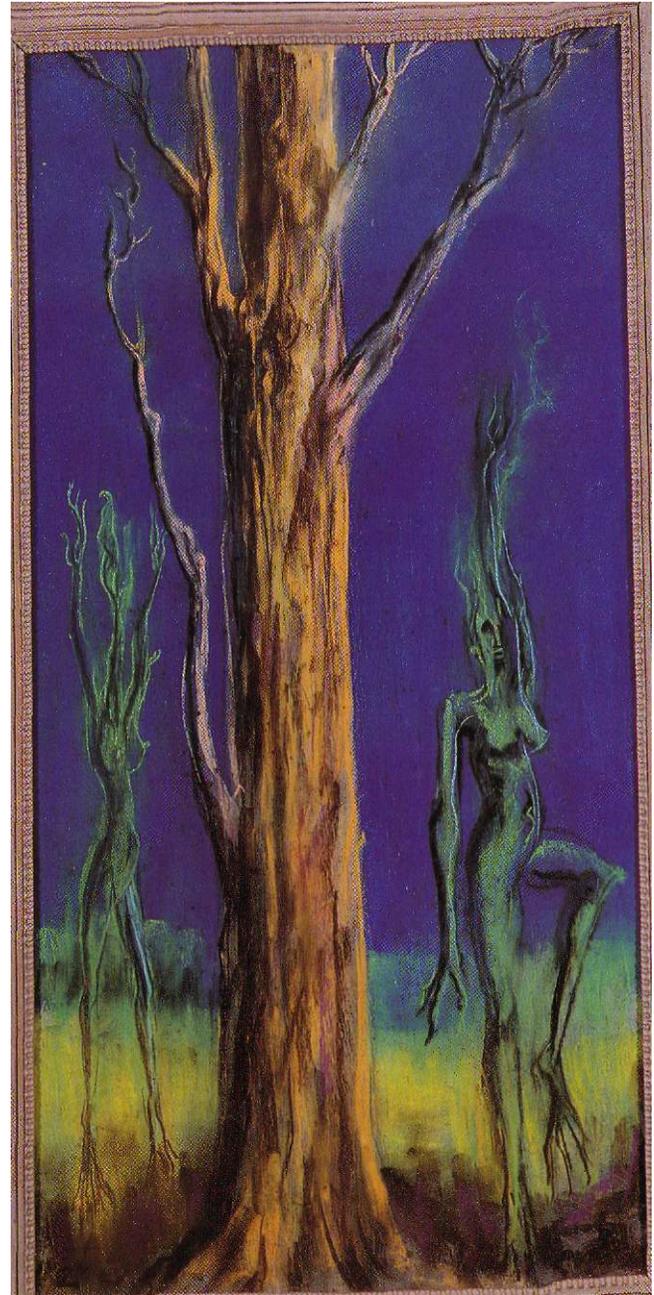
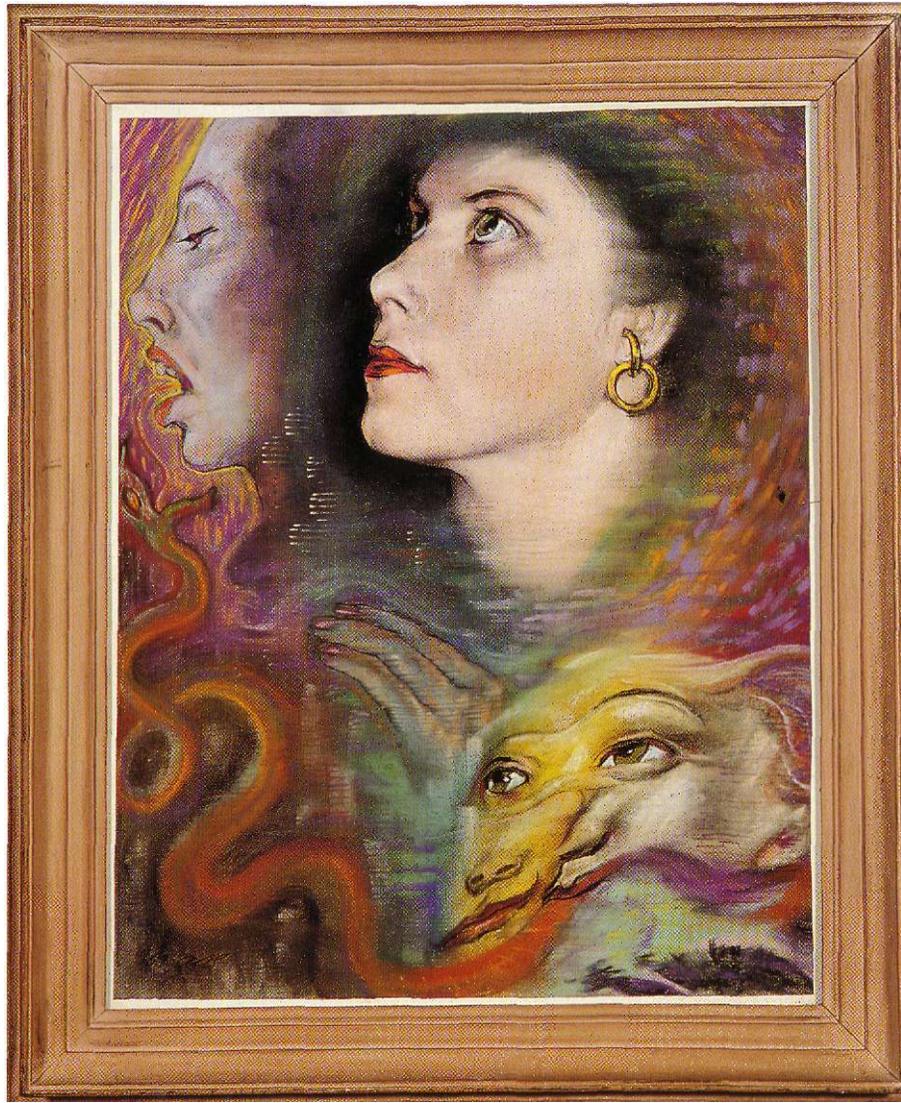
4. A detailed evaluation of the 1909-13 period and *The Book of Pleasure* is contained in an unpublished essay by Robert Ansell and the present writer.

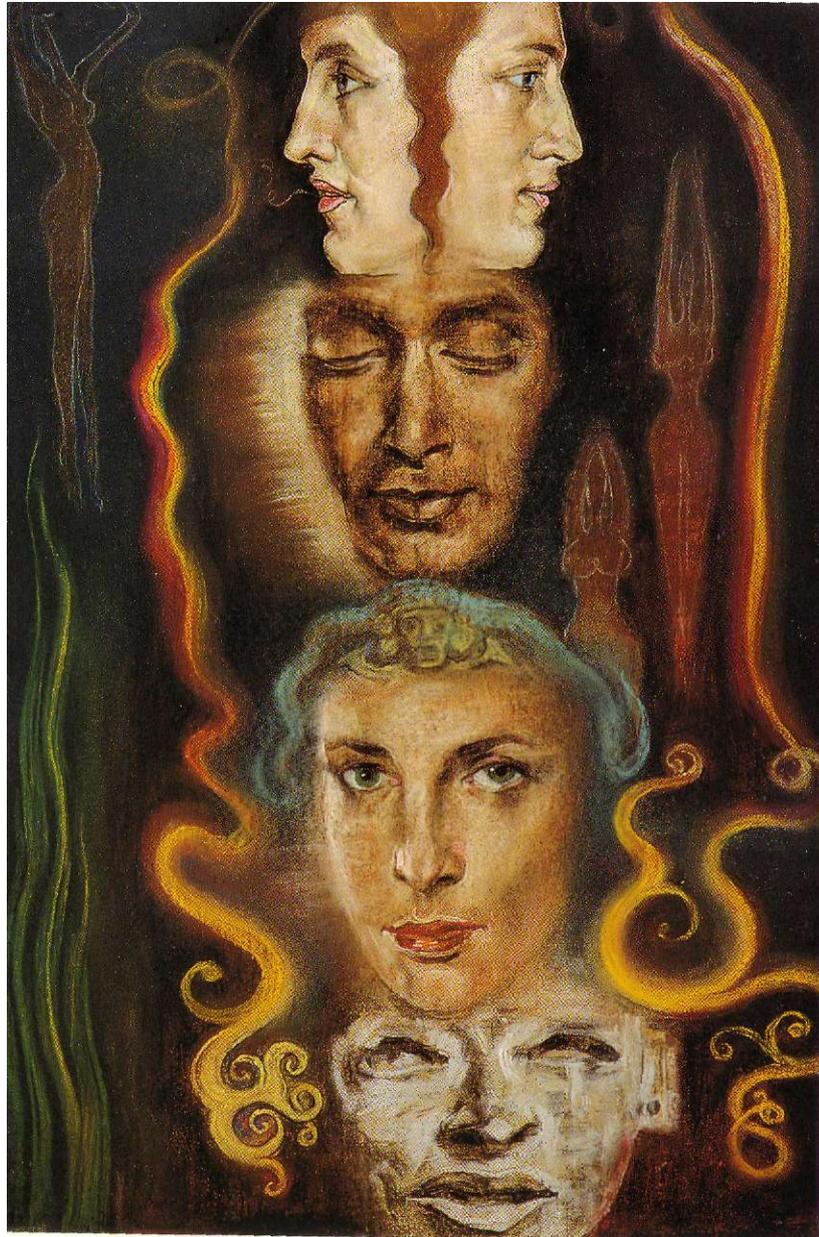
5. In contrast to the number of pages in books and articles which have since been written to explain this simple matter. The exception to this repetitious effort is the eminently readable and comprehensive *'Visual Magick'* by Jan Fries (Mandrake of Oxford, 1992).











are deployed in *The Book of Pleasure* illustrations, and Spare notes that the primary example given "is illustrative and the fundamental idea of them all, from which anyone can evolve his own system. Conditions, etc., of necessity subsequently evolve themselves" (*The Book of Pleasure*, p.50, marginalia 3). "By knowledge of the first letter, one is familiar with the whole alphabet, and the thousands they imply. They are the knowledge of desire. Embracing a positive system of grammar which allows easy, non-conflicting expression, and reading of difficult and complex principles; ideas that at present escape conception" (*The Book of Pleasure* p.56). By continued experiment, therefore, the individual will discern a sequence of magical principles which underpin his or her practices; taken together, the sigil forms which manifest these points constitute an occult lexicon which Spare terms the 'Sacred Alphabet'. *The Book of Pleasure* (p.56) specifies an Alphabet comprised of twenty-two letters; this was Spare's first formulation and almost certainly a borrowing from the Qabalah. As a Probationer of the A. A. -. Spare would have been equipped with a copy of Crowley's book of correspondences, 777, written as a guide to the construction of a magical alphabet on the Qabalistic schema of twenty-two divisions, and may from this have discerned the previous application of the technique which he was evolving. Over the years, however, Spare's Alphabet naturally multiplied to cover any possible eventuality.

Sigils may be received in dreaming or trance, but the most effective means of their discovery is through automatic drawing. Since the 1850's Spiritists had been using automatism to produce texts and drawings without the interference of the conscious mind, purportedly controlled by spirits of the dead. Under the guiding influence of his mentor Mrs. Paterson, Spare was possibly the first artist to incorporate the technique in his work, preceding the Paris Surrealist group by ten years<sup>6</sup>. Automatism should be employed to encode moments of powerful emotion in line; nuances of sensation are thereby captured - or bound as spirits - at the moment of their resurgence. Spare describes this process as "symbolically visualising sensation" - its virtue is that it prevents kinaesthetic perception and pre-conceptual (non-verbal) knowledge from uniting into internal dialogue, while giving free expression to the subconsciousness. The article written by Spare and Frederick Carter, 'Automatic Drawing' (appearing in *Form* Vol.1, No.1, London, 1916), gives a precis of the method:

*"Automatic drawing can be obtained by such methods as concentrating on a sigil - by any means of exhaustion of mind and body pleasantly in order to*

<sup>6</sup> Or as a later press report on AOS asserts, "Father of Surrealism - he's a Cockney!" In *The Book of Pleasure* Spare claims that he first experimented with automatism in 1900, and one manuscript grimoire from 1906 includes passages of pure 'dancing line' as devices.



ECSTASY FROM A BIRD KARMA.

obtain a condition of non-consciousness — by wishing in opposition to the real desire after acquiring an organic impulse towards drawing.

The hand must be trained to work freely and without control by practice in making simple forms with a continuous involved line without afterthought i.e. Us intention should just escape consciousness."

Sigils are infinitely inscrutable - although it will try very hard, the ego cannot breed ideas from them. Instead it will slip into inbetween states. By this anoesis, subtle shifts and movements of Otherness are inferred as they impinge upon the Sorcerer, and are translated into glyphs whose 'meaning' or content eludes conscious apperception, yet which thereby become functional as tools of sorcery. In a sense, this is art applied as fetish magic: the implements of sorcery - whether stone and bone, mannikin and cord, or sigil and cipher — are mnemonic devices for the cohesion of elicited states. By their manipulation the sorcerer effects a binding and alignment of spirit forces. Thus Spare carried on the ancient tradition of the divine Scribe, he who controls the magical universe by letter and line - avatar of Thoth and mediator between the human and the divine:

"Hidden in the labyrinth of the Alphabet is my sacred name, the SIGIL of all things unknown. On Earth my kingdom is eternity of DESIRE. My wish incarnates in the belief and becomes flesh, for, I AM THE LIVING TRUTH."

ANATHEMA OF ZOS P. 15

### IN THE DEATH POSTURE

"Death is named the great unknown. Assuredly, death is the great chance. An adventure in will, that translates into body." THE FOCUS OF LIFE

A voracious reader, Spare by 1913 had gathered a wide knowledge of religions, cults and the lore of the arcane, all of which he put to good use in formulating his doctrine. However, in contrast to Crowley's syncretic method, Spare's master-stroke was to separate the process of believing and how to believe from the content of what is believed. *The Book of Pleasure* opens with the words, "What is there to believe, but in Self?", and continues with a meticulous iconoclasm of beliefs both orthodox and unorthodox. By this Spare clears the stage for the introduction of his essential concept: Kia - the 'Consumer of Religion.' "Of name is has no need, to designate, I call it Kia — I dare not claim it as myself. The CIA

7 Cf. *Tao Teh King* Chapter XXXII.

which can be expressed by conceivable ideas, is not the eternal CIA, which bums up all belief- but is the archetype of 'self, the slavery of mortality."

The foundation of religion and faith is the human outreach toward transcendence, as those who are aware of their impermanence strive to embrace, and be embraced by, that which lies beyond the coils of time and death. Spare observes that however the Absolute may be conceived, the very act of objectifying it as *other* than what one is creates a fundamental dualism which cannot then be resolved; therefore all doctrines are doomed to failure from their inception, and as long as transcendence is imaged as a god or believed in as a power, it remains unattainable. Self gazes upon self through the mirror of its own making. This is the Law of Duality - the nature of belief, and the very substance of Ego.

Spare's antidote to this bondage of religion is to disengage the mutual tension between 'believer' and 'believed-in' by simply removing that which at once unites and separates them - the *believing*. He asserts that belief is not an end in itself, but is a tangible end-product of the process which moves outwards into the world of created forms, shaping personality, conditions and events; it can be traced backwards from its object to its origin, and that source - CIA - must necessarily be prior to all conceivable form. The Self is always 'upstream' of what is conceived by it, or what we perceive of that. "*Ideas of Self in conflict cannot be slain, by resistance they are a reality - no Death or cunning has overcome them but is their reinforcement of energy*" (*The Book of Pleasure* p.17). However, the Law of Duality had not reckoned with Spare's cunning, nor with his peculiar form of Death.

Any idea or state necessarily implying its opposite, a typical solution is to accept neither one nor the other, and thereby transcend both. By the negative process of believing 'neither this - nor that', the consciousness (as belief) is located ever between subject and object. This attitude is common to several mystical schools; however, Spare takes it a step further. The 'neither' position still infers the two polarities between which it lies, yet can itself be transcended, by itself; this Spare calls the 'Neither-Neither' principle: "*The Absolute appears to become other than itself, for it is sufficient; it is and is not, neither is it beyond, nor in, nor of me or any thing: it is 'Neither-Neither'*" (*The Logomachy of Zos*). This condition of tacit non-belief renders the rationalising ego temporarily absent, and engenders a thoroughly paradoxical state of mind:

*"Through it comes immunity from all sorrow, therefore the spirit of ecstasy. Renouncing everything by the means shown, take shelter in it. Surely it is the abode of the CIA?"* THE BOOK OF PLEASURE P. 17

In order to obtain a foretaste of this bliss of supreme non-attachment Spare prescribes a simple physical practice in three steps, to which he gives the redolent title of 'The Death Posture'; "*It is the dead body of all that we believe, and shall awake a dead corpse... Know the death posture and its reality in annihilation of law - the ascension from duality*" (*The Book of Pleasure* p.18). This is his description of the procedure:

*"Lying on your back Lazily, the body expressing the emotion of yawning, suspiring while conceiving by smiling, that is the idea of the posture. Forgetting time with those*

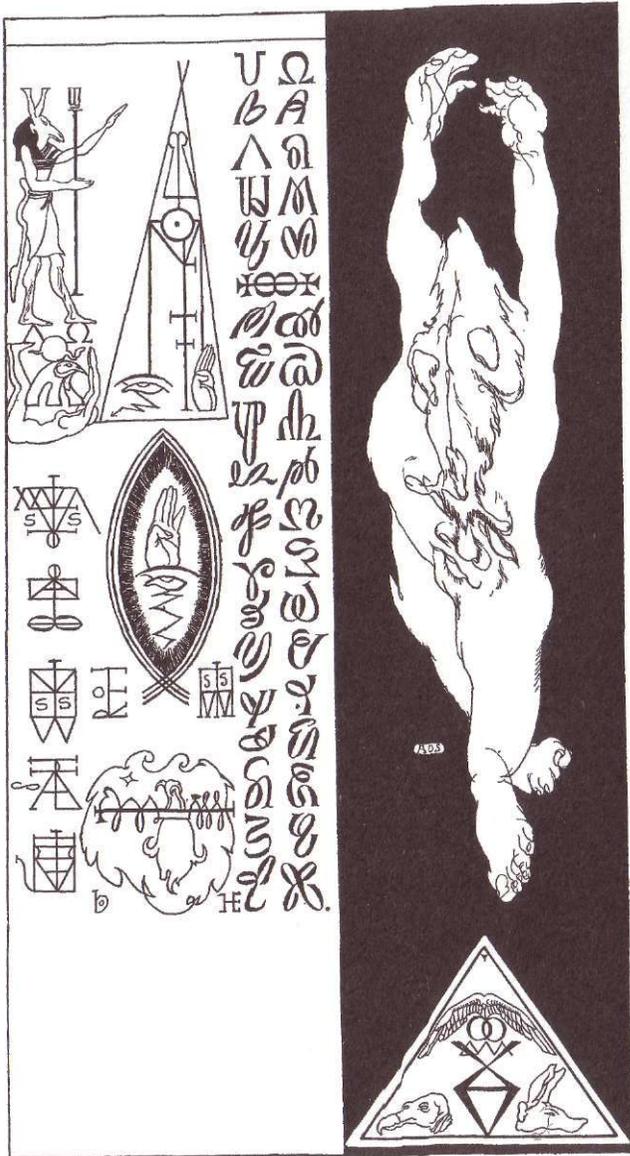
*things which were essential reflecting their meaninglessness, the moment is beyond time and its virtue has happened.*

*Standing on tip-toe, with the arms rigid, bound behind by the hands, clasped and straining the utmost, the neck stretched - breathing deeply and spasmodically, till giddy and sensation comes in gusts, gives exhaustion and capacity for the former.*

*dazing at your reflection till it is blurred and you know not the gazer, close your eyes (this usually happens involuntarily) and visualize. The light (always AN X in curious evolutions) that is seen should be held on to, never letting go, all the effort is forgotten, this gives a feeling of immensity (which sees a small form ♡), whose limit you cannot reach. This should be practised before experiencing the foregoing. The emotion that is felt is the knowledge that tells*

*you why."* THE BOOK OF PLEASURE P.18





THE DEATH POSTURE.

while the body regains its normal metabolism, and the mind returns to its accustomed order, is reinforced and prolonged by evoking the sensation of other, parallel, states in which conceptual thought is negated. Note that AOS specifies the *emotion* of yawning; mentation is suspended during a yawn or smile (this can be ascertained by attempting a simple calculation) and it is the accompanying state of mind that is sought here, rather than the action itself. With a smile and a mighty sigh that awakens nostalgias of the infinite, the sorcerer shifts between the domain of the living and the otherworld of the dead; dead in life and vital in death, within the perfect equipoise of Neither-Neither.

A somnolent trance results, imitating death by adroitly usurping every reaction. In *The Focus of Life* (p.18) Spare defines it as "*A simulation of death by the utter negation of thought, i.e. the prevention of desire from belief and the functioning of all consciousness through the sexuality*". In the Death Posture all opposites are conjoined and annihilated, awakening consciousness from the thrall of imposed limitation, time and identity and giving birth to the Other, or Body of Otherness - glyphed by Spare as the 'Ka' or Double. In the automatised figure from the 'Death Posture' drawing [*The Book of Pleasure* p.16]<sup>9</sup> this intrusion or intra-version is suggested by the face reappearing at the level of the sex, whilst the head itself is replaced by an anamorphic skull, signifying the ego-self overcome. Correspondingly, Set - the Shadow - decrees his ascendancy over Horus, bestriding the Alpha and Omega, Lord of the Double Horizon and of all that lies between<sup>10</sup>.

Such is the Death Posture exercise that AOS prescribes as the *only* ritual required for attainment; small wonder that his contribution has been overlooked by those who seek ever greater complexities in magical systems. Yet having described the posture, he adds almost dismissively, "*There are many preliminary exercises, as innumerable as sins, futile of themselves but designative of the ultimate means...*" (*The Book of Pleasure* p. 18). The implication of this is significant, for rather than being simply a daily yoga practice, this death-feint mimetises in terms appreciable to both body and mind the fundamental principle of magic; "*the reduction of all properties to simplicity, making them transmutable to utilise them afresh by redirection, without capitalization, bearing fruit many times*" (*The Book of Pleasure* p.37). The world of self we inhabit is in no means real, but composed entirely by the interaction of Will, Desire and Belief; that is, the vital emanation of Kia, its vehicle of conception, and its manifestation

- Whose symbolic importance can be gauged from the fact that Spare also had it reproduced  
- *The Equinox* and *The Focus of Life*.

The instructions given by Spare also infer trance induction in the sexual embrace - initiated by **the lovers' gaze of mutual fascination.**

as perceived by the senses and organised by the ego<sup>11</sup>. The 'eternal triangle' of Will, Desire and Belief forms the *shakti* or reifying principle of Kia; when its cycle is short-circuited, as by a temporary indirection of ego - the "*prevention of desire from belief* — consciousness is returned to its primal simplicity, the inbetween state from which all creation arises:

*"The 'Self is the 'Neither-Neither,' nothing omitted, indissoluble, beyond prepossession... The desire, will and belief ceasing to exist as separate."* THE BOOK OF PLEASURE P.33

Death Posture employs the flesh itself as the effigy or sigil of Belief, and through its 'death' and resurrection "*he has imitated the great purpose*" - the Great Work. This work is the ecstatic fusion of the Zos and the Kia (Ego and Self), the Self-Love which gives the title to Spare's book, and for which he coined the motto of his credo:

*"The new law shall be the arcana of the mystic unbalanced 'Does not matter - need not be,' there is no necessitation, 'please yourself is its creed.'"*<sup>12</sup>  
THE BOOK OF PLEASURE P. 17

By repeated transaction across the threshold of Otherness a particular faculty of perception is engendered, as individual self remembers its extent throughout the continuum of consciousness. Realising that it is *already* death it transcends fear; without fear, it becomes all desire and so desires nothing; abiding in stillness it obtains the autotelic ecstasy (i.e. ecstasy for its own end) which is the self-pleasuring of almighty Kia. Thus the Death Posture - however assumed - opens the way to a New Sexuality:

*"The Death Posture is the reduction of all conception (sin) to the 'Neither-Neither' till the desire is contentment by pleasing yourself. By this and no other means are the inertia of belief<sup>13</sup>; the restoration of the new sexuality and the ever-original self-love in freedom are attained."* THE BOOK OF PLEASURE P.33

11. In identifying the Kia as 'Will' (vide *The Book of Pleasure* illustration p.45) Spare takes his lead from Nietzsche, although Spare's Zos and Kia more nearly align with Schopenhauer's dualism of phenomenon and noumenon ('the self as it appears as object of perception, and 'the self as it is in itself, as a manifestation of will), than with the Nietzschean 'Will to Power'. This dualism is derived from Kant, as was Spare's recension of the 'As If principle. Nietzsche, however, was a key influence upon Spare, his aphoristic approach providing a stylistic model, and the voice of Zarathustra echoes throughout *The Focus of Life* and *Anathema of Zos*. In a manuscript dating from 1952 Spare writes as "*Zarathustra's shadow*". AOS was introduced to the works of Nietzsche around 1910, and *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and *Beyond Good and Evil* offer a wealth of insight into the provenance of his psychology as presented in *The Book of Pleasure*, and further elaborated in *The Focus of Life*.

12. Herein Spare gives his malapert riposte to Crowley's "Do what thou Wilt..."

13. i.e. are beliefs (as the ego) rendered inert or powerless.



It is this sacrifice of Belief that gives life to the autonomous sentience of the Neither-Neither, the Silent Watcher which Spare masks as the Vulture, feeder on the carrion of dead - *devitalised* - beliefs; and as its cognate type, the Black Eagle. Applied to the individual psyche, Death Posture is the mind's means of slipping through its own meshes by the gateway of the Neither-Neither, a hidden door that stands ever ajar, awaiting the touch of a straying hand; through this point the reassembling of personality by the destruction of doubts, fears, false ideas and impressions takes place. On the borderland of sleep or waking, in the moment between sensation and perception, thought and memory, remembering and forgetting, *there is the Neither-Neither; the primordial absence that is all procreation:*

*"Shall I speak of that unique intensity without form? Know ye the ecstasy within? The pleasures between ego and self? At that time there is no thought of others; there is NO THOUGHT. Thither I go and none may lead..."*

ANATHEMA OF ZOS P. 16



## CASTING THE SHADOW

*"All things are subject to resurrection,' thus spake smiling Aaos,  
on rising from the dead. Then turning towards his shadow,  
'I come! the changing word that destroys religion, a vortex wind  
that shall jest in temples!'"* THE FOCUS OF LIFE

Spare walked the paths of both mysticism and magic. To a mystic seeking reunion with and dissolution in Godhead, magical powers - the *siddhis* - are unwanted side-effects of his practices; for a sorcerer, observation of magical mechanisms at work may lead to speculations of a purely mystical nature. The two paths are refractions of one Path, like the single surface of the double-sided Moebius band. Spare approached the mystical aspiration by the use of the Death Posture, described in *The Book of Pleasure* (p. 18 'The Ritual and Doctrine'), as a procedure for "*becoming a Ka*" or locating consciousness within the dreaming body. His results from this practice are evidenced by the illustrations of the book. The Death Posture involves a total negation of conceptual thought and perceptual awareness, and the assumption of the Void, Kia, by its practitioner; its aim is ecstasy, the bliss of union with the Absolute in Self-Love:

*"Let him practice it daily, accordingly, till he arrives at the centre of desire. He has imitated the great purpose. Like this, all emotions should find equipoise at the time of emanation, till they become one."*

This is the typical method of the ascetic, involving the abnegation of all desires, until the primordial Kia alone remains.

In reaction to his High Church upbringing Spare opposed contemporary religion with its insistence on the repression of instinct and desire. He realised that each desire is an emanation of Kia, and each is imperfect because conditioned by time and place; self therefore seems divided against self in our concatenation of personalities, the circle-dance of our mysterious nature. Yet by embracing these constantly projected desire-bodies, and thereby transcending or over-reaching them, their original unity in Kia may be realised:

*"Resist not desire by repression: but transmute desire by changing to the greater object."* THE FOCUS OF LIFE P.39

Herein may be seen the vital link between Spare's mysticism and his distinctive method of sorcery.

Consciousness of desire is itself the obstacle to its attainment; Spare observes that:

*"Directly we desire, we have lost all; 'we are' what we desire, therefore we never obtain. Desire nothing, and there is nothing that you shall not realise."*

THE BOOK OF PLEASURE P.30

Once a desire has arisen in the mind, it attracts to itself some arbitrary form through which to manifest, and is thereby projected into the world, fixating upon one object or another in the form of belief. Desires change as quickly as fashions and are equally sterile as means to knowledge and power; therefore the work of the sorcerer entails an iconoclasm of Belief, that Desire may remain ever free and unconditioned - for this is the nature of the Kia, the primal belief. In *The Book of Pleasure* Spare analyses this 'Psychology of Believing', in grammar which is oftimes obscure; however, to his friend Clifford Bax in 1921 he gave this piquant explanation:

*"Whatever you really want, you can get. The want first rises in the conscious mind, but you have to make the subconscious desire it too. And you can do this by inventing a symbol of the thing you want - wealth, a woman, fame or a country cottage, it's all alike. The symbol drops down into the subconscious. You have to forget all about it. In fact, you must play at hide-and-peek with yourself. And while you're wanting that particular thing or person, you must resolutely starve all your lesser desires. By doing that, you make the whole self, conscious and subconscious, flow toward your main object. And you'll obtain it."*

Sigmund Freud held the obstacle to free passage between conscious and subconscious mind to be the 'Super-ego', its purpose being to attenuate the chaotic contents of subconsciousness and present them in forms which pose no threat to the ego - this was the context in which he applied dream analysis. In this formulation the 'psychic censor' guarding the threshold has an essentially moral function, and is no more than Freud's own ethical superimposition upon an inherent function of mind. Spare's conception of the nature of the threshold was opposed to this:

*"Dreams are translated by a parallelism, not by free association: there is no dream censor, but an amoral thinking by symbol, ideograph and metaphor..."*

THE LOGOMACHY OF ZOS

Through Spare's interpretation the threshold is simply an interstice between streams of consciousness of complementary but divergent

natures; and ingress into subconsciousness requires a transvaluation of the language of thought into a symbolic language of desire, active at elemental levels, as he describes in *The Focus of Life* (p.9):

*"Conscious desire is the negation of possession: the procrastination of reality. Make thy desire subconscious; the organic is creative impulse to will."*

Although Spare was willing to make eclectic use of terms such as 'unconscious', 'subconscious', 'ego', etc (the legacy of the psychoanalytic school of Freud - of which Spare was scathingly critical, with his references to "*patho-psychology*"), these nominalisations become hopelessly unwieldy when applied to magical praxis. They imply hierarchies of mentation, or zones of the physical mind, and are superfluous in describing the actual mechanisms at work. The fundamental principle belying Spare's system - which he established as early as 1904 - is the mutual interplay of Being and Nothingness, which he characterised as Zos and Kia, the Hand and the Eye; I and All Otherness:

*"What has orbit is negative to a converse experient: when and where you are positive, Otherness becomes rotative to you."* THE LOGOMACHY OF ZOS

Simply put, that which is immediately present in consciousness as now is 'I' or Zos; all else is 'Other' or Kia - the Great Negative, our ever-present Shadow. That which is not manifest can be considered as abiding in the Shadow - and there, beneath the wings of the Vulture brood all our gods, spirits, familiars, daemons and atavisms; the vast conclave of transliminal entity which answers to the sorcerer's calling:

*"Darken your room, shut the door, empty your mind. Yet you are still in great company - the Numen and your Genius with all their media, and your host of elementals and ghosts of your dead loves — are there! They need no light by which to see, no words to speak, no motive to enact except through your own purely formed desire."* THE LOGOMACHY OF ZOS

Spare referred to such entities as 'Dwellers at the Gates of Silent Memory' - silent because they obtain at pre-conceptual levels - and as 'Dwellers on the Threshold', the nascent selves swarming at our periphery, always *behind* our attention. It is through interaction with these desire-bodies, and their integration into our subjective continua, that we interact directly with Self, through the infinite permutation of its expression:

*"Union of 'Self to Ego' is commanded by obeying our more latent ideas. Self is the real thing, Ego what we realise of it."* THE LOGOMACHY OF ZOS



These latencies or 'Sexualities', as Spare termed them, are the nodes of mediation between I and All-Otherness (Ego and Self) by which Otherness – Kiā – manifests its diverse modalities as psyche, soma and environment. Spare's conception of 'Sexuality' has a wider definition than simply copulation – it is the non-sexual impetus of sexuality and all else, a

pleroma of absolute possibility, ever striving for realisation. The letters of the Sacred Alphabet express certain aspects of this potential and bring them to birth, therefore they have essentially sexual connotations: "Each letter in its pictorial aspect relates to a Sex principle, and its modifications as completeness" (*The Book of Pleasure* p.56) - hence, the 'Alphabet of Desire'. Silence is the language of the domains of the other that lie beyond and between the soliloquies of conceptual ego:

*"What sounds the depths and conjoins Will and Belief? Some inarticulate hieroglyphorsigilwroughtfromnascentdesireandrhythmnedbyunbounding ego."* THE LOGOMACHY OF ZOS

The method of sigillation as a transversion of linear thought to a language of pure form is pre-eminently suitable for the practice of sorcery. A Sigillic language enables the sorcerer to think in symbols, indeed "*sentient symbols do our thinking for us...*," allowing consciousness to pervade hitherto occluded regions; the sigil acts as a 'courier' in the transference across the threshold:

*"Allprayerdissipateswithoutanintermediaryorcarrier. Gods, soulandthe psycho-substantive seem to respond only through the mind by in-direction and hetero-suggestion: this is the secret way through many barriers."* THE LOGOMACHY OF ZOS

Any process is controlled by the element with the greatest flexibility; this is a primary axiom of sorcery. The power of the sigil derives from its ability to communicate between all levels; emotional, perceptual, cognitive, elemental, atavistic, sexual, Oneiric, stellar; like an elevator that stops at all floors. The silent sigils of the Sacred Alphabet bespeak the grammar of the hidden Self, weaving therein a web which registers each movement of the Other; and by which Otherness may be drawn across the threshold and induced to manifest according to the Will of the sorcerer. As an artist, Spare's innate rapport with pure form, image and visual metaphor - cultivated over years in the practice of his art - enabled him to use sigils to interact with Otherness in ways that may seem incredible to many. Yet his reported displays of rain-making, the materialisation of elementals to visible appearance and so on were rather more than Sorcerous glammers - for as demonstrations of the power of the dreaming mind to influence reality they reveal the infinite potential of the magical current when allowed to flow unhindered through the vessel of the sorcerer. It was with this knowledge that Spare could affirm in *The Book of Pleasure*; "*Freedom from the necessity of law, realisation by the very wish, is the ultimate goal*".

## MODUS OPERANDI

*"Does an abstract, when symbolised, take on sentience? Yes, inasmuch as we react and feel the same as from an actual. When we so formulate ideas they become as finite automata (familiar) that will react 'as if sentient; thereof, 'sentient symbols.'" THE LOGOMACHY OF ZOS*

In 1929 Spare drew a pencil portrait which he titled 'Theurgy'; this picture is significant for it illustrates his application of modern psychological terminology to traditional forms of elemental evocation and binding, for the realisation of a magical wish. 'Theurgy' is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "a system of magic, originally practised by the Egyptian Platonists, to procure communication with beneficent spirits, and by their aid produce miraculous effects...", and indeed Spare's drawing contains vital clues to his own methods of working such magic. Alongside a three-quarter portrait of a woman, and a magnificent sweep of automatic line ensorcelling spirit forms, there appears a partly sigilized spell, and at the bottom left of the picture is inscribed this legend:

*Modus Operandi:*  
SUGGESTION  
REPRESSIONS  
OBSESSIONS  
FIXATIONS  
ELEMENTALS MANIFEST  
REACTIONS  
WILL OBEYS ORIGINAL IMPULSE

This is a concise resume of evocation by sigil, kindly bequeathed to us by Zos himself, and which may be viewed in the following light.

**SUGGESTION:** is the play of the sigil, once formulated, upon the still and voided mind. Spare explains that *"all consciousness except of the Sigil has to be annulled; do not confuse this with concentration — you simply conceive the Sigil any moment you begin to think. Vacuity is obtained by exhausting the mind and body by some means or another"* (*The Book of Pleasure* p.51). Those who have worked with sigils will likely have found that the best means of transmission is simply to become absorbed in their line, allowing the glyph to seduce the eye. The sigil can be assimilated through any sensory channel, even by 'listening' to it; by this latter means may be apprehended the *"Grimorium of...vague phonic nuances that conjoins all thoughts and is the cryptic language of the psychic world"* (*The Logomachy of Zos*), which expresses itself freely in mantra, incantation,



somniloquy - the unselfconscious utterances of trance and obsession. Intense efforts of concentration directed at the sigil tend to imbue the sigil with that effort, and the concomitant cramp and fatigue, thus accumulating associations which are obstacles to transference. The intent of the operation is encrypted in the sigil, and the desire thereby exteriorised; consequently the sorcerer must become a passive partner in the seduction, and allow the sigil to return unhindered to its source:

*"By the Ego conceiving only the Sigil, and not being able to conceive anything from it, all energy is focused through it, the desire for identification carries it to the corresponding sub-conscious stratum, its destination."* THE BOOK

OF PLEASURE P.51

One extremely useful habit is to liberate the energy of negative emotional states, or of obsessive and demoralising trains of thought, by visualising the sigil when these are most active. AOS suggests that the Sigillic art is *"believed by taking it up at a time of great disappointment or sorrow"* - his formula therefore re-directs the sloughs (or slags, i.e. the *qliphoth*) of thought and emotion towards the greater desire, thus following the natural ecology of the mind.

REPRESSIONS: Once the sigil has thoroughly impressed the consciousness, it must be dismissed from the mind, for *"The sub-conscious is exploited by desire reaching it. So consciousness should not contain the 'great' desire once the Ego has wished: and should be filled with an affected ambition for something different"* (*The Book of Pleasure* p.47). Spare also recommends that *"When conscious of the Sigil form (any time but the magical) it should be repressed, a deliberate striving to forget it, by this it is active and dominates at the unconscious period..."* (*The Book of Pleasure* p. 45). Alas, forgetfulness being itself a subconsciously directed process, it can prove frustratingly difficult to contrive; therefore a divertive act often serves better to engage the conscious mind and allow the sigil to 'seed' in Otherness. In this context it is interesting to note the interview with Spare which appeared in *Psychic News* (November 26th, 1932). Pointing out to journalist A.W. Austen a painted panel depicting Egyptian deities, Spare explained that it was intended to commune with the Knowledge of Ancient Egypt which remains imprinted in the astral:

*"Several requests I have made to this great race of Egyptians, and all have been answered. I do not merely make the request and leave it at that. When I ask for a thing — which I do by placing a note in front of the panel - I deliberately make some sacrifice. I give up smoking — which is a great hardship — or something like that until the request has been granted."*

This 'starving of lesser desires' - as he described it to Bax - sounds dangerously close to 'placating the Gods with offerings', however, as a divertive technique, giving up smoking for a period is a perfect means of preoccupying the conscious mind - a habitual smoker will find it difficult to think of anything but cigarettes!<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, desire is freed to gestate and permutate as protean elemental energy.

OBSESSIONS/FIXATIONS: Elemental energy forms begin to mass in the Otherness of the sorcerer and may be sensed, perhaps as surging tides of sensation or emotion. Anyone who knows how to fall in love can experience the orbit of all creation centred upon the *absence* of the beloved; the process here is identical. Crowley was critical of Spare's use of 'obsession'<sup>15</sup>, for he interpreted this as a loss of control on the part of the magician. What Crowley had overlooked was Spare's criticism of the passive tendency of seance mediums; he recognised that the disembodied energy of 'free belief' will always find some focus for its expression, therefore, by the use of sigils the sorcerer designates a vital function for its outlet, and the operation proceeds strictly 'under Will'<sup>16</sup>. The elemental obsession gathers momentum and, like a whirlpool's vortex, it fixates upon its own negative centre: this Point is the fulcrum of the sorcerer's Will - the gateway opened by configuring the 'Sacred Alignments' of Will, Desire and Belief. The maelstrom of energy must discharge through this point, to manifest in the sorcerer's consciousness or environment.

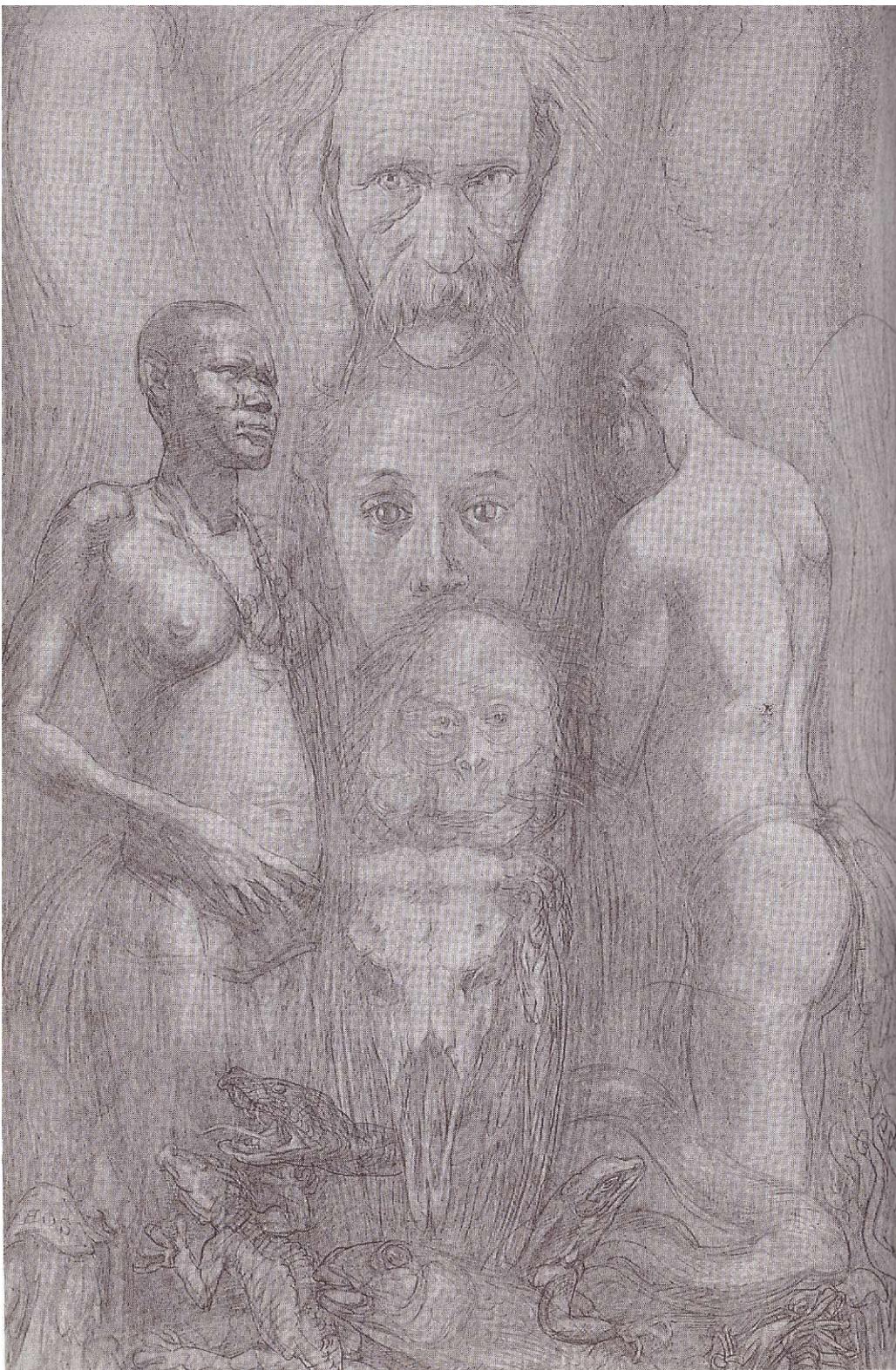
ELEMENTALS MANIFEST: The belief underlying the motivation of the sigil, enciphered in its line, defines and covertly predetermines the form or vehicle in which the elemental familiar will manifest. This depends upon the nature of the entity, yet it will always assume the form most accessible to the sorcerer's perception. Attaining autonomy through transference from the ego, the symbol has become sentient - it awaits its chance to return into the sorcerer's field of activity.

REACTIONS: There will come a moment, always intensely poignant, when the conscious mind recognises the presence of the elemental - by omens or co-incidence, according to personal tabu - at which time the sorcerer interacts with it accordingly. -

14. All habits and behavioural automatisms function as sentient familiars, and, once recognised and isolated, may therefore be induced to set themselves to new tasks.

15. Noting in his personal copy of *The Book of Pleasure*, "Spare was at the time a pupil of Fra. P. [Crowley] but was kept back by Him on account of his tendency to Black Magic. This tendency is seen in its development in this book..."

16. Vide *The Book of Pleasure* pp.41 and 47, where AOS distinguishes magical obsession from mediumism or insanity, and stresses the identity of obsession and illumination.



**WILL OBEYS ORIGINAL IMPULSE:** The moment has passed *"and its virtue has happened..."*. The impulse of all Desire now emanates from Otherness via the sorcerer as the medium of Will, and the motive impetus of the entire procedure is at the sorcerer's disposal. Instead of pitting the meagre desire (for meagre is the nature of conscious desire) against the universe, the sorcerer, by making the wish magical, aligns with universal Will. The secret is alignment and identification; there is but one Will.

This formula of sorcery by sigil indicates the type of experiments Spare was pursuing in his tiny Southwark tenement flat in 1929, during his most reclusive period. In its singular simplicity it embodies the fundamental magical process, making apparent to perception the forces at work so that, rather than merely acquiescing in impassive interaction, the sorcerer actively engages in the process of creation and change. Thus gravitating to the equipoise centre of Desire, the Great Purpose is accomplished - *"Verily he steals the fire from heaven: the greatest act of bravery in the world"* (*The Book of Pleasure* p.38).

## THE EFFORT OF REMEMBERING

*"The soul is the ancestral animals. The body is their knowledge."*

THE FOCUS OF LIFE

In the ecstasis of trance, ritual or dreaming we may experience spontaneous impressions of deep memories. Some are remote, elusive and barely sensed, while others have the vivid impact of reality. They may summon no image, but linger as haunting nostalgias of prescience. Always they are obsessively familiar yet unknown, somehow strangely 'other'; unbidden they reach forth to touch us like fond, half-remembered lovers.

As human animals, our physical and neural structures retain vestiges of our evolution; the layered structure of the brain is comprised of fish, reptile, amphibian, bird, and so on through mammalian, primate to human; this is the physiological basis of genetic memory. Moreover, each one of us recapitulates the entire order of evolution on Earth, from protozoa to human, during the nine months of our incubation within the womb; indeed, throughout our lives we carry our ancestors and their wisdom with us - our atavisms swim as chromosomes in the ocean of our cell nuclei, their voices echo in the caverns of our bones.

Spare's conviction was that all knowledge of past, present and future entity resides within us, and under certain conditions may be drawn upon and returned into consciousness as power and knowledge. In his later writings he termed this process 'Atavistic Resurgence'; and the faculty of recall which summons such memory, 'Atavistic Nostalgia' - literally the

'homesickness of ancestry'. In *The Book of Pleasure* he describes subconsciousness as "The Storehouse of Memories with an Ever-Open Door"<sup>17</sup>:

*"Know the subconsciousness to be an epitome of all experience and wisdom, past incarnations as men animals, birds, vegetable life, etc., etc., everything that exists, has and ever will exist. Each being a stratum in the order of evolution. Naturally then, the lower we probe into these strata, the earlier will be the forms of life we arrive at; the last is the Almighty Simplicity. And if we succeed in wakening them, we shall gain their properties, and our accomplishment will correspond. They being experiences long passed, must be evoked by extremely vague suggestion, which can only operate when the mind is unusually quiet or simple... So by evoking and becoming obsessed or illuminated by these existences, we gain their magical properties, or the knowledge of their attainment. This is what already happens (everything happens at all times) though exceedingly slowly; in striving for knowledge we repel it, the mind works best on a simple diet."* THE BOOK OF PLEASURE P.47

The "vague suggestion" which Spare decrees as the method of evocation is accomplished by sigillation of the nostalgic desire. The sigil is cast into the surging tide of an intense, yearning effort of memory - into the current of Otherness wherein "everything happens at all times". Its intent fixates and isolates the designated point of the 'circle of animals,'<sup>18</sup> so that its power may resurge through the sorcerer as now. One manuscript page reproduced by Kenneth Grant in *Images & Oracles of Austin Osman Spare* (p.53) shows a fine example of such a spell:

*"I, Zos Apuleius, desire the strength of my Tigers - for my purpose is towards a great evil — therefore: Let loose the fierceness of great Tigers so I receive great obsession!"*

In *The Book of Pleasure* Spare describes the process as follows:

*"Hence the mind, by Sigils, depending upon the intensity of desire, is illuminated or obsessed (knowledge or power) from that particular Karma (the sub-conscious stratum, a particular existence and knowledge gained by it) relative to the desire, but not from a memory or experience which was recent. Knowledge is obtained by the sensation, resulting from the unity of the desire and Karma. Power, by its 'actual' vitalisation and resurrection."* THE BOOK OF PLEASURE P.51

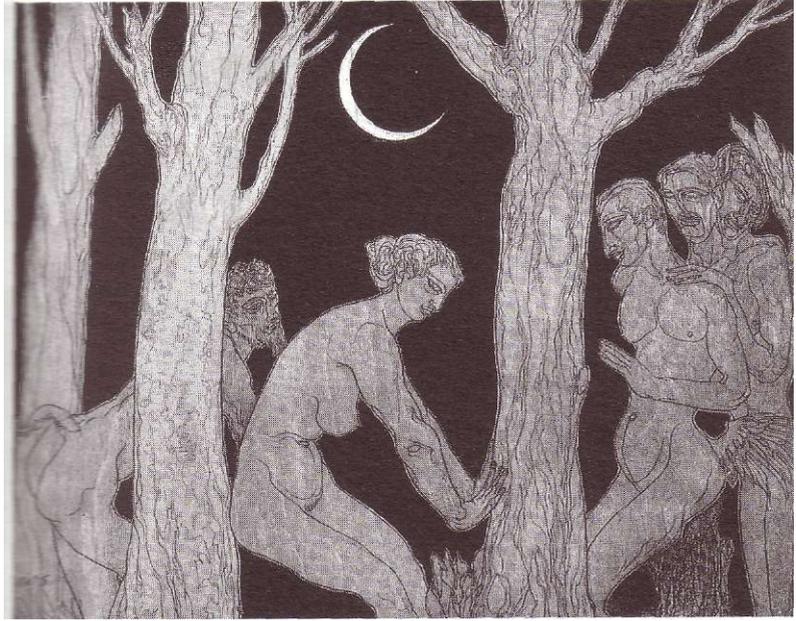
17. An allusion to J. F. C. Fuller's "The Treasurehouse of Images", (*The Equinox* Vol.1, No.3, March 1910).

18. The 'Zod-Kia' of *Earth: Inferno* is a metathesis of Zodiac - the 'circle of animals.' Hence "the Zod-Kias are the hands of Death" suggests "the atavisms are the fleshing of Kia".

*"By these means all past incarnations can be expressed, all creation seen without stirring foot..."* THE BOOK OF PLEASURE P.56<sup>19</sup>

Spare's sorcery has been described as becoming 'shamanistic' in emphasis; this comment was probably intended to contrast his pure and uncluttered method with the ceremonialism which he derided. The true link however is through his formulation of Atavistic Resurgence as the means of eliciting and empowering creative *genius*. Bestial transformation is perhaps the most ancient magical art, used by shamans to establish rapport with animals - essential for tribal societies dependent upon the hunt - and to ensorcel beast spirits and familiars for spirit journeying and shape-shifting. Such practices are associated with witchcraft the world over. However, the assumption of atavistic powers can take other forms, apart from possession and mimesis: the bestial and vegetal forms which writhe and weave through Spare's artwork - indeed the organic vitality of his bold and fluent line - indicate the ways in which he preferred to interact with atavisms. He directed their 'knowledge and power' into the

19. Spare is paraphrasing the *Tao Teh King* Chapter XLVII. The inspiration of the Tao pervades all of Spare's books, appearing as early as 1904 in *Earth: Inferno*, and greatly influenced his doctrine of the Kia.



discipline of his art; this was his recension of the primal magic, clothed in a form appropriate to his epoch. In this way Austin Spare transmitted the Current with which he had been placed in contact as a youth, by the old seeress Mrs. Paterson. His pictures and books continue this transmission to the present day, and beyond.<sup>20</sup>

One of the most striking statements contained in *The Book of Pleasure* is that sigils are "the means of inspiration, capacity or genius, and the means of accelerating evolution". The motive force of planetary evolution is not the war of attrition suggested by the phrase 'survival of the fittest'; it is mutation. Nature, ever-bountiful and, as we are told, abhorring a vacuum, experiments with every possible permutation of life and climate at some time; a mutation is a pivotal moment of change within species, which, when successful, exploits an earlier form to go beyond that form, and thereby to dictate the subsequent course of evolution: "Out of the past cometh this new thing...". Faithful to Nature's eloquent wisdom, Spare's Atavistic Resurgence directs this process into creativity:

*"Inspiration is a minor mutation evoked by a passionate nostalgia from our heritage."* THE LOGOMACHY OF ZOS

The gesture which this evokes, of 'stepping forwards, backwards', epitomises Spare's cult. Its intent is to use the mutational leaps made possible by sorcery for the cultivation of creativity and, conversely, the magical use of obsessional aesthesis as a means of obtaining knowledge and power, thereby to accelerate our own evolution.

*"Let us desire no better Pantheon than the zoomorphic in which to find a place: better to venerate our animal ancestry - until fully human - then the least attainable and most unknowable will disclose our next step."*<sup>21</sup> THE LOGOMACHY OF ZOS

Spare states in *The Book of Pleasure* chapter 'Note on the difference of Magical Obsession (Genius) and Insanity'<sup>22</sup> that:

20. Bestial symbology originated in the earliest totemic mysteries, when a variety of forms other than human were used to typify super- or trans-human forces. The god-forms of *The Book of Coming Forth by Day* and similar dynastic texts demonstrate this knowledge in its decadence. The deliberate use of animal and vegetal types as masks transmitting the powers of the Other, as the pre-human Gods, is implicit throughout Spare's work. Vide Gerald Massey's *Ancient Egypt*, Books I and II.

21. Crowley averred that his purpose was to teach humanity 'the Next Step', which he designated as being to obtain the 'Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel' or *genius*. Vide *Magick* p.158.

22. Likely penned in retort to certain harsh reviews which greeted his early exhibitions, some of which went so far as to suggest the Spare was unhinged and possibly degenerate.

*"Magical obsession is that state when the mind is illuminated by sub-conscious activity evoked voluntarily by formula at our own time, etc., for inspiration. It is the condition of Genius."* THE BOOK OF PLEASURE P.41

In truth, as sentient creatures we are creative all the time, and we are all much better artists than we think. It is the *unwilled* artistry of our believing that creates the fiction we inhabit, the web of illusion that ensorcelles us:

*"Your desires shall become flesh, your dreams reality and no fear shall alter it one whit."* ANATHEMA OF ZOS P. 10

The adept manoeuvre which Spare's sorcery entails is a harnessing of Desire, by Will, in order to redesign the Belief that we manifest around us; becoming conscious of our 'inherent dream' which Kia constantly projects, we may give truer expression to the intrinsic spirit of the creative:

*"The chief cause of genius is realisation of 'I' by an emotion that allows the lightning assimilation of what is perceived. This emotion is immoral in that it allows free association of knowledge without the accessories of belief. Its condition is, therefore, ignorance of 'I am' and 'I am not' with absent-mindedness as believing. Its most excellent state is the 'Neither-Neither,' the free or atmospheric 'I'."* THE BOOK OF PLEASURE P.43

To speak of I and Other, Ego and Subconscious, This and That, belies the fact that there is only the single continuum of Consciousness. In the temporal and spatial duality which is our habitual perception, we are never entirely 'here and now', but then and gone, or yet to be; therefore, as we experience it, all Self is atavism. Yet Self *has* no past or future, it is eternal present, eternally recurring. Our atavisms are not strictly memories - personal, ancestral or otherwise - but operate through the *medium* of memory, reaching out through nostalgia in a contraplex process; past and future echo each other endlessly, reflecting through the double-mirror of 'I' (enantiomorphism). Spare writes in his *Logomachy* that "*The conjugation of 'a priori' and 'a posteriori' creates the anoetic*", and therefore it is only through the Neither-Neither, the absent-minded moment of neverness, that we may grasp the one-pointed totality of Kia:

*"Retrospect to the point where knowledge ceases, in that law becomes its own spontaneity and is freedom."*<sup>23</sup> THE FOCUS OF LIFE P.8

23. Crowley's marginal comment in his copy of the book - "Great".

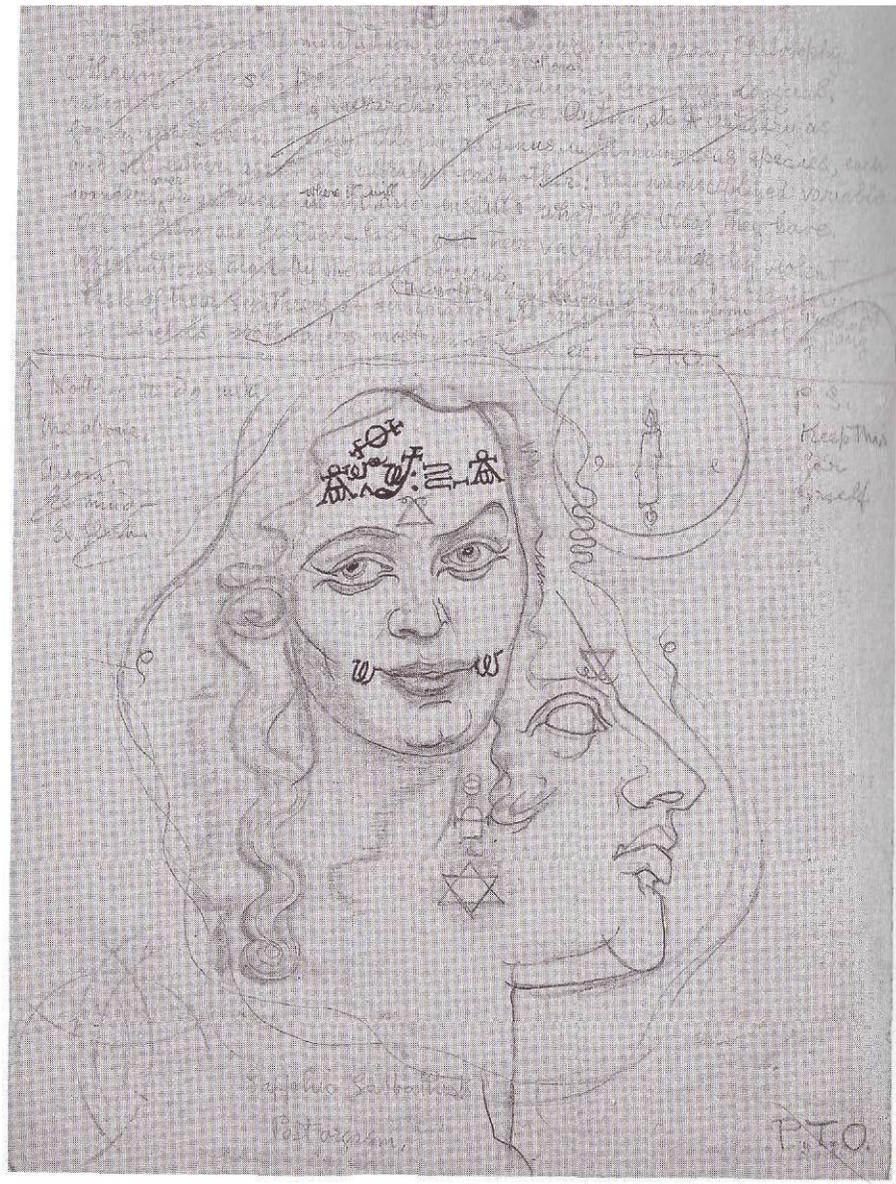


In *Earth: Inferno* Spare places the vulture-head totem of Kia at the centre of his 'Synopsis of the Inferno', a symbolic mandala of existence. This 'Mystic I', the negatively-existent point at the centre of Self, has an infinite number of reflections in the circumference of its locus; it is the kentron or polar axis upon which turns the Wheel of the Great Year of existences, the "emotional range" of our Otherness. Between these twain extremities of centre and circumference flashes the fractional moment of becoming which we experience as 'I', the lightning-bolt snaking earthwards from the eye of Void. "This focus 'I' called consciousness is unaware of its entire living embodiments but alternates and epitomises their personalities," as Spare describes it in *The Focus of Life* (p. 19).

In one sense 'Zos' implies manifest entity - our time-bound flesh and the identity we make at every moment; Zos being the only thing that *is*, it is the only thing that can *cease* to be. Yet only by virtue of its cessation is its eternal continuity assured, for Death is not an end, but a posture; the poising of awareness upon the knife-edge of Neither-Neither, at the very threshold of rebirth - one step in the cycle of becoming: "O' Zos, thou shalt live in millions offorms and every conceivable thing shall happen unto thee..." (*The Focus of Life* p.8). Zos is therefore a name of the immortal Adept who wanders the earth as Taliesin, Khidir, Merlin, Lao Tzu; the Traverser of Aeons, transcarating at every moment throughout the pan-aeon of Self - the initiating Spirit of Magic which the sorcerer seeks to incarnate by a tireless remembering of ipseity.

We who are fragmented, dismembered, seek ever to complete our unity. At that moment when perception expands to encompass its entirety, Zos - "the body considered as a whole" - is identical with Kia: the sorcerer, becoming freedom as the living embodiment of the magical Current, is free - to weave reality anew from the inherent dream of Desire.





## ENVOI

*"Our amnesia covers so much: all our early history and potentials - now latent, unknown yet..."* THE LOGOMACHY OF ZOS

The nostalgic yearning of Zos for re-union with Kia compels the 'effort of remembering' which is the key of Spare's doctrine. Yet our remembering is in truth an 'un-forgetting' - a drawing back of the veil of our inmost nature, to dispel the "cloudy enemies bom of stagnant self-hypnotism".<sup>24</sup> By silence and solitude, by sorcery and sigil, the fugitive fragments of our shadow-selves are re-called and re-membered as Self: that 'I' may realise its completion beyond necessity in the ecstasy of Self-Love, one immanent point of ever-virgin consciousness which is the fulfilment of the New Sexuality.

*"Seek thy way through that which is, into that which you desire or think i should be; for the day of great mutation is always at hand - for the chosen."*  
THE LOGOMACHY OF ZOS

Such is the Pathway of the Kia and the Zos that Spare opened. "Thither I go and none may lead..." is the affirmation of those who set out into this twilit domain. There shall be found no Initiatic hierarchies - there can be no 'attainment,' for there is no thing to be attained, and no one to attain it. To realise 'the extent of the Body', embracing Self in all and All in self; to dance in perfect equipoise upon the tightrope way, the crooked path uncoiling endlessly from the foot that treads it - this is the task of the sorcerer: a star-guided wanderer in the labyrinth of 'I'.



24. In Plato's terms 'anamnesis' - a recollection of the Forms or Ideas known prior to this lit; or, in the present context, prior to this moment *as now*, the absence which belies presence, abiding ever between.

## GLOSSARY

**ALPHABET OF DESIRE:** The formulaic point of congress with Otherness; an unspeakable grammar that articulates between Kia and individual self, mediating the sentience of the primal and inconceivable T.

**ATAVISTIC RESURGENCE:** The return into the sorcerer's consciousness of latent powers and knowledge, resurrecting the 'dead' from pre-human strata; typically manifesting through bestial and elemental forms, evoked by intense nostalgia.

**AUTOMATISM:** Spontaneous activity giving limitless expression to the latent Self, exploiting the instance of diverted ego. Inspiration always occurs in the moment of inattention, and any activity that allows the sorcerer to transpose the manifestation can be applied Magickally.

**BELIEF:** The investment of Self in entity. The process of believing necessitates a focus to which Will gravitates and is then united by the vehicle of Desire. Belief deprived of focus is free and returns to its source (Self) unless it is immediately re-applied by the sorcerer.

**CONCEPTION:** The emanation of Kia, perceived as thought.

**DEATH POSTURE:** A procedure wherein the sorcerer embraces death through a mental and physical posture, which as a mimesis of actual death embodies the Neither-Neither, the fulcrum of magical Will.

**DESIRE:** The Vortex fixating upon the focus of Belief. Through the vehicle of Desire, Self is impelled towards alignment and manifestation; yet directly Self obtains, the impulse of Desire is transformed to Pleasure.

**DIVERTIVE:** Any procedure which distracts conscious ego (see p.71).

**ECSTASY:** The instant realisation of Self transcending the dual being of self and other.

**ELEMENTAL AUTOMATA:** Residual fragments of consciousness, independent and motivated within a specific field of activity and influence. Once rendered perceptible these are delegated by the sorcerer to new functions according to intent.

**INBETWEENNESS:** The procreative instant in which Belief is suspended. The state is realised through the Neither-Neither or Death Posture, and may be seen as a point of balance; the fulcrum of Will that is the threshold of absolute possibility. Spare's early formulation of the Neither-Neither principle was augmented by his introduction of the 'Inbetweenness concepts,' which he visualised as a "*funambulatory pathway between ecstasies*".

**INTRUSIVE FAMILIAR:** A type of autonomous sentience which utilises the sorcerer as a vehicle for manifestation of its intent. Of primaeval origin, the true Intrusive communes mainly through the media of omens, dreaming, and automatism. Intimate interaction results in a gradual dissolution and reorganisation of the sorcerer's conscious ego, under the impress of the pervasive entity.

**KARMA:** The gravity, both inherited and conditioned, of unresolved beliefs - begotten by experience. Spare applied the term to distinct and organised memories stemming from outside the individual psyche; the atavistic powers which are resurged through nostalgia.

**KIA:** The unmanifest and formless inceptor of Self as all manifest forms.

**NEITHER-NEITHER:** A liminal state of mind. Through paradoxical thinking the sorcerer experiences a fecund instant in which is perceived the unlimited realisation of Self.

**NEW SEXUALITY:** The primal impulse of Desire, ever vital and imaged. The unmodified sexuality seeks to unite with all things, uninhibitedly, without identifying, and may do so in moments of spontaneity through a divertive medium, or may be cultivated by the Neither-Neither as Spare advocated.

**NOSTALGIA:** The emotive route of transference between ego and Self.

**OBSESSION:** A process contrived by the sorcerer as the vehicle for autonomous manifestation. Obsession is the apotheosis of Desire, the most powerful vortex, aligning and absorbing all lesser wants. The energy can be harnessed with the focus of a sigil, which masks intent from the conscious mind while it gestates within the subconscious, thereby engendering an autonomous consciousness, aligned via the sigil to the Will of the sorcerer. Obsession culminates in two ways: the sensation of ecstasis (pleasure), or the return of Belief to Self through manifest phenomena, i.e. the enfleshing of the magical wish. Without a focus of belief (a sigil) obsession invades the conscious mind: *propter hoc*, insanity.

**PLEASURE:** The bliss of non-desire in which the sorcerer realises magical intent. For Spare, Pleasure is the state of self in the embrace of Self-Love, the unmodified rapture of existence.

**SACRED ALIGNMENTS:** An abstract geometry of concepts or potentials for the purposes of magical resolution. Spare evolved a "*New Geometry*" through which to express the complex connections between trans-perceptual states, and graphic examples may be seen in his work.

**SELF:** The all-spacious; non-dual consciousness in objectless subjectivity. The 'Self' is the entire compass of the individualized and personal 'self' and its unremembered extension throughout Otherness.

**SEXUALITIES:** The apperception and application of the New Sexuality.

**SIGIL:** A cryptic representation of Will, delimiting Belief and rendering it transvaluative through Desire. A true sigil has potency by virtue of its latent intent, whereas a symbol has only content and meaning.

**WILL:** The unmodified impulse towards manifestation; the perceptible emanation of Kia.

**ZOS:** The conditional realisation of Self as entity, incarnating the body of Belief: the domain of the existent and the flesh. In an early manuscript *grimoire* Spare designated the "*body as a whole*" as 'Ikkah' or 'Klat', whilst "*the consciousness considered with the senses*" he called 'Sikah.'

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Fulgur would like to thank the few private collectors, public galleries and auction houses that have kindly given permission for photography or loaned pictures for reproduction in this volume. Where possible the original frame chosen by Spare has been reproduced with the picture. Where the title is unknown, a descriptive title has been supplied in square brackets.

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