

## Chapter Five

### ROSALEEN NORTON'S MAGICAL PRACTICE

Details of Norton's approach to ritual magic can be gleaned from a range of magazine articles published, for the most part, during the 1950s and 1960s, several of them autobiographical, others written by journalists fascinated by Norton's persona as 'the Witch of Kings Cross'.<sup>1</sup> There is also data from court hearings and police interviews associated with controversial photographs seized by NSW Vice Squad police in 1955 which showed Norton and Greenlees engaged in what were claimed to be ceremonial rites dedicated to Pan. In addition, there is a small amount of television documentary material<sup>2</sup> and photographic documentation (both published and unpublished) to supplement the data provided by Norton herself, both in interviews and autobiographical articles.<sup>3</sup> Finally, and not insignificantly, copies of extant unpublished letters written by the distinguished musician Eugene Goossens to Rosaleen Norton describe their shared interest in sex magic and paganism and provide important insights into the activities of Norton's inner magical circle.

The various aspects of Norton's magical practice can be summarised as follows:

- a) Individual trance-magic episodes during which Norton sought to venture forth on the 'astral planes' in a state of mental dissociation induced by self-hypnosis. It was while on these trance journeys that Norton claimed to encounter the 'god-forms' of the principal deities in her magical pantheon.
- b) Sex magic activities with members of her magical coven, based substantially on practices derived from the magical writings of Aleister Crowley.
- c) Ritual magic invocations and other ceremonial activities which included improvised elements from Kundalini Yoga, Left-Hand Path Tantra and voodoo. These ritual activities were undertaken by Norton in her role as 'High Priestess at the Altar of Pan', together with members of her inner magical circle.

d) Miscellaneous magical activities, including attempted ‘magical flights’ seeking to simulate the ‘aerial’ journeys allegedly undertaken by medieval witches when they ‘rode’ to the Witches’ Sabbath, and also magical hexings and improvised ritual magical workings using various drugs and mind-altering stimulants.

### ***Trance journeys***

As noted in the previous chapter, magical trance journeys became a central feature of Norton’s magical practice after she began exploring self-hypnosis when she was 23 years old.<sup>4</sup> Norton’s exploration of trance states was also central to her creative process as an artist, and this aspect of her work will be described in Chapter Six. However it is pertinent to note here that several of Norton’s artworks from the 1940s, including such drawings as *Astral Scene*<sup>5</sup> and *The Sphinx*<sup>6</sup>, specifically show her naked body in a comatose horizontal position with magical ‘thought-forms’ issuing from her head.<sup>7</sup> In *Astral Scene* a stream of white energy zig-zags into space from Norton’s mouth, culminating in a magical *sigil* which seems to split into two magical ‘horns’ and apparently results in the successful invocation of a horned deity. This deity is described in the accompanying caption as the ‘cryptic-faced Aegypan [who] represents Being’ [Norton’s capitals]. The caption beneath



Plate 54: *Astral Scene* – a pencil drawing from the early 1940s showing ectoplasm issuing from Norton’s mouth as she projects a magical sigil

this image, published in *Pix* magazine in July 1943 and evidently written with Norton's input,<sup>8</sup> identifies the zig-zag energy as 'ectoplasm issuing from [Norton's] mouth' and states that this is the 'astral body' – a clear indication that Norton had been influenced by modern spiritualism as well as other aspects of the western esoteric tradition.<sup>9</sup> Ectoplasm is an ethereal substance which is said to emanate from the bodies of spirit mediums while they are in a state of trance, thereby allowing deceased spirits to manifest themselves visually to the audience assembled in the seance.<sup>10</sup> However, the fact that the mythic figure of the 'cryptic-faced Aegypan' appeared to Norton during this trance journey rather than the spirit-form of an actual, deceased person (which would be the normal expectation during a spiritualistic seance) indicates that Norton was using trance states to 'project her astral body'<sup>11</sup> with magical intent, rather than taking the passive role of a spiritualistic trance medium. In *Sphinx and Her Secrets* the magical intent associated with the act of astral projection is even clearer. The picture is dominated by a central female head adorned with ancient Egyptian head-gear: this figure clearly embodies Norton's conception of a 'female' Sphinx.<sup>12</sup> Two other mythic beings are shown rising up behind her. One is a naked male figure with circular horns – possibly a depiction of Pan; the other is a bare-breasted ancient Goddess wearing a ceremonial robe. The head-gear worn by the central female Sphinx-figure is surmounted by a serpent rising up from a coil – a likely reference to the *Kundalini* serpent – while immediately behind this serpent a solar orb radiates wispy filaments of energy, an allusion to the serpent's 'fiery' nature.<sup>13</sup>

In his 1948 critique of Norton's art-works, 'The Art of Rosaleen Norton', published in *Arna*, Owen M. Broughton writes that the figure of the Sphinx 'has become synonymous with Mystery and is the Guardian of Secrets'.<sup>14</sup> Broughton also draws attention to the fact that the naked figure of Norton, who is shown horizontal in a state of trance, is depicted as lying within the form of a *yonis*, or vulva – a symbol not only of Norton's 'Receptivity to Forces from other planes and Dimensions of Being', as Broughton puts it, but also an indication of Norton's interest in Tantra and Kundalini Yoga.<sup>15</sup> Broughton also notes that 'The central face is the Spirit of the Sphinx which embodies the mystery of Being – which can be applied both to Being in general and to the Self. The two figures behind and merging into the Sphinx represent the ... active and passive principles in Nature and the Male and Female Principles in the Self.'<sup>16</sup>



Plate 55: *Sphinx and her Secrets* (Plate 11 in the *Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton*). Norton's comatose body is clearly visible – a visual reference to her magical trance technique

If Norton believed that she was able to contact the 'active and passive principles in Nature' as god-forms on the astral planes – an ability she emphasised in her statements to psychologist L.J. Murphy<sup>17</sup> – she also believed that she had encountered the entity she referred to as the Adversary (Lucifer / Satan) as an embodied, tangible presence. In an interview I conducted with Norton in her Roslyn Gardens, Kings Cross, apartment in 1977 she told me that she regarded Lucifer not as 'evil', but as humanity's natural adversary. In Norton's words:

He binds and limits man when it appears that he is growing too big for his boots. He tries to trick man, not with malicious intent, so much as exposing the limitations of the ego and man's pride in his own existence.<sup>18</sup>

Norton's concept of Lucifer is also referred to in Broughton's 1948 article, mentioned above. Here Broughton writes that Norton's portrait, *The Adversary*, 'represents the "Opposition Principle" operating throughout Nature – the large figure being the personification of this principle and the small figure depicting Man attempting to challenge an indestructible power.'<sup>19</sup>

Norton told me during the 1977 interview that she invoked the gods ‘inwardly’ and ‘intuitively’. When I asked Norton whether the ‘gods’ and the magical universe generally could be regarded as a projection of humanity’s own existential reality Norton rejected this approach emphatically. Norton made it clear to me that, for her, the gods existed *in their own right* and not simply as projections of the psyche, and she believed that it was a ‘very egotistical and self-centred approach which places man on a pedestal in creation’.<sup>20</sup> Norton also emphasized that she knew such magical entities as Hecate, Lucifer and Pan ‘not as extensions of her own consciousness, but as beings who [would] grace her with their presence if it pleased *them* [Norton’s emphasis] and not subject to her will’.<sup>21</sup> My notes from the 1977 interview with Norton read as follows:

She says that she has discovered certain of the qualities of these gods in her own temperament and this is a natural catalyst which makes their invocation much easier and more effective. But she does not contain them in the manner of the occult practice of ‘assuming the god form’,<sup>22</sup> for example. She goes to be with them on the astral planes, and on different occasions it may be that they show different aspects, or facets, of their own magical potency.<sup>23</sup>

Norton’s magical trance journeys invariably took place in a secure location. According to Norton’s older sister, Cecily Boothman, Norton used to come across from Kings Cross to Kirribilli on the lower North Shore near the Sydney Harbour Bridge, to undertake some of these trance journeys. Boothman lived in an old block of flats in Kirribilli Avenue with large windows overlooking the harbour. According to Boothman, Norton regarded this apartment as her second home and would often spend time there.<sup>24</sup> There was a special tree in a park nearby and ‘Roie used to meditate near it, go into trance, and communicate with the spirit of the tree’.<sup>25</sup> According to my notes from an interview conducted in August 1986, Boothman was well aware that her sister had a natural ability to enter trance states and other dissociated forms of consciousness, and was willing to assist her in this process. On one occasion, Boothman was present when Norton went into trance states continuously over a five-day period. Boothman left water and understood that her sister’s body ‘mustn’t be disturbed’.<sup>26</sup>

Norton also confirmed in her autobiographical article ‘Witches Want No Recruits’, published in January 1957,<sup>27</sup> that her trance journeys could last as long as five days:

...some years ago I underwent a deep trance lasting five days. Shortly after this I met a Buddhist monk from Burma, who was an expert on such things. He seemed astounded when I described the contents of this trance, and after questioning me closely on the subject, said that it had undoubtedly been what some Buddhist schools call the 'Trance of Annihilation'.<sup>28</sup>

While any interpretation of Norton's experience of the 'Trance of Annihilation' must necessarily remain speculative<sup>29</sup> it seems clear that she was capable of entering deep trance states in which she had metaphysical experiences involving encounters with such mythic and magical entities as Pan, Hecate, The Adversary ( Lucifer/ Satan), Lilith and the Werplon, referred to earlier. Reproducing the 'god-forms' associated with these magical beings became a central feature of Norton's creative art-making process during the 1940 and 1950s – a process discussed further in Chapter Six.

An additional point of interest concerns Norton's depiction of herself as naked while in a state of trance. According to Cecily Boothman this was a symbolic device indicating that a 'voyage of the spirit' was taking place. Boothman maintained that Norton believed it would be less effective depicting herself wearing clothing.<sup>30</sup>

### ***Norton's magical coven***

For most of her adult life Norton lived in squalid, dimly lit apartments and frequently her ritual practice often took place within a relatively confined space, in what otherwise served as her living quarters. 179 Brougham Street, Darlington was in a very run-down condition when Rosaleen Norton and Gavin Greenlees lived there in the 1950s.<sup>31</sup> When Norton and Greenlees first moved in, having returned to Sydney after the Rowden White Gallery exhibition in Melbourne, the paint on the terrace house was flaking badly, the slate roof was in a state of disrepair, and the house was occupied by an assortment of vagrants and bohemians.<sup>32</sup> At the beginning of their tenancy, Norton, Greenlees and a number of pet cats shared the basement flat, which was actually a converted laundry and a sign which read *The Female Vagrant* was pinned to the door.<sup>33</sup> As mentioned earlier, at this time the attic was occupied by a one-handed man named Mick who emerged periodically amidst piles of assorted newspapers. Later Greenlees and Norton shared the attic as a living space. They also constructed their ritual altars in this room. At one end of the attic a huge painted mural of Pan served as a backdrop to one of the altars; a second, smaller, altar was located in the opposite corner of the

room.<sup>34</sup> The attic also contained what journalist Dave Barnes described as a 'long low couch'<sup>35</sup> as well as other items of domestic furniture.

Several journalists who visited Norton during the 1950s and 1960s to interview her have provided detailed descriptions of the Brougham Street flat and its embellishments. In *Sydney Observed* (1968) Gavin Souter describes the ambience of Kings Cross during the 1950s and goes on to provide fascinating details of his personal visit to the Norton apartment in Brougham Street:

From...the top of William Street, King's Cross has projected its identity up Victoria Street as far as the Slamet Makan Indonesian restaurant, and down as far as the Swiss Inn; up Darlinghurst Road as far as the Tabou near Elizabeth Bay Road; down Macleay Street to the Chevron-Hilton; down Bayswater Road to the All Nations Club; and down William Street to Brougham Street, where Rosaleen Norton used to burn her incense to Pan and Hecate. Perhaps she still does. It is a few years now since I visited Miss Norton's terrace house, but I recall the occasion clearly; it was about 11 a.m. and although bright sunlight was slanting through the leaves of the plane-trees downstairs, the Norton living-room was kept dark with heavy drapes. Against one wall stood an altar decorated with a painting of Pan, a set of stag's antlers, a red cactus flower in a brass urn, a cobra's head candlestick holder, and a few blobs of candle grease from the last ritual. The name *Uriel* had been chalked in several places on the wall. 'I must take those off,' said Miss Norton apologetically. 'They were put up for a particular operation – an invocation.'

Before I left, Miss Norton jokingly put on a rubber lizard's head mask. 'A friend of mine wore this to the Kashmir one night,' she said. 'It had all the *tapuls* quite worried. A tapul, in case you are not familiar with the word, is a dummy mask made for occult purposes by a Tibetan sorcerer.... Miss Norton, her eyebrows pencilled upwards in mephistophelean curves and a talisman around her neck, may sometimes be observed sitting among the tapuls at the Kashmir coffee-lounge – an object of timid curiosity, like a lovebird among sparrows.'<sup>36</sup>

A later [1962] visit to the same Norton apartment is described by Bob Walker and Richard Neville in 'Deliver us to E-ville', an article written for the University of New South Wales student newspaper, *Tharunka*:

Timorously, 'Tharunka' entered the King's Cross coffee shop which exhibits those of her paintings not condemned by the Vice Squad, and were given a variety of directions to follow. Finally they found themselves outside a dingy tenement house in a locale of dubious reputation. The windows were boarded up, paint had long since peeled from its walls. The time, midnight, when Cinderellas go to bed and witches rise.



They knocked at the door, and waited. They knocked again. Finally, as one went to ring a bell suddenly noticed high up on the door, it creaked open and a dark figure said ‘Yes?’

In the flickering light of a brass lamp they caught glimpses of a narrow face, prominent nose and teeth, with eyebrows angled sharply upwards. In fact, somewhat like the mask-like paintings in the coffee-shop.

They were led into a cramped basement room. The low ceiling was of bare boards, cobwebs hanging like stalactites. A red covered bed was along one wall; opposite there was an altar draped with blue cloth, on top of which were gilded antlers, porcelains of entwined snakes, panthers and a variety of lamps and candles. Masks grinned from the walls; four mirrors glinted in the half-light, and shelves of grey-old books were variously placed in what space remained.

Rowie [sic] was dressed in black tights and a red sweater. The room was heated by a makeshift gas ring [on] the floor, illuminated by a red lamp whose shade was decorated with daemonic faces. There was no source of ventilation.<sup>37</sup>

The lack of ventilation in Norton’s apartment was something that Dave Barnes had also noticed in 1956 when he interviewed her for a second time, accompanied by a staff photographer.<sup>38</sup> At this stage Norton and Greenlees had moved upstairs from the basement to the attic. ‘For the first time the



Plate 56: The Pan altar at 179 Brougham Street, photographed by Vice Squad detective Bert Trevenar in October 1955



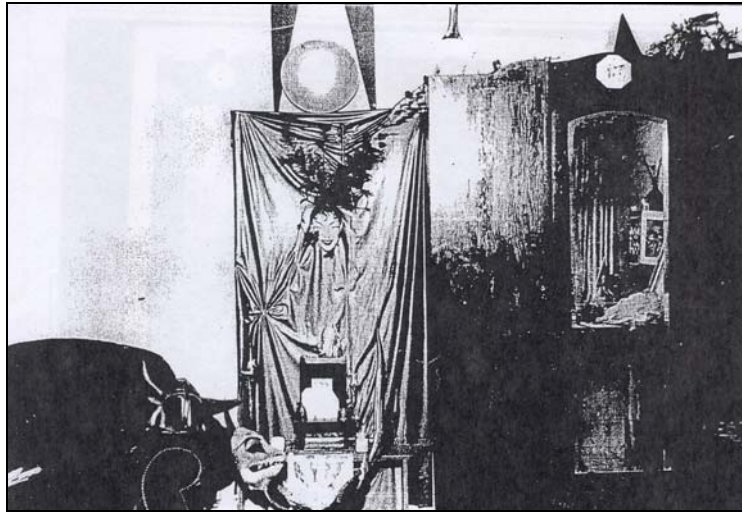


Plate 57: The smaller Hecate altar, also photographed by Bert Trevenar in October 1955

room seemed oppressive,' Barnes wrote. 'We noticed that the black curtains seemed to keep out nearly all the sunlight. And air. The attic seemed suddenly nearly as dark and damp as that four-years-ago basement.'<sup>39</sup>

The confined ritual working space in the Brougham Street attic suggests that the number of magical practitioners working closely with Norton was very restricted. When journalist D.L. Thompson visited Brougham Street in 1955 to interview Norton and also to meet other coven practitioners he was told that Norton's immediate magical group consisted of seven members.<sup>40</sup> And yet Norton herself later gave widely varying responses to different interviewers who asked the same question about her coven membership. When Bob Walker and Richard Neville asked Norton in 1962 how many people belonged to her cult she gave the figure as 'roughly 300',<sup>41</sup> and in the Channel Nine television documentary on Kings Cross, *The Glittering Mile* (1964), in which Norton was interviewed, Norton at first claimed 'thousands' of followers and then admitted to exaggerating before revising the figure down to 'hundreds'. In 1972, when Norton was asked the same question by *Sunday Telegraph* journalist Kerry McGlynn, she claimed she had 'at least 200 followers in Sydney and hundreds more throughout the country'.<sup>42</sup> However the wildly varying figures may conceal a different issue. If Norton had begun to think of herself at this time as the titular head of all the witchcraft covens in Australia – a situation suggested in a by-line in Dave Barnes' 1967 article 'Confessions of a Witch',<sup>43</sup> – the larger numbers may be approximately correct.<sup>44</sup> However,



Plate 58: Norton with her ritual masks, photographed in 1955

in this case the estimates of coven membership numbers would not be referring specifically to Norton's inner group of close magical associates, which would have been very small – around seven, as the Thompson article suggests. It is interesting to note, in this context, that Norton's sister and confidante, Cecily Boothman, denied that Norton's Brougham Street coven actually existed, in terms of the usual meaning of the expression 'witches' coven' – which generally means a group of up to thirteen initiated members.<sup>45</sup> My handwritten notes from my first interview with Boothman (c.1982) say that according to her, 'Roie didn't have a coven as such – Roie had a group of "occult friends".'

Whether or not they were simply 'friends' or 'coven members', however, two close magical associates of Norton's were nevertheless included in D.L. Thompson's interview at the Brougham Street flat in 1955. They were not identified by their real names but were referred to in the article according to the ritual masks they were wearing. One of the coven members – described as 'plump, dark, and middle-aged, with a face like a successful dentist' – was initially introduced to Thompson as 'Mr Abrahams' but later conceded that this was not his real name. He did claim, however, to be an electrical engineer,<sup>46</sup> which provides us with a clue to his possible identity.<sup>47</sup> Mr Abrahams later donned a green Toad mask and is subsequently referred to in

the article as the Toad. Norton changed into her ritual clothing, emerging in a loosely hung 'witch's apron' and a black shawl. She was also wearing a Cat mask that had an opening allowing her to continue smoking a cigarette through her long cigarette-holder. Thompson refers to her as the Cat. The other group member present at the interview was the Rat, whom Thompson describes as a 'taciturn, squarely built type'.<sup>48</sup> Thompson's interview took place in the Brougham Street attic through a haze of incense smoke, in front of the large painting of Pan – a figure Thompson mistook for the Devil:

To the left, in the shadow was an old settee; above it a nude and rather shy-making [sic] picture painted by Miss Norton. Further left was what was clearly the coven's place of worship – an altar, with a man-sized picture (painted by Miss Norton) of a particularly toothy devil. To the left and right of Lucifer two candles burned, while in front a spirit lamp added its quota of smoke to the generally murky atmosphere. Odd horns, devil's potions, and other black magic bric-a-brac stood around... Behind us, almost lost in gloom, was a deep easy chair, and beside it a smaller altar with a sea-shell full of bat's blood or something of the sort...<sup>49</sup>



Plate 59: Norton at her Pan altar, photographed in 1955

Thompson began his interview by asking how many members were in the coven and the Cat's response was: 'Seven.'<sup>50</sup> Thompson now asked whether this was the only coven in Sydney, to which the Toad replied: 'No, this is only one of half a dozen.... As you see, we are quite well equipped, although perhaps a little restricted for space. There is one coven which I visit which is much better equipped. However, this serves our purpose admirably, and we are all indebted to Miss Norton for accommodating and decorating it.'<sup>51</sup> Thompson now asked whether the coven practised 'certain cruelties' as part of its rites, to which the Toad responded: 'That is completely false. Cruelties have been only too common in all the so-called religions since history began, but the followers of Lucifer<sup>52</sup> practise no cruelty to man or animal.'<sup>53</sup>

Thompson turned again to Norton who was now sitting topless in her skimpy witch's apron, having discarded her shawl,<sup>54</sup> and asked her somewhat ingenuously: 'But what do you get out of witchcraft? If you don't do it for the dressing up or for the ritualistic posing, which we have just photographed, why on earth do you do it all?' Thompson records her response:

'What do I get out of it?' said Miss Norton. She pushed the cat mask to the back of her head and lit another cigarette. The cool air from the window chilled her bare body and she reached for her shawl again. 'I get a life that holds infinite possibilities and is entirely satisfying to me in all planes of consciousness.'<sup>55</sup>

The Thompson article is a significant document because in addition to providing details from the interviews it also contains details of the group's magical activities written by Norton herself – details acknowledged as such in the text. Norton confirms that she was 'self-initiated'<sup>56</sup> and that she 'took the Oath of Allegiance to the Horned God when [she] was 13...'<sup>57</sup> Norton also writes: 'I had not been taught any ceremonial magic, nor had I read anything technical on the subject – it just "came through" instinctively.'<sup>58</sup> Norton then goes on to provide important information relating to the group's structure and ritual practice:

Sorcerers or witches (the term applies to either sex, although males are generally known as warlocks, and the more advanced as wizards) are not confined to any age, class, professional or social sphere. The youngest I have encountered (apart from myself) was a male of 17, the oldest a witch of 65.

As I said, this coven has seven members. The oldest is 51 and the youngest 25. There are also several associate or honorary members of both sexes, and our last meeting was held in my own studio temple here. Other meeting places have included two North

Shore suburbs and an eastern suburb. In summer we meet anywhere out of doors that is suitable.

Initiation rites differ somewhat according to the coven, but are broadly, the same. The neophyte, after a period of probation, is asked certain questions. After that he or she assumes a ceremonial posture (one hand on the crown of the head, the other under the sole of one foot) to take the oath of allegiance to the presiding deities of the covens, male and female, sometimes called Pan and Hecate. A ritual to the four Elemental Powers, either before or during the initiation, is also necessary.<sup>59</sup>

After initiation comes a form of baptism, when a new name is given to the initiate. It is usual for him to be presented with a magnetised talisman<sup>60</sup> and a piece of cord known as the Witches' Garter.<sup>61</sup> Ceremonial attire ranges from nakedness to full regalia – robes, hood, sandals, and accessories. Different types of incense are used, according to the nature of the rites in progress, and special herbs are sometimes infused and drunk.<sup>62</sup>

Norton concluded her interview with Thompson by commenting that she was 'proud of being a witch, sorceress, or what you will' and that she had provided this information to counteract the tone of a number of articles published previously by *Australasian Post*, which may have conveyed a quite different impression of the 'Witch Cult'.<sup>63</sup>

### ***Doreen Valiente's account of the Norton coven***

Information about Norton's coven is also included in a book titled *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*<sup>64</sup> by the noted British witch Doreen Valiente (1922-1999), who was at one time High Priestess in Gerald Gardner's coven and helped develop key ritual procedures in the modern witchcraft revival (see Chapter Two). Valiente had gained this information about Norton and her ritual activities from a British journalist, Leslie Roberts, who also worked as a waiter on the ocean-liner *S.S. Orcades* which covered the sea-route between Britain and Australia in the late 1950s. Valiente had earlier told Roberts about Norton and he in turn became interested in the possibility of meeting her. Norton had sent Gerald Gardner a copy of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, and this is how Valiente herself had first heard of the Australian witch and artist.<sup>65</sup>

According to Valiente, Roberts located Norton shortly after the *Orcades* docked in Sydney in 1959, and they got on well together. Valiente writes about Roberts:

It was not long before he was initiated into her coven. I have his scribbled notes of the events, autographed by Rosaleen Norton herself. He also recorded a good deal of personal information about Rosaleen.<sup>66</sup>

According to Roberts' notes, Norton's tradition of witchcraft was known as 'The Goat Fold' and this branch of the Old Religion had been brought to Australia by some of the people who were deported from Britain as convicts during the colonial era.<sup>67</sup> Valiente says there was a Welsh flavour to some of the names associated with Norton's coven and this may have arisen because 'Rosaleen's family was of Welsh extraction':

The first degree of initiation is called 'Consurier', which is a form of an old Welsh word meaning 'wise woman' or 'cunning man'. A phrase from the ritual says: 'Walking on the heath, I met some friends. I have been in the cauldron and out again. They told me I am one of the green shoots of Pryderie.' This word is evidently a version of the name Pryderi, one of the heroes of the old Welsh romance called the *Mabinogion*, which is full of magic and mystery. Its heroes and heroines are probably the ancient gods under a medieval guise, as they were sung about by the Welsh bards after Wales became Christianized. Pryderie seems to have been the miraculous child of Queen Rhiannon, who is the version of the mother goddess herself.

It was perhaps because of his Welsh connection that Rosaleen accepted Leslie so readily as a member of her coven. His full name was Leslie Tudor Roberts, and he believed himself to be descended from a Welshman called Tudor Roberts who was a chamberlain at the court of Henry VIII.<sup>68</sup>

With regard to magical tools and ritual nudity, according to the notes Valiente received from Roberts the following ritual practices were a feature of Norton's coven:

Some of Rosaleen's rituals were conducted in a state of ritual nudity, but often she preferred to dress in robes and she and her coven made much use of ritual masks in the form of heads of animals and birds....

The Sabbats were the same as those observed by European witches, though of course in Australia midsummer and midwinter would be at the opposite times of the year from those in Europe, so the witches' year had to be adjusted accordingly...

Like Gardnerian witches, Rosaleen and her coven used 'working tools', though not so many as are enumerated in Gardner's rituals. They had only five, namely the athame (air), the cup (water), the censer (fire), the pentacle (earth) and the cord (spirit). They made much use of consecrated cords in their workings. They also had a ritual meal of wine and cakes, the latter being specially made of wholemeal flour, olive oil and honey. The wine was drunk from a horn, which was passed round the circle deosil (clockwise).<sup>69</sup>



Valiente also provides details of a text address from the initiation ritual which Roberts says he received from Norton. This was called *The First Knowledge* and, according to Valiente, 'Leslie let me copy this down'.<sup>70</sup>

The text reads as follows:

The Craft is only part of the Way and must not be mistaken for all of it. But in itself it is important, for it can be used to lighten burdens and to help in the Great Work. It is not for the weak. Had you been such, you would not be here. Therefore, know this: some have the power, most have it not. If you have it, it springs from within you, from the will, the mind and the spirit; and it can be joined to external symbols. It must grow through practice, as you gain knowledge and skill. The implements, words, symbols and spells are your working tools. You must be guided by the Gods who dwell in the mind and body. The Officers of the coven will tell you of the Gods, for this knowledge is too secret to be written. Always remember that you must be stronger than the powers you evoke. Knowing how this is done is one of the signs of mastery. Therefore to the Work, and to the knowledge that is joy and strength and light and life everlasting.<sup>71</sup>

Valiente admits to slightly amending the grammar of the original and writes: 'I think it gives a good idea of Rosaleen's attitude to witchcraft.'<sup>72</sup> However it is highly doubtful that Norton would have written this text herself. Norton was never one to lapse into a pontificating, formal style of writing and the contrived seriousness of such phrases as 'Therefore, know this: some have the power, most have it not' and the almost Christian tone of 'Therefore to the Work, and to the knowledge that is joy and strength and light and life everlasting' are most unlikely to have come from Norton's lips or pen. She was, after all, a creature of the night and had said so on numerous occasions in the past. Norton does not refer to her magical procedures as 'the Work' in any of her earlier articles or interviews so we must infer that, if it is authentic, *The First Knowledge* was a document that Norton had acquired from another source. It was most likely of British origin, where ritual formality was more valued in occult circles. It is possible that around the time Roberts met her in Sydney, Norton may have incorporated *The First Knowledge* into the activities of her local magical group although it is not referred to in the 1955 Thompson interview referred to earlier, which includes ritual details provided by Norton herself.

It is possible that by 1959 – three years after the departure of Sir Eugene Goossens – the act of asserting a sense of 'occult lineage' may have become important to Norton, or one of her close magical associates,<sup>73</sup> as had also been the cases with witches in Britain who were keen to demonstrate that they were



restoring the forgotten lineage of the Old Religion (see Chapter Two). The allegedly Welsh orientation of Norton's personal witchcraft lineage is also very much open to question. Her father was English and her mother a New Zealander of Jewish extraction.<sup>74</sup> Even more significantly, from the beginning, Norton had made it clear – and this is supported by her autobiographical articles in the *Australasian Post* in 1956 and 1957 as well as by references in the 1955 Thompson interview – her central deity was Pan and not one of the Welsh Celtic deities, and the other central deities in both her art and her personal magical cosmology were Hecate, Lilith and The Adversary (Lucifer). Other elements of Norton's ritual practice – as is clear both from textual evidence that links some of her thinking and ritual practice to the writings of Aleister Crowley<sup>75</sup> and photographs, already referred to, that show she invoked Jewish archangels like Uriel – indicate that she was more influenced by the magic of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and *Thelema* than by Celtic tradition.

There is one additional, somewhat surprising statement in Valiente's account. Valiente writes that

members of Rosaleen Norton's coven had a special handshake which they used between themselves. Leslie was taught this handshake and he always used it from then onwards among his closest friends. I do not know of any other coven which uses a sign like this. Perhaps it may have been derived from Masonic sources.<sup>76</sup>

The founding members of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn were all Freemasons, and if this handshake was indeed part of Norton's coven procedure in the late 1950s it too seems to have been a practice introduced for effect to reinforce the notion of a secret occult lineage – an idea that may have been suggested by one of Norton's magical associates but which is unlikely to have come from Norton herself. Nowhere in Norton's own writings or in her lengthy interview with L.J. Murphy at the University of Melbourne, which was very probing, is there any mention of a Masonic component to Norton's magical practice.

However other statements made by Valiente are definitely supported by corroborating data. Valiente writes that 'The deities invoked by Rosaleen and her coven were called Pan and Hecate, though other names were also used.'<sup>77</sup> This assertion is certainly supported by statements from Norton as well as by photographs taken in 1955 by Vice Squad detective Bert Trevenar which confirm D.L. Thompson's observation, namely that there were two altars in

Norton's Brougham Street flat – one dedicated to Pan and the smaller one to Hecate.<sup>78</sup> Dave Barnes' interview with Norton in 1956 similarly alluded to a ritual altar in both North and South.<sup>79</sup> There is also supporting evidence for Valiente's statement that Norton's coven made much use of ritual masks in the form of heads of animals and birds: photographs of masked coven members, including Norton herself, were published in the *Australasian Post* in October 1955.<sup>80</sup>

Valiente was aware that several aspects of Norton's ritual practice were improvised and spontaneous, a point reinforced recently by magical practitioner Dave Robinson (aka Wayland the Smith), who was a friend of Norton's and a regular visitor to the Brougham Street flat in the early 1960s.<sup>81</sup> Valiente was also aware that Norton had taken a private oath of allegiance to Pan for she writes: '...she had never read of this ritual anywhere. It just "came through" instinctively...',<sup>82</sup> a statement which is clearly at odds with the notion that Norton was continuing a Welsh Celtic witchcraft lineage dating back to convict days. It is therefore apparent that while some details in Valiente's account can be substantiated by reference to other sources, including Norton's own statements, other details supplied by Leslie Roberts remained contradictory and unresolved.

Nevertheless, despite the contradictory elements in the Norton coven material that Leslie Roberts shared with Doreen Valiente one point is indisputable: the name of Leslie Roberts is one of the few that can be definitively linked to Norton's magical group in the 1950s – we know this because Valiente was able to witness documents from the Australian coven that bore Norton's own signature.

Who else is known by name as an early member of Norton's magical coven? One of Norton's long-standing 'occult friends', to use Cecily Boothman's somewhat quaint expression, was Bill Turnbull, to whom Norton bequeathed her *athame* [her magical dagger] and other magical equipment in her will.<sup>83</sup> The fact that Turnbull was bequeathed personal ritual equipment that had belonged to Norton herself, including her prized ceremonial dagger, strongly suggests that he was a long-standing member of her inner magical circle, although for how long is unknown.<sup>84</sup> Norton's publisher, Walter Glover, claimed to know of three other individuals who were rumoured to be members of Norton's inner magic circle: he named them as Jack Davey, the prominent radio announcer; George Nathan, a wealthy Jewish bookmaker, and Henry

Foster, an engineer who specialised in oven maintenance and who worked at a bakery in Bondi Junction.<sup>85</sup> Glover understood that Foster was the ‘high priest’ in Norton’s coven and the circumstantial evidence provided earlier suggests he may have been the coven member who referred to himself first as Mr Abrahams and then as the Toad, in D.L. Thompson’s interview.<sup>86</sup> More recently, in June 1999, Sydney-based crime writer Ned McCann was told by Detective Bert Trevenar that there were ‘malicious rumours’ circulating around the time of Sir Eugene Goossens’ departure claiming that Sir Charles Moses, General Manager of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, and his assistant, A.N. (Huck) Finlay were also members of the coven, but this assertion had not been proven.<sup>87</sup> Aside from these possible connections – several of which are speculative and unsubstantiated – further information on Norton’s inner circle of magical associates has not been forthcoming. There is, however, one close associate of Rosaleen Norton whose magical activity in her inner circle has been documented in some detail. This figure is Sir Eugene Goossens, and the ritual practices he and Norton were engaged in included various forms of sex magic based largely on the *Thelemic* teachings and practices of Aleister Crowley.

### ***Norton and Crowleyian sex magic***

As described in detail in Chapter Three, the modern practice of sex magic derives substantially from the magical philosophy and ritual activities of Aleister Crowley. Other leading esoteric practitioners of sex magic, as noted earlier, include Paschal Beverly Randolph, Theodor Reuss and Kenneth Grant,<sup>88</sup> but their writings are not acknowledged by Rosaleen Norton in her bibliography and it is unlikely that she was aware of them. Very few of Grant’s major works were available in Norton’s lifetime, Reuss was known primarily in Germany and died when Norton was only six, and an accessible English-language version of Paschal Beverly Randolph’s 19<sup>th</sup> century text *Sexual Magic* was published only as recently as 1988, nine years after Norton’s death.<sup>89</sup> On the other hand, Crowley’s *Magick in Theory and Practice* is listed in Norton’s bibliography<sup>90</sup> and there are several references to Crowley in the private correspondence between Norton and Goossens.<sup>91</sup> *Magick in Theory and Practice*, first published in 1929, was an extremely rare item during Norton’s lifetime – the undated pirated edition released in New York during the 1960s was not available when *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* was published. However we now know that Norton collected rare and relatively obscure volumes on magic and erotic verse issued by Crowley. This latter point is demonstrated by the fact that a limited edition volume titled

*Konx Om Pax*,<sup>92</sup> which was self-published by Crowley in London in 1907 – restricted to 500 numbered copies and printed on handmade paper – was part of Norton’s estate following her death: it was listed for sale in 1996, along with several of Norton’s original etchings and drawings.<sup>93</sup>

In addition to drawing on the ceremonial sex magic practices of Aleister Crowley, which were described at length in Chapter Three, Norton’s sex magic approach also involved the practice of arousing *Kundalini* energy. Norton had alluded to the Kundalini in the symbolism of her controversial drawing *Fohat*, which was reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*: this was one of the two offending images that had to be blacked out from the original edition before it could be legally released for sale in Australia.<sup>94</sup> According to Norton the image of *Fohat* – which depicted him as a goat-headed deity with a large serpentine phallus – was intended to convey ‘the dynamic energy of cosmic ideation’.<sup>95</sup> As Norton wrote in a personal commentary on *Fohat* which she later passed to her publisher, Walter Glover, ‘The goat is a symbol of energy and creativity: the serpent of elemental force and eternity.’ Norton went on to link her drawing to the power of the Kundalini, which is unleashed through Tantric sex practices in order to facilitate the release of cosmic consciousness. The following details are previously unpublished notes relating to the *Kundalini* and the image of *Fohat* which Norton prepared while she was selecting artworks for inclusion in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*:<sup>96</sup>

*Kundalini* – the undifferentiated elemental and potential creative power of the Self (collective unconscious, personal and impersonal or racial), generally symbolised as the serpent and traditionally associated with the spinal cord. When latent it manifests itself only sporadically and partially in the sex force and sometimes in artistic creativity. Active, it confers supernormal powers in various directions. Kundalini is generally represented as a serpent: the serpent penis of Fohat is the same symbol used here to denote macrocosmic creativity. The phoenix is an emblem of immortality.

A third aspect of Norton’s interest in sex magic relates to her own individual sexual preferences, which were candidly discussed during a lengthy interview with the University of Melbourne psychologist, L.J. Murphy, in August 1949 – an interview which has already been mentioned in relation to the data it yielded about Norton’s magical cosmology.

When Murphy and Norton discussed the latter’s sexual history she revealed that she had her first sexual experience at the age of 12 with a boy of her own age: ‘I found it very painful and did not try again.’ She had her next sexual

experience at the age of 17 and Murphy records that from this time onwards her sex life was 'continuous'. In the beginning Norton's sexual preferences were conventionally heterosexual but by the age of 23 she had become more interested in male homosexuals: Murphy wrote in his interview record

...she still prefers S.I. [sexual intercourse] with male homosexuals because she can take a more active role – 'These men are soft and rounded and they let me do what I like with them. I enjoy most of all their hands running up and down my back. Sometimes they use pencils and leaves.'<sup>97</sup>

### *Sex magic and homage to Pan*

Norton's practice of sex magic reflects her own sexual preferences, which were recorded in the sessions with L.J. Murphy. As previously mentioned, Norton was originally heterosexual but around the age of 23 she became more interested in male homosexuals.<sup>98</sup> She favoured sexual intercourse with male homosexuals because she could take a more active role,<sup>99</sup> although she also stated that after around three months of sexual activities with male homosexuals she also liked to participate in manual and oral manipulation with female homosexuals.<sup>100</sup> The Melbourne transcript also notes that she [ie. Norton] 'likes very much to be tied up, beaten, [and] then have S.I. [sexual intercourse] when her partner hurts her by forcing her back against the pole to which she is tied'.<sup>101</sup> The transcripts continue with a first-person statement from Norton herself: 'I enjoy very much beating men with a strap and then having S.I. I think all-in-all my most complete pleasure is through the active role I can play.'<sup>102</sup> Murphy then appends the following notes:

...[There has also] been a considerable amount of fellatio; the main pleasure there is in giving the man pleasure. I feel this is in part the basis of her Lesbian role too – giving pleasure to the partner, stroking and being stroked, kissing and being kissed but all the time taking the dominant role. She did say that during Lesbian S.I. she often felt that she would like to have a penis of her own to insert into the woman.<sup>103</sup>

The Melbourne transcript also makes reference to the fact that [Norton] 'likes very much to be tied up, beaten, [and] then have S.I. [sexual intercourse] when her partner hurts her by forcing her back against the pole to which she is tied'. This particular aspect of Norton's sexual behaviour is reflected in a controversial and far-reaching incident that occurred in October 1955, when Norton and her lover, Gavin Greenlees, were charged by N.S.W. Vice Squad police with engaging in 'an unnatural sexual act'.

As mentioned briefly in Chapter One, on 3 October 1955 two members of the NSW Vice Squad, Detective A.H. 'Bert' Trevenar and Detective N. Hayes, raided Norton's Brougham Street flat and laid charges against Norton and Greenlees.<sup>104</sup> The police raid had taken place because two men, Francis Honer and Raymond Ager, had earlier offered the Sydney-based *Sun* newspaper a series of allegedly obscene film negatives and photographs which purported to show evidence of a Kings Cross witchcraft cult. Honer had stolen the film negatives from Norton's flat and, with Ager acting as an accomplice, had attempted to sell them to the *Sun* newspaper for £200.<sup>105</sup> Honer and Ager had been apprehended by police and two naked figures had been identified in the photographs: Norton and her lover, Gavin Greenlees. Later, in ensuing court proceedings, Norton maintained that she and Greenlees had been engaged in a sexual ritual dedicated to Pan.<sup>106</sup> The offending photographs would not be available for public viewing for many years.<sup>107</sup> A few of the photographs<sup>108</sup> were screened on the ABC television programme *Rewind* on 5 September 2004 and showed Norton naked and tied by her wrists and ankles to a pedestal in a staged act of sex-bondage, while Greenlees performed acts of flagellation on her. Greenlees had also been photographed engaging in cunnilingus and anal sex.<sup>109</sup>

During the first court session<sup>110</sup> Norton adopted a defiant attitude to the charges of alleged obscenity brought against her. Dressed flamboyantly in a red skirt, black top and leopard-skin shoes, she defended her belief in pantheism, which she described as the heathen worship of ancient Greek gods.<sup>111</sup> At the end of the court hearings Honer and Ager were jailed for four months, while Norton and Greenlees were eventually acquitted.<sup>112</sup> Somewhat predictably, the court case against Norton and Greenlees attracted extensive coverage in the popular press.<sup>113</sup>

The Honer/Ager incident suggests that Norton and Greenlees had begun to formulate the rudiments of a sustained practice of sex magic by the mid-1950s: Norton specifically claimed during the court proceedings that the controversial sex-bondage photographs 'depicted aspects of ceremonial'<sup>114</sup> and that they had been taken 'during a ceremony of worship of the Greek mythological [figure] of Pan and not during a witchcraft ritual'.<sup>115</sup> Detective Trevenar confirmed that Greenlees was 'dressed in ceremonial garb' in several of the photographs.<sup>116</sup> He also confirmed that he had been advised that Greenlees and Norton had lived together in the Brougham Street studio since 1949 and had committed similar sexual acts 'quite often'.<sup>117</sup> However, there is

other data which connects the Honer/Ager photographs to a more far-reaching practice of sex magic. This data concerns the unique sexual relationship between Rosaleen Norton, Gavin Greenlees and the resident chief conductor of the ABC's Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Eugene Goossens.

***Norton, Greenlees and Goossens – and the influence of Aleister Crowley***

As noted in Chapter One, Norton and Greenlees had formed an unlikely friendship with Eugene Goossens, the English-born musician who had come to Australia in 1947 and who had been installed as the first permanent conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and director of the NSW State Conservatorium. Goossens had come to Australia with his American-born wife, Marjorie Fetter-Foulkrod, and they had established themselves in a stylish home in Wahroonga, on Sydney's upper North Shore. Mrs Goossens, who was nineteen years younger than her husband and strikingly attractive, soon began to make an impact on the Sydney social scene and her views on fashion were eagerly sought by the women's magazines.<sup>118</sup> However, by the early 1950s, after several years of working with musicians at the Conservatorium, Goossens had become increasingly autocratic and was becoming bored by his work routines.<sup>119</sup> Some time in late 1952 or early 1953 he discovered a copy of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* in a gallery bookshop,<sup>120</sup> and it immediately rekindled his earlier interest in paganism and magic.



Plate 60: Goossens already had an international reputation as a conductor and composer when he first met Norton and Greenlees – but his professional image would be irrevocably damaged by his magical explorations in the Kings Cross coven

Before coming to Australia, Goossens had been friendly with the pianist and composer Cyril Scott (1879-1970), who had Theosophical interests and was the author of *An Outline of Modern Occultism*. Goossens was also friendly with the composer, critic and editor Philip Heseltine (1894-1930), who had a



strong interest in black magic and paganism. Heseltine had met Crowley around 1914,<sup>121</sup> was a member of Crowley's O.T.O.,<sup>122</sup> and was known in artistic and musical circles by his *nom de plume*, Peter Warlock.<sup>123</sup> On one occasion Heseltine used magic squares from the *Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* in order to get his estranged wife to return to him: his ritual method included the act of engraving one of the *Abramelin* magic squares 'neatly on his arm'.<sup>124</sup> In the posthumously published *Magick Without Tears* (1982) Crowley notes: 'I don't know how he proceeded to set to work; but his wife came back all right, and a very short time afterwards he killed himself.'<sup>125</sup> As mentioned in Chapter One, according to Goossens' younger sister, Dame Sidonie Goossens-Millar, it was Heseltine's involvement with magic that first attracted her brother to the occult,<sup>126</sup> and it is also of interest, in this context, that Heseltine was a friend of the poet Victor Neuburg, who had been involved with Crowley in sex-magic ritual activities in the Algerian desert in 1909.<sup>127</sup> As an O.T.O. member, Heseltine provides the key link between Crowley's sex magic practices on the one hand, and the *Goetic* sex magic techniques that Eugene Goossens offered to teach Rosaleen Norton (see below).

Goossens told Vice Squad detective Bert Trevenar in 1956 that the discovery of Norton's book in a Sydney bookshop reawakened his fascination with western magic – he subsequently wrote to Norton, expressing admiration for both the book and her artistic work.<sup>128</sup> Goossens also told Trevenar that Norton had subsequently invited him to her Brougham Street flat for an introductory discussion over a cup of tea.<sup>129</sup> Goossens was fascinated by Norton and her seemingly authentic approach to paganism, and soon a friendship began to develop. Goossens had been working regularly in rehearsal rooms at the Australian Broadcasting Commission, just a few minutes walk away from Brougham Street, so it was easy for him to maintain close contact. Goossens became a frequent visitor to Norton's flat and a member of the small magical group that would meet periodically to discuss magical ideas and perform rituals sacred to Pan. In addition to their shared interest in the pagan traditions, Goossens, Norton and Greenlees also shared a love of classical music. Norton's favourite composers included Mozart, Beethoven and Sibelius and she was also very fond of Baroque music.<sup>130</sup> Soon there was talk of all three working together on a musical rendition of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Greenlees would write the libretto, Norton would paint the backdrops, and Goossens would compose the music. This project, unfortunately, did not proceed. Nevertheless, according to

a recent article by David Salter,<sup>131</sup> Goossens' relationship with Norton quickly acquired a 'sexual intensity' that expressed itself both through magical ritual and also erotic photography. 'We have many rituals and indulgences to undertake,' he wrote in one of his letters to Norton, '...and I want to take more photos.'<sup>132</sup>

Goossens' sex magic activities with Norton and Greenlees are discussed below. However his personal relationship with the couple came to a sudden end on 9 March 1956 when he returned to Mascot Airport, Sydney, on a flight from London. He was now officially Sir Eugene Goossens, having received his knighthood a few months earlier,<sup>133</sup> and was apparently unaware that a group of detectives and Customs officers had gathered at Mascot Airport to apprehend him. Alerted by Vice Squad detective Bert Trevenar, the Customs officials at the airport anticipated that Goossens would be carrying with him a large amount of allegedly pornographic material, and when they searched his luggage they discovered over 800 erotic photographs, a spool of film, and also some ritual masks and incense sticks.<sup>134</sup> Goossens was subsequently officially charged under Section 233 of the Customs Act, which prohibited the possession or importation of 'blasphemous, indecent or obscene works or articles'.<sup>135</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter One, Goossens' case was brought before Mr J.M.McCauley, SM in the Martin Place Court of Petty Sessions, and Goossens was fined the maximum penalty of £100.<sup>136</sup> Four days after issuing his guilty plea Goossens submitted formal letters of resignation to the Australian Broadcasting Commission and the NSW State Conservatorium, his professional career as an internationally renowned conductor effectively over. On 26 May 1956 Goossens boarded a flight to Rome, travelling incognito as Mr E.Gray, never to return to Australia again.<sup>137</sup> Soon afterwards Goossens separated from his wife and then tried to reinstate his professional life as a musician by working occasionally for the BBC in London. However as David Salter has noted, 'Goossens was now in decline. News of his antipodean disgrace had undermined the maestro's standing in the British music world. He lived in a succession of London flats and hotel rooms and struggled against failing health...'<sup>138</sup> Goossens died in England from a ruptured ulcer in June 1962, at the age of 69, shortly after returning from a trip to Switzerland where he had visited one of his daughters by an earlier marriage.

It has been established that Goossens' unusually close relationship with Norton and Greenlees had already been noted by Detective Trevenar of the Vice Squad *prior* to the police raid on the Brougham Street apartment on 3 October 1955.<sup>139</sup> At this stage Trevenar had in his possession a collection of intimate and personal letters Goossens had sent to Norton – he had obtained them from Joe Morris, one-time senior crime roundsman for the Sydney *Sun*, who had infiltrated Norton's coven and secretly removed them.<sup>140</sup> Salter notes that when Norton and Greenlees were charged with engaging in 'an unnatural sexual act' following discovery of the Honer/Ager photographs, Goossens feared implication and hurriedly destroyed his private collection of pornography and black magic paraphernalia, 'probably by burning it in the backyard of his Wahroonga home'.<sup>141</sup> Not to be outdone, Trevenar swiftly obtained approval from Detective Inspector Ron Walden, head of the Vice Squad, to monitor the relationship between Norton, Greenlees, and Goossens – specifically with a view to securing evidence of sex perversion – and this included tracking Goossens during his visits to Europe with assistance from connections provided by the Sydney *Sun* newspaper.<sup>142</sup> In London Goossens was observed making 'unorthodox purchases in grubby newsagencies and bookshops in Soho and around Leicester Square'.<sup>143</sup> It is significant that a leading occult bookshop, Watkins, was located close to Leicester Square in Cecil Court; Goossens could easily have acquired rare works by Aleister Crowley at this specialist outlet for *esoterica* – Watkins is well known in London as a source of rare magical texts.

Following the arrest of Goossens at Mascot Airport, Sydney, on 9 March 1956, Trevenar had a unique opportunity to interrogate Goossens in relation to his sex magic interests. A section of Trevenar's record of interview reads as follows:

'I said: "How is that Rite [ie. sex magic] conducted?" '

'He said: "We undressed and sat on the floor in a circle. Miss Norton conducted the verbal part of the Rite. I then performed the sex stimulation on her." '

'I said: "How did you do that?" '

'He said: "I placed my tongue in her sexual organ and kept moving it until I stimulated her." ',<sup>144</sup>

This interview between Trevenar and Goossens establishes that cunnilingus was part of Norton's approach to ritual sex magic. Further allusions to sex magic rituals are also found within Goossens' personal correspondence to Norton, copies of which Trevenar had secured through his informant, Joe

Morris.<sup>145</sup> When Trevenar interviewed Goossens he showed the conductor photocopies of the letters taken by Morris from the Brougham Street flat and Goossens in turn confirmed that he had written them.<sup>146</sup> Some were signed ‘*Djinn*’, which was a magical name used by Goossens when he corresponded with Norton. ‘*Djinn*’ may also have been a ritual name associated with membership of the Norton ‘coven’, if indeed such a magical structure operated at Brougham Street at this time.<sup>147</sup>

In her research paper ‘The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia’,<sup>148</sup> Dr Marguerite Johnson notes that there are at least eleven extant letters written by Goossens to Norton and Greenlees, one them incomplete and another a set of instructions possibly related to another piece of correspondence, probably lost.<sup>149</sup> Johnson writes:

Each of the letters extends to two-and-a-half handwritten pages approximately; they had been composed in Australia and overseas; seven open with a greeting to Norton; four either refer to and/or send greetings to Greenlees (one is actually a postcard from Lord Howe Island addressed to Greenlees); three are signed with Goossens’ magical name, *Djinn*; five include references to caution and anonymity; six contain small sketches, two of which are sex magic images. The letters are not dated, although one has an intact envelope stamped 4 June 1953 with a Canberra postmark. Another includes a series of potential meeting times which suggest four possible dates: March 1952 (too early), August 1953, May 1954 or January 1955. Each letter deals with magic and sex magic is expressly mentioned in all of them...<sup>150</sup>

Because the letters refer to different types of magical activity their contents will be discussed below under different headings. However, as Johnson has indicated, there are several references to sex magic in the correspondence. These magical references are clearly associated with a specific type of ritual practice: the Thelemic sex magic of Aleister Crowley.



Plate 61: A portrait of Thelemic magician Aleister Crowley by Austin Osman Spare.

‘A.C.’ is referred to specifically in four of the letters. In one, which begins ‘For Roie, to whom secret greetings...’ Goossens writes: ‘Thanks too for that quite needless assurance regarding the inviolability of my MSS and notes...also for retaining the A.C. writings’ – a clear reference to the published works of Crowley. In another, which begins ‘Roie – the savoury witch...,’ Goossens makes a passing reference to the well known libertarian attributes of Aleister Crowley when he writes: ‘And how I agree with you about all that normality “pap”! Let’s “piss it out” of existence as A.C. used to say...’ However in a third letter, which is of considerable interest from a magical point of view, Goossens provides Norton with travel details of how to get to his cottage near Mount Victoria in the Blue Mountains, so she can come and visit him. In this letter there is also a key reference to Crowley. Goossens writes: ‘Obviously a pied-à-terre is necessary, hidden and private...’ He then continues: ‘*Yes, I’ll instruct you in the grimoire.* The diagrams are necessarily crude but none the less effective, being all from unimpeachable sources. *You will be my best – and only – pupil* [my emphasis in italics], and I shall appoint you keeper of the seals (You nearly <sup>151</sup> hit the nail on the head in your bit about A.C. and self in June letter!). Unfortunately, I didn’t bring the book, but shall bring it to you next week for lesson one.’

It is interesting that Gavin Greenlees was not involved in this secret meeting in the Blue Mountains: Goossens refers to Norton as his ‘only’ pupil in matters relating to the grimoire. The last two sentences provide us with a useful insight: here Goossens is offering to instruct Norton in an area of the magical arts relatively unfamiliar to her: *namely how to make use of the magical seals, or sigils, contained within a medieval grimoire.* This is an important point because here we see Goossens offering knowledge of specific magical techniques to Norton and not the other way around. This clearly contradicts the statement issued by Goossens’ solicitors issued after Goossens’ departure for Europe in May 1956 to the effect that the conductor believed he was responding [in a ritual context] to ‘persistent menaces...involving others’. <sup>152</sup> Here is a case of Goossens ‘luring’ Norton into the magical practice of *Goetia* and not the other way around. In addition, there is a clear inference that Norton appreciates the magical connection between Crowley and Goossens, for the letter makes reference to something previously noted in relation to ‘A.C. and self’ [ie. Crowley and Goossens].

Magical grimoires – spell-books containing the magical sigils or ‘seals’ assigned to various demonic spirits – were largely unknown in the West until

the 13th century.<sup>153</sup> Crowley had himself financed publication of an edition of the *Goetia, or Lesser Key of Solomon the King* in 1904, a 16th century work which contained the magical seals used to evoke 72 ‘evil spirits’.<sup>154</sup> In the *Goetia* these spirit-entities are described as the ‘72 Mighty Kings and Princes which King Solomon commanded into a Vessel of Brass, together with their Legions... Of whom Belial, Bileth, Asmoday and Gaap were chief.’<sup>155</sup>

The *Goetia* is very likely to be the book Goossens is referring to above, because A.C. (Aleister Crowley) was not only directly involved with its publication but also supplemented MacGregor Mathers’ presentation of the actual grimoire text with an essay titled ‘The Initiated Interpretation of Ceremonial Magic’ which was included as a separate chapter in the same volume when it was published in 1904.<sup>156</sup> During the mid-1950s, when Goossens’ letter was written, the *Goetia* was probably the most accessible magical grimoire and source of magical seals for occultists seeking this sort of information.<sup>157</sup> A further indicator that the *Goetia* was very probably the text in question is provided by the fact that in the same letter, referred to above, Goossens makes reference to ‘Ashtaroth cream’ which was intended for Norton alone, ‘and no-one else’. This was probably a magical unguent that Norton was to rub into various parts of her body – we know that Goossens had purchased such ‘unguents’ for Norton in Paris (see below).

In relation to the use of seals from magical grimoires, Astaroth [also known as Ashtaroth] is listed as the 29th spirit in the *Goetia*; the following text describes his specific attributes:

He is a Mighty, Strong Duke, and appeareth in the form of a hurtful Angel riding on an Infernal Beast like a Dragon, and carrying in his right hand a Viper. Thou must in no wise let him approach too near unto thee, lest he do thee damage by his Noisome Breath. Wherefore the Magician must hold the Magical Ring near his face, and that will defend him. He giveth true answers of things Past, Present and to Come, and can discover all Secrets. He will declare wittingly how the Spirits fell, if desired, and the reason of his own fall. He can make men wonderfully knowing in all Liberal Sciences. He ruleth 40 Legions of Spirits.<sup>158</sup>

After describing the particular attributes of each of the 72 evil spirits, including Astaroth, the text of the *Goetia* includes the following commentary on what happened when the legendary King Solomon ‘commanded’ these spirits ‘into a Vessel of Brass’:

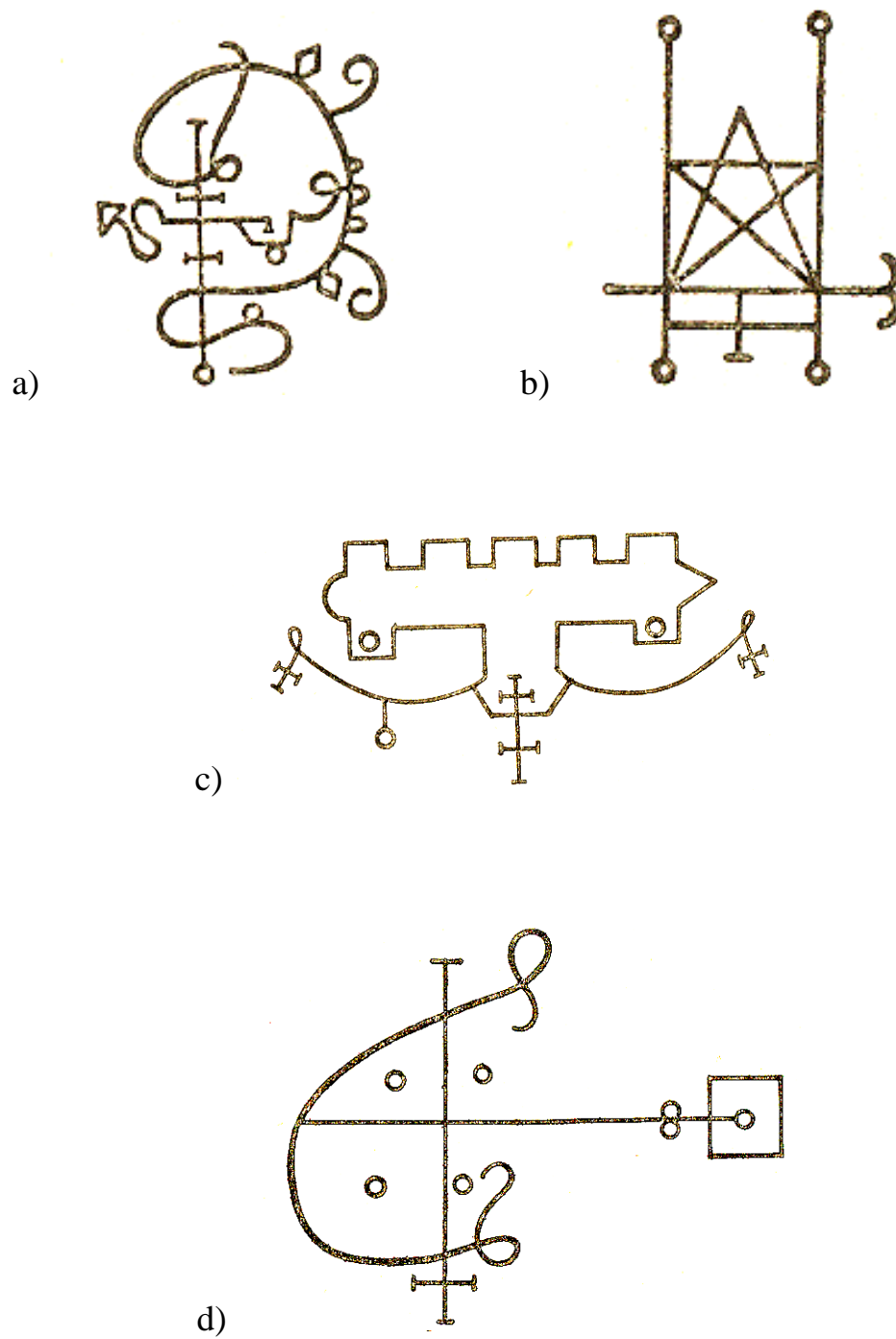


Plate 62: Demonic magical seals (sigils) from the *Lesser Key of Solomon (Goetia)*:  
a) Asmoday b) Astaroth c) Belial d) Gaap

(Source: I.Shah, *The Secret Lore of Magic* [1957], Abacus, London 1972: 190, 191, 193, 199)



And it is to be noted that Solomon did this because of their pride [ie. the pride of the evil spirits], for he never declared other reason why he thus bound them. And when he had thus bound them up and sealed the Vessel, he by Divine Power did chase them all into a deep Lake or Hole in Babylon. And they of Babylon, wondering to see such a thing, they did then go wholly to into the Lake, to break the Vessel open, expecting to find great store of Treasure therein. But when they had broken it open, out flew the Chief Spirits immediately, with their legions following them; and they were all restored to their former places except Belial, who entered into a certain Image, and thence gave answers unto those who did offer Sacrifices unto him, and did worship the Image as their God.<sup>159</sup>

When we consider that the spirits described in the *Goetia* had such a specific connection with King Solomon it is perhaps not surprising that Goossens decided to use '*Djinn*' as his magical name. One can also speculate on how Goossens himself would have made use of the magical sigils contained in the grimoire. In a fourth letter, headed 'Salaam Roie', Goossens mentions that he has just located a second-hand copy of 'G.B' and is leaving it propped up against Norton's door awaiting her return. In all probability the initials 'G.B' refer to a major biography of Crowley, *The Great Beast*, by John Symonds, published in London in 1951.<sup>160</sup> Goossens goes on to explain that he had 'since read it and [it] confirms all I knew of A.C. though [it] exaggerates certain things overmuch...' In the same letter Goossens also mentions that he has been experimenting with 'cakes of light' and he adds a note of encouragement to Norton: 'I hope you will have better luck with the unguent...' As noted earlier, the reference to 'cakes of light' is a specifically Crowleyian allusion to sex-magick ritual offerings made from meal, honey, menstrual blood and sexual secretions. Given Goossens' Crowleyian orientation, one can assume that Goossens would have employed magical seals, or sigils, in the same way that Crowley did: by activating them with semen. It is possible that Goossens wanted to be alone with Norton in the Blue Mountains to simulate the Great Beast / Scarlet Woman sex-magic partnership advocated by Crowley and this could explain why Greenlees was not invited on this particular occasion. Also, as mentioned earlier, it was part of Crowley's Thelemic approach to sex magic to masturbate and ejaculate onto magical sigils like those contained in grimoires like the *Goetia*. As O.T.O. historian P-R. Koenig has noted:

... masturbating on a sigil of a demon or meditating upon the image of a phallus would bring power or communication with a (or one's own) divine being...In the IXth degree,

one identifies oneself with an ejaculating penis. The blood (or excrements) from anal intercourse attract the spirits/demons while the sperm keeps them alive.<sup>161</sup>

### ***Altars, ritual paraphernalia, and Voodoo-inspired performances at Brougham Street***

Mention has already been made of the fact that Rosaleen Norton's Brougham Street attic apartment was small, and that when she and Gavin Greenlees resided there during the 1950s and early 1960s this space had to double as a living area and a ritual working area. Detective Trevenar's photographs of the attic studio at 179 Brougham Street are of interest because they reveal details of the ritual aspect of the room. It is also useful to compare the Trevenar photographs with details reported in Dave Barnes' profile article on Norton, 'I am a Witch!' published a little over a year later,<sup>162</sup> and also with photographs reproduced in Norton's autobiographical article 'Hitch-hiking Witch', published in February 1957.<sup>163</sup> The latter suggest that some elements of Norton's ritual practice were improvised or flexible, particular items from the main Pan altar being moved to other locations within the apartment. According to Barnes (1956), Norton's Pan altar was located 'at the end of the room'.<sup>164</sup> A large figure of Pan had been painted directly onto the wall, and the large, opening photograph in the Barnes article shows Norton sitting next to various ritual implements and assorted bric-a-brac, including stag antlers, a candle-holder, dishes and pine-cones. The word 'Pan' is visible on the wall beneath a circular mirror on the left-hand side.<sup>165</sup> Taking into consideration details from D.L. Thompson's 1955 interview, referred to earlier, it can be established with regard to the position of the windows facing Brougham Street, that the altar dedicated to Pan was located at the northern end of the attic, the northern quarter being the traditional position for a witch's altar.<sup>166</sup> Trevenar's photographs, taken in the same year, indicate that there were two altars in the Brougham Street attic. We know from other sources that the second altar was dedicated to Hecate.<sup>167</sup> The Hecate altar, which was located at the southern end of the attic, was squeezed in between an armchair and a wooden wardrobe whereas the Pan altar stood alone and effectively occupied the full width of the room, with heavy curtains draped on both sides.

A photograph taken of Norton in the Brougham Street apartment in 1957<sup>168</sup> shows that the stag antlers had been moved from the Pan altar to a different location and were now part of an improvised altar in the corner of the room. The mounted stag antlers which in the Barnes article had been photographed on the floor in front of the Pan altar had now been lifted up and placed on top

of an item of furniture that is not clearly visible but which is waist-high. In the 1957 photograph Norton stands beside the antlers pointing a curvy snake implement which seems to be some form of magical wand. A solitary candle is also placed centrally on the altar in front of the antlers. Behind the candle and the antlers a medium-size, heavily framed mirror has been mounted so that the mirror-glass is visible between the V-shape of the antlers. Although one could surmise that Norton may have moved some of her ritual paraphernalia around the room to pose for photographs, there are some indications that the altar arrangement in the February 1957 photograph had some degree of permanency. The name *Uriel* has been painted on the wall. In the Golden Dawn magical tradition (to which Crowley also belonged prior to 1904 – see Chapters Two and Three), Uriel is the archangel of Earth and his



Plate 63: Norton photographed beside her altar in 1957. The archangel-name Uriel is clearly visible, painted on the wall behind the altar. Uriel is assigned to the North, and the Element Earth.

assigned ‘sphere’ or ‘quarter’ is in the North. The words ‘Of the Air’ are also visible in the photograph and have been painted on the wall behind Norton. This would locate the element Air in the West. In the Golden Dawn tradition the element Air is associated with the archangel Raphael and is traditionally located in the East as part of the well-known Banishing Ritual of the Lesser Pentagram.<sup>169</sup> Golden Dawn magicians used this Banishing Ritual to ‘purify’ the ritual space by ‘banishing’ negative influences and establishing the sacred protection of the four archangels of the Apocalypse over the ritual space.<sup>170</sup> West is the symbolic domain of Gabriel, the archangel of Water, but this

photograph indicates that Norton has located Air in the West. This suggests that Norton did not follow the Golden Dawn system exactly although the very presence of a reference to the archangel Uriel behind her ritual altar suggests that part of her magical practice was based on familiar Golden Dawn procedures. Since Uriel is traditionally associated with the North and is a symbol of Earth it was appropriate that her main ritual altar, dedicated to Pan in his role as the ancient Greek God of Nature, was located symbolically in the North.

Norton's Hecate altar, however, appears to have been at least partially improvised. In the photograph introducing Barnes' article 'I am a Witch!' (December 1956), in which Norton posed in front of the mural of Pan, a small female mask has been mounted on the wall; here it has become part of



Plate 64: Norton photographed in December 1956 during her interview with Dave Barnes. The small female mask is clearly visible, mounted on the mural

the altar backdrop, nestling between Pan's outstretched hand and his chin.<sup>171</sup> In Detective Trevenar's photographs of the Pan altar, taken approximately a year earlier, the female mask is missing. However this same female mask occupies a central position in Trevenar's photograph of the second altar, which Norton confirmed to D.L. Thompson was dedicated to Hecate.<sup>172</sup> Barnes remarked in his 1956 article that this particular female mask had a surprising resemblance to Norton herself,<sup>173</sup> and she may have used it to reinforce her sense of symbolic and personal connection with both Pan and Hecate, on different ceremonial occasions.

Norton confirms in the Thompson article [1955] that the ritual initiations which took place at Brougham Street were dedicated to 'the presiding deities' of the coven, Pan and Hecate, and that neophytes were required to take an oath of allegiance to these deities.<sup>174</sup> Norton also confirmed in an interview with *Sun* journalist Nan Javes that she commenced all magical rituals by burning incense to each of the deities involved, and that she placed a 'protective magical circle'<sup>175</sup> around the ritual area where she was working.<sup>176</sup> Countering charges made by Anna Hoffmann and others, that Norton had conducted the Black Mass in her Kings Cross apartment,<sup>177</sup> Norton told Dave Barnes in her December 1956 interview that she had never attended ceremonies at which there had been blood sacrifices.<sup>178</sup> She then added, no doubt in jest, '...And I've never drunk bat's blood either...'<sup>179</sup>

An insight into what a ritual gathering at Brougham Street may have been like, at least on some occasions, is provided by a short section of film footage in the 1964 television documentary on Kings Cross, *The Glittering Mile*, and by reference to one of the drawings in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (1952) titled *Rites of Baron Samedi* [Plate XIV]. In *The Glittering Mile*, a robed Rosaleen Norton performs a banishing ritual by inscribing a pentagram in the air with her ceremonial *athame*, or dagger, thereby purifying and defining the 'sacred space' associated with the ritual. However we know that Norton was not always robed during her ceremonial performances because she confirmed in her interview with D.L. Thompson that 'ceremonial attire ranges from nakedness to full regalia – robes, hood, sandals and accessories...' <sup>180</sup> Norton appeared during her interview with Thompson clad only in her dark leather 'witch's apron', naked from the waist up, although she later posed for a photograph wearing a cat's mask in addition to her apron. During Norton's interview with Thompson her fellow coven members wore ritual animal masks to disguise their identity and referred to each other by using code names like



the Rat and the Toad, thereby remaining effectively anonymous.<sup>181</sup> It has since been established that the exotic masks brought back into Australia by Sir Eugene Goossens were intended for ritual use in the coven.<sup>182</sup>

Unpublished manuscript notes by Rosaleen Norton accompanying the draft manuscript for her book *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, state that *Rites of Baron Samedi* is an 'impression of a personal experience... a ritual invocation'.<sup>183</sup> Gavin Greenlees' accompanying poem describes the scene as a 'saturnalia'. Norton acknowledges the influence of Voodoo in the ritual performance and confirms that 'the mantelpiece, the bison's skull, the candlelight, cats etc are part of the artist's living quarters'.<sup>184</sup> In *Rites of Baron Samedi* we are shown a ritual performance where an exotic dark-skinned woman is dancing naked in a



Plate 65: *Rites of Baron Samedi* (Plate XIV in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*) – a work which reflects Norton's keen interest in Voodoo. The figures in the lower right-hand corner may be Norton and Greenlees

state of frenzy in the centre of a small room while a small gathering of ritual devotees look on admiringly.<sup>185</sup> Some of these onlookers are wearing masks: one of them, who may be Norton herself, sits cross-legged wearing sandals and smoking a cigarette in a long cigarette-holder. Behind her sits a young man wearing a simple unadorned mask: this figure resembles Greenlees. A candle has been mounted atop the bison's skull and magical forces throng through the room. The winged face of Baron Samedi and a coiled snake rise up around the dancer, suggesting that the ritual combines elements from Voodoo, Tantra and sex magic. The dancer meanwhile thrusts her naked body into full view as she embodies the frenzied lust of Erzulie. Erzulie is a Voodoo goddess known for her love and passion, an archetypal figure associated with the sensual magic of the left-hand path, and here the dancer has become her Priestess as she is 'possessed' by the Voodoo deity's inspirational magical energies.<sup>186</sup>

### ***Miscellaneous magical activities***

As described above, Norton's magical practices included individual trance journeys involving 'astral plane' encounters with the principal deities in her magical pantheon; sex magic rituals (for example, with Gavin Greenlees and Eugene Goossens) based on the Thelemic (ie. post 1904) writings and practices of Aleister Crowley; ceremonial activities (ie. both within her inner magical circle and also with Greenlees and Goossens) involving homage to Pan and Hecate as the 'principal deities of the coven', and improvised magical practices involving elements of Tantra and Voodoo. However Norton pursued other magical activities as well. They included attempted 'aerial' or 'out-of-the-body' journeys comparable to the flights which medieval witches claimed to undertake en route to the 'Witches Sabbath', occasional magical hexings, and the sporadic use of mind-altering drugs to facilitate an altered state of consciousness.

During the Middle Ages there was a common belief in Europe that witches could fly through the air,<sup>187</sup> transporting themselves by means of a broomstick, pitchfork or shovel. During the medieval witch-trials many witches were also accused of paying homage to the Devil by kissing his posterior. Rosemary E. Guiley, author of a major source-work on witchcraft, notes that the so-called *osculum infame* or 'kiss of shame' was mentioned in 'virtually every recorded account of a witches' sabbat, most confessions of which were extracted under torture'.<sup>188</sup>





Plate 66: A witch riding on a goat to the Sabbath. Etching by Albrecht Durer c.1501

Some medieval witches were believed to ‘ride’ in the company of demons who were able to transform themselves magically into such animals as goats, cows, horses or wolves.<sup>189</sup> The noted historian of medieval witchcraft, Jeffrey B. Russell, describes a characteristic case from Simmenthal, near Bern, reported during the witch trials held there between 1395 and 1405, in which a number of people were convicted of witchcraft and subsequently burnt at the stake:

The witches at Simmenthal were accused of constituting a sect that met at Church on Sunday morning, not for mass, but to worship Satan. There they performed rites including homage to the Devil. They stole children, killed them, and then cooked and ate them, or else they drained them of juice in order to make ointments. With the ointment, they changed themselves into animals, rendered themselves invisible, or rubbed their bodies in order to obtain the power of flying through the air.<sup>190</sup>

In another case, which occurred in 1587, Walpurga Hausmannin, a midwife, was tried and burnt at the stake in Dillingen:

Arrested and tortured, she admitted to having intercourse with the Devil and making [a] pact with him, riding out at night on a pitchfork, trampling on the consecrated host, keeping a familiar named Federlin as a lover, manufacturing hailstorms, and committing a long list of *maleficia*...<sup>191</sup>

The notorious text *Malleus Maleficarum* (*The Hammer of the Witches*), compiled as an instructional manual by the Inquisitors Jacob Sprenger (1436-1495) and Heinrich Kramer (1450-1505) and first published in Germany in 1486, also includes a chapter on witches' flight titled 'How they are transported from place to place'.<sup>192</sup> Sprenger and Kramer write:

Now the following is their method of being transported. They take the unguent ['flying ointment'] which...they make at the Devil's instruction from the limbs of children, particularly of those whom they have killed before baptism, and anoint with a chair or broomstick; whereupon they are immediately carried up into the air, either by day or by night, and either visibly or, if they wish, invisibly... at times [the Devil] transports the witches on animals, which are not true animals but devils in that form; and sometimes even without any exterior help they are visibly carried solely by the operation of the Devil's power.<sup>193</sup>

However, during the Renaissance some observers began to suspect that, at least in some cases, the phenomenon of 'aerial flight' ascribed to the witches was an internal perception rather than an external reality. The 16th century scientist Giambattista della Porta (c.1535-1615), a colleague of Galileo, was one who entertained such doubts:

...An old woman came to my notice, [one of those] whom they call screech-owls [*striges*], from the resemblance between the night-owl [*strix*] and the witches [*strigae*], and who suck the blood of tiny children in their cradles; who promised of her own accord to bring me answers in a short while. She ordered all of us who were gathered there with me as witnesses to go outside. Then she stripped off all her rags and rubbed herself very thoroughly and heartily with some ointment (she was visible to us through the cracks in the door). Then she sank down from the force of the soporific juices and fell into a deep sleep. We then opened the doors and gave her quite a flogging; the force of her stupor was so great that it had taken away her senses. We returned to our place outside. Then the powers of the drug grew weak and feeble and she, called from her sleep, began to babble that she had crossed seas and mountains to fetch these false answers. We denied; she insisted; we showed her the black-and-blue marks; she insisted more tenaciously than before.<sup>194</sup>

Della Porta proposed a physiological explanation of the witches' ointment, noting that after the witches had concocted a brew which included such ingredients as aconite and 'sleep-inducing nightshade' [*Solanum somniferum*]

and after they had anointed ‘parts of the body, having rubbed them very thoroughly before’ so that the ‘flesh may be loose and the pores open’, they then experienced a drug-induced aerial sensation which also included strong elements of fantasy:

Thus, on some moonlit night they think that they are carried off to banquets, music, dances, and coupling with young men, which they desire most of all. So great is the force of the imagination and the appearance of the images, that the part of the brain called memory is almost full of this sort of thing; and since they themselves, by inclination of nature, are extremely prone to belief, they take hold of the images in such a way that the mind itself is changed and thinks of nothing else day or night.<sup>195</sup>

The contemporary American anthropologist Dr Michael J. Harner, has noted recently, however, that it could be the potency of the psychotropic herbal ingredients within the witches’ ointments, rather than ‘the force of the imagination’ referred to by Della Porta, that produced the aerial sensation reported by the medieval witches. Harner notes that when the German scholar Karl Kiesewetter, who had himself been inspired by the insights of Della Porta, created a witches’ ointment and rubbed himself with it, he experienced a dream in which he felt he was flying in spirals.<sup>196</sup> And when Professor W.E. Peukert of Göttingen, Germany, employed a 17th century witches’ formula and created a ‘flying ointment’ containing belladonna, henbane and datura, he too experienced a bizarre altered state of consciousness. Peukert and some of his colleagues rubbed the ointment onto their foreheads and into their armpits, and the result was dramatic: ‘They fell into a twenty-four hour sleep in which they dreamed of wild rides, frenzied dancing, and other weird adventures of the type associated with medieval orgies.’<sup>197</sup> Jeffrey B. Russell similarly supports the view that the sensations of flight and ecstasy induced by the medieval witches’ ointments could be induced by the innate chemical properties of herbal ingredients like aconite and nightshade [belladonna]: ‘...aconite depresses the cardiovascular system and produces sensory semi-paralysis, while...nightshade induces delirium, excitement, and sometimes unconsciousness.’<sup>198</sup>

In his correspondence with Rosaleen Norton, Eugene Goossens makes reference to astral encounters with mythic beings, to magical unguents, and also to the notorious *osculum infame*, or ‘kiss of shame’. There are also references to ‘familiaris’, or magical helper-spirits, and to the idea of



Plate 67: Medieval witches concocting a ‘flying ointment’. Etching by Hans Baldung Grien, 1514

transforming into animal forms. Collectively these references indicate a strong interest in, and acquaintance with, the medieval witchcraft tradition. Based on the level of detail provided in the correspondence, it would appear that Goossens and Norton were seeking to validate aspects of medieval witchcraft practices in a personal, experiential way.

In an undated letter which opens *‘Roiewitch’*, Goossens writes that

contemplating your hermaphroditic organs in the pictures nearly made me desert my evening’s work and fly to you by first aerial coven. But, as promised, you came to me early this morning (about 1.45) and when a suddenly flapping window blind announced your arrival, I realised by a delicious orificial tingling that you were about to make your presence felt in a very real sense! <sup>199</sup>

Quite apart from the erotic content of this letter, which is intriguing, Goossens and Norton clearly had a prior arrangement for an 'astral' rendezvous because at the time this letter was written they were physically separated by a substantial distance: other details in the same letter suggest that Goossens posted this letter to Norton either from an interstate location or from Europe.<sup>200</sup> Goossens' letter continues:

Seriously, you were very definitely here, and you were doubtlessly enjoyably aware of what took place. I was in the middle of a rite to A and he had just asked for the 'osculum infame' (which I was about to administer) when you took advantage of my position and administered same to me. A strange hoofed creature was in the room with us – upper and middle parts female, lower centaur, and a pretty crustacean creature with milky breasts also appeared. I will draw it for you when I see you. All night I was in sheer s.m. [sex magic] delight and my offerings were, by results, most acceptable to the beings... More of this later.<sup>201</sup>

Goossens goes on to remark that 'Your description of the triple S.M. Rite (you, G and me) was curious because I was aware of you both as female (G always comes to me as a female) and I was fully present, also in changing form.' This section of the correspondence shows Goossens comparing astral visions with Norton, almost like two enthusiasts comparing dreams, in order to confirm whether both parties (ie. Goossens and Norton) had experienced the same phenomena during the astral encounter. The figure identified as 'A' is clearly not a physical person but a metaphysical entity associated with the Devil because according to the correspondence, 'A' has requested the '*osculum infame*', usually regarded as an act of demonic ritual homage, and Goossens has agreed to comply.<sup>202</sup>

We know that Goossens is referring to inner-plane encounters because he uses the expression 'our astral meetings' in another letter when describing similar activities.<sup>203</sup> In that particular letter Goossens also makes reference to 'Asmodeus' and to 'a succubus<sup>204</sup> in the form of Astarte'. Given these references, the metaphysical being referred to simply as 'A' in the first letter could theoretically be either one of these magical entities. Of the two, Astarte is the less likely alternative because she is an Assyrian-Babylonian mother goddess associated with love, battle, war, sex and fertility and there is no cultural connection between her and the notorious '*osculum infame*'.<sup>205</sup> On the other hand, Asmodeus was well known to the compilers of medieval grimoires as the demon of lust and lechery, and Goossens' interest in such magical grimoires has already been established.<sup>206</sup> Possibly derived from the

Persian Aeshma Daeva and otherwise known as a ‘fiend of the wounding spear’, and also as a storm spirit and the personification of rage, Asmodeus [sometimes known as Ashmedai] features in ancient Jewish literature as a demon who causes frustration in marriage.<sup>207</sup> Goossens may have become interested in Asmodeus because of his fascination with medieval grimoires like the *Goetia*. An entity known as Asmoday [a variant on Asmodeus / Ashmedai] is listed in the *Goetia* as one of the 72 ‘evil spirits’ – here he is described as a three-headed demon with the tail of a serpent.<sup>208</sup> As historian Richard Cavendish notes, Asmoday’s three heads are those of a ram, a bull and a man, ‘all traditionally lecherous creatures’, and in Jewish literature Asmodeus is a demon also associated with lechery: he has the feet of a cock, ‘a bird noted for indiscriminate sexual vigour’.<sup>209</sup> Taking into consideration Goossens’ magical name, *Djinn*, referred to earlier, it is significant that Asmodeus also has a specific connection with the legendary King Solomon. According to Jewish tradition, Asmodeus was forced by King Solomon, along with other devils, to build his Temple in Jerusalem. However, in his characteristically lecherous manner, Asmodeus pursued one of King Solomon’s wives and it was not until the archangel Michael intervened by offering King Solomon a magic ring that this mighty demon could be conquered.<sup>210</sup>

Goossens’ ‘*Roiewitch*’ letter is of interest for other reasons as well. Goossens clearly conceives of the astral magical encounter referred to above as being one where both he and Norton will be able to jointly observe what is occurring, because he writes: ‘...you were doubtless enjoyably aware of what took place.’ He also shares an implied understanding with Norton that the magical entities that appear in such visionary circumstances are both tangible and experientially real, even if they emanate from other planes of existence. Goossens writes in his letter that ‘A strange hoofed creature was in the room with us – upper and middle parts female, lower centaur...’ However, this is no fictional centaur from the literature of classical Greek legends but a magical ‘god-form’ experienced as real within the context of the visionary encounter. When Goossens writes that his offerings ‘were, by results, most acceptable to the beings’ he is acknowledging that these entities have their own, tangible reality, and that one can interact meaningfully with them, even if their presence can only be fully experienced on the ‘inner planes’. Finally, in the same letter there is a notable reference to a triple S.M.[sex magic] rite involving Goossens, Norton and Greenlees. Goossens writes that ‘G always comes to me as a female’ which in itself is an interesting remark, given that

Greenlees was openly bisexual.<sup>211</sup> The letter confirms that on some occasions, at least, the Brougham Street sex magic ritual workings involved a *menage à trois*<sup>212</sup> – a detail later confirmed by Bert Trevenar in an interview with Sydney crime writer Ned McCann in 1999.<sup>213</sup>

Goossens' references to unguents similarly link his correspondence with Norton to the medieval magical tradition. In one of his letters,<sup>214</sup> as mentioned earlier, Goossens makes a passing reference to a substance called Ashtaroth cream which, he writes, is intended 'for you [ie Norton], and no-one else'. As previously noted, Ashtaroth is a demon referred to in the *Goetia* but, in addition, he is also listed by the ceremonial magician and grimoire enthusiast, S.L. MacGregor Mathers, as one of the *Qlipha*, or negative forces, on the obverse, evil face of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life.<sup>215</sup> Unfortunately, we are not told what was actually contained in the Ashtaroth cream, or why it received its distinctive name.

In Letter 3 in the Johnson sequence<sup>216</sup> Goossens tells Norton that she has begun 'to take almost concrete form' during their recent astral experiments and he says 'I will send you next week, on my return, a pleasant unguent, which applied to you, may perhaps be helpful in this matter' – that is to say, an unguent that would help produce the dissociative effects required for astral encounters. Once again we are not given details of what is contained in the unguent itself, but Goossens adds as an aside that he has been told about this unguent 'by one familiar with these things in Paris, where they are by no means uncommon...' However, Goossens does provide a much more detailed commentary on the use of a magical unguent in another letter – Number 7 in the Johnson sequence – which lists the specific procedures Norton should undertake in applying the ointment to her body. It reads: 'Use half level teaspoonful. Massage cream into skin over wide area on inner face of the thigh (between crotch and knee) or on abdomen. Use on unwashed skin. Don't bathe anointed area one hour before or three hours after. Don't use during menstrual period. No man must use this unguent. It would be more than dangerous.' Goossens signs the letter '*Djinn*' and then adds some further details: 'Base Cream d'Egypte prepared by Anna (Paris). Herb ointment – blood base. Apply once a day for 3, 4 or 5 days.'<sup>217</sup>

Finally, one needs to ask whether Goossens really believed that he could transform into an animal form on the astral plane, for this aspect of magical practice is clearly connected to the medieval European witchcraft tradition. It

has to be conceded that sometimes Goossens adopts a light-hearted approach in referring to occult matters and this factor needs to be taken into consideration. In one letter to Norton, Goossens mentions jokingly that he sometimes refers to London's Covent Garden as Coven Garden.<sup>218</sup> In another he writes that a large package has arrived by 'daemonic angel carrier',<sup>219</sup> obviously a metaphor for speedy airfreight, and later in the same letter he writes that after being stimulated by Norton's erotic artwork he felt he wanted to fly to her 'by first aerial coven'.

In light of such remarks it is not easy to decide whether Goossens takes seriously the notion of magical animal transformation, or lycanthropy. Is Goossens expressing himself literally or metaphorically when he writes in one of his letters to Norton: 'Even now my bat-wings envelop and lift you, as yours often enfold me, into Arimanic<sup>220</sup> spheres'?<sup>221</sup> Just prior to making this particular remark Goossens writes: 'You don't know what your long letter means to me; understanding and eloquent they are and happily satisfying to my nature, occult, obscene, and of other worlds and beings. *I am mastering many things; in all of which you figure and help.*' [my emphasis in italics] The latter sentence suggests that Goossens is taking his magical practice seriously, and on the previous page of the same letter he advises Norton that 'the Master, in Paris, passed on a few months back. So no more unguent...'<sup>222</sup> Harner's investigation of witches' ointments, referred to earlier, strongly suggests that in medieval witchcraft it is the unguent that facilitates the perception of animal transformation so it is especially significant that in another letter, when Goossens refers to his 'astral meetings' with Norton, he then goes on to refer to unguents in terms of their specific effects: 'I am however working on an unguent (with the one you have as basis)<sup>223</sup> *to bring about our physical transportation.*'<sup>224</sup> [my emphasis in italics] Goossens seems to be suggesting here that the innate properties of the magical unguent, that is to say, its capacity to produce dissociative effects, could bring about a projection of the 'astral body' onto the inner planes allowing 'transportation' and an ability to engage in visionary encounters ('astral meetings'), as if they were tangible and real. Goossens would surely not have believed that his actual physical body was transported through the effects of the unguent, but given the potency of the unguent he would have had good reason to believe that his 'astral vehicle of awareness'<sup>225</sup> could be 'transported' by the flying ointment as it entered an altered state of consciousness. On balance, then, it seems reasonable to conclude that even though Goossens sometimes made whimsical remarks like 'daemonic angel carrier' and 'flying by first aerial coven' in his personal



correspondence, he nevertheless believed in the fundamental validity of his magical explorations and ‘astral meetings’ with Norton.

### ***Drugs and hexings***

Theoretically one might have expected that Norton would follow Aleister Crowley’s well known example of frequently using mind-altering drugs to induce ‘magical’ states of consciousness. However, it has not been confirmed in any extant documents that this was a substantial aspect of Norton’s magical practice. Crowley was a habitual drug-user and kept meticulous records of his experiences with laudanum, opium, cocaine, hashish, alcohol, ether and heroin.<sup>226</sup> Furthermore, at the end of his life he was addicted to heroin and required regular injections to sustain him.<sup>227</sup> Crowley was probably introduced to the magical use of drugs by his mentor Allan Bennett<sup>228</sup> and in Paris during the 1920s he experimented with *Anhalonium lewinii*, otherwise known as the mescaline-yielding cactus, peyote.<sup>229</sup> However, apart from the use of the dissociative unguents described by Eugene Goossens in his letters, drug-use seems to have been a comparatively minor feature of Rosaleen Norton’s magical practices and may indeed have been more specifically associated with her creative, art-making processes than her ritual activities. It would also appear that, although Norton sometimes liked to present herself to the tabloid press as the ‘wicked witch of Kings Cross’, spells and hexes did not play a major role in her magical practice.

According to publisher Walter Glover, when he first met Norton in late 1951,<sup>230</sup> during the period ‘before Roie became known as a witch, [she] had little respect for so-called witches and fortune-tellers....In those days she was the girl who hypnotised herself to draw whilst in trance.’<sup>231</sup> Nevertheless, there are occasional references in the popular media to Norton’s use of mind-altering drugs as well as her ability to generate magical hexes and spells – so these elements are not entirely absent from her magical repertoire and must be acknowledged.

During legal hearings held at Sydney’s Central Court in October 1955 in relation to the charges associated with the controversial Honer/Ager photographs, a psychiatrist, Dr S.J.Minogue, submitted a medical certificate on Norton’s mental state. The certificate was dated 18 October 1955 and read as follows: ‘This is to certify I examined Miss Norton today. In my opinion she is still suffering from the after-effects of drugs, chiefly Dexedrine and Methedrine, and is incapable of sustained concentration. At the present time I

think that the court proceedings would impose too great a strain on her, but she should be much better in a month's time.'<sup>232</sup> Mr.A.Griffith, representing Norton, asked that his client be remanded to 2 December 1955. At the same time it was noted during court proceedings that the Lunacy Court had committed Gavin Greenlees to an institution and he was likely to be there 'for at least six months'.<sup>233</sup>

In addition to using Dexedrine and Methedrine, Norton had also been taking Benzydrene pills. In one of the letters that found their way into Detective Trevenar's possession, Eugene Goossens expresses concern about 'heart attack' symptoms that Norton has referred to in earlier correspondence: Goossens warns her that the Benzedrine tablets she has been consuming are likely to produce such symptoms, 'especially when you've eaten nothing'.<sup>234</sup>

Dexedrine, Methedrine and Benzedrine are all forms of amphetamine, chemical stimulants that produce temporary states of euphoria, confidence and mental alertness but which are also associated with insomnia and mild irritability. Dexedrine and Benzedrine are both forms of dextroamphetamine, marketed under different brand names and in different strengths.<sup>235</sup> Methedrine is a generic name for methamphetamine,<sup>236</sup> a form of amphetamine associated with heightened sexual awareness.<sup>237</sup> According to the *High Times Encyclopedia of Recreational Drugs* (1978), as amphetamine use continues, or the dose increases or periods of sleep grow less frequent,

the adverse effects become more severe, the personality is definitely modified, most often afflicted with paranoia and delusions. Even though at first the user may view this development with a certain intellectual detachment, chronic heavy use typically destroys mental balance and the delusions become strikingly real.<sup>238</sup>

In addition to using various amphetamines, it was also reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in April 1972 that Norton had admitted to using LSD to gain inspiration for her art.<sup>239</sup> Regarded as an amplifier of emotional states, aesthetic perceptions and sensory input from the subconscious mind, LSD<sup>240</sup> remains one of the most potent psychoactive drugs ever discovered.<sup>241</sup> Derived from ergot (*Claviceps purpurea*) and classified as a 'psychedelic',<sup>242</sup> or 'mind-manifesting' drug, LSD was first synthesized by Dr Albert Hofmann at the Sandoz Laboratories in Basel, Switzerland in 1938 and became a hallmark of the American counter-culture during the late 1960s.<sup>243</sup> LSD had some surprising and distinctive characteristics that would have made it especially attractive to Norton. In particular, she would have been aware that

the states of heightened awareness accessed through LSD were often reflected in greater artistic and mystical sensitivity. As psychiatrist Dr Stanislav Grof has noted in *Realms of the Human Unconscious: Observations from LSD Research*:

Many LSD subjects reported in their sessions unusual aesthetic experiences and insights into the nature of the creative process ...[and another] area in which the use of LSD appeared to be rather revolutionary was the psychology of religion....some LSD sessions had the form of profound religious and mystical experiences quite similar to those described in the holy scriptures of the great religions of the world...<sup>244</sup>

Norton's use of LSD may well be reflected in the intense and vibrant colours associated with some of Norton's artworks during the late 1960s and 1970s, (see Chapter Six) but no substantial documentation has so far emerged regarding her magical, inspirational or artistic use of LSD. At the present time, any perceived correlations between her magical practices and her use of mood-altering stimulants and psychedelic drugs remain purely speculative.

As with Norton's drug-taking, media references to Norton as a magical hexer, or black magician, are also comparatively rare. However, one such instance occurred when *Sun* journalist Nan Javes called on Norton in February 1969. Norton had left her Brougham Street apartment and was now living in a derelict inner-Sydney house in Bourke Street. During her interview with Javes, Norton referred to herself as a 'coven master' and depicted both herself and the unnamed members of her witchcraft cult as potentially hostile and dangerous:

It's ridiculous to say we never do harm. If we weren't capable of fighting people through hexes and charms we couldn't survive. But here we are in the twentieth century, stronger than ever. Of course, we sometimes do good turns too. The sort of people I might put a spell on are those who harm me or someone close to me. I mightn't do it immediately if the circumstances weren't propitious, but you can bet your life I'd get around to it in time – and it works!'<sup>245</sup>

During an interview with the noted journalist and writer Robert Drewe, published two years later in the *Australian* newspaper,<sup>246</sup> Norton explained that as 'coven master of the Wicca branch of the witch cult' she was now presiding over major ritual meetings four times a year; Candlemas was the next ceremony that would be held in her coven.<sup>247</sup> Perhaps sensing the drama of the occasion, Norton then went on to say:

We feast, dance and drink. The sexual side of things is very important. We invoke deities and spirits and set to work to formulate whatever we mutually want through spells, and also things that we each want for ourselves. Black magic is a very personal thing. It is an integral part of our lives.<sup>248</sup>

If Norton truly saw herself at this time as ‘coven master of the Wicca branch of the witch cult’, that is to say, as the Australian counterpart to the British ‘King of the Witches’, Gerald Gardner (to whom she had sent a copy of her book *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*), she would not have referred to herself as a practitioner of black magic. Gardner and his colleagues were adamant that the Wicca revival in Britain focused very much on fertility rites, the imagery of the Goddess, and the cycle of the seasons, and had nothing whatever to do with black magic, sorcery or Satanism (see Chapters Two, Three and Eight for key distinctions between these forms of magical practice). However, referring to her ritual practice as ‘black magic’ may have been part of Norton’s strategy to impress Drewe during her meeting with him. ‘Some of the things they [ie. the witches in Norton’s coven] may mutually or individually want,’ wrote Drewe in his article, ‘include zapping some enemy with a hex or spell, and at this Rosaleen professes to be quite proficient.’ Drewe then quotes Norton again: ‘I took care of two policemen who were foolish enough to tangle with me...One was soon afterwards forced to resign from the [police] force, and the other, a detective-sergeant, soon found himself pounding the beat again.’<sup>249</sup> Apparently Norton did not provide Drewe with the details of her hexing spell against the policemen in question, and did not seek to validate the effectiveness, or otherwise, of her act of ‘black magic’.

There is, indeed, a genuine question-mark over Norton’s assertion that she was a practitioner of ‘black magic’. As noted in earlier chapters, Norton certainly oriented towards the ‘dark’ side of magic and felt attracted to the *Qlipha* or negative forces of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life.<sup>250</sup> However, while she certainly practised Thelemic sex magic, and explored Left-Hand Path Tantra and Voodoo-oriented ceremonial practices in addition to various forms of witchcraft, there is little, if any, evidence that she used her magical practices to wreak harm and injury on others. In this context Norton’s remarks to Robert Drewe and Nan Javes seem somewhat exaggerated.

Norton appears to have been preoccupied at this time with her need to generate her media persona as a ‘witch’ – a fact alluded to by Norton’s publisher Walter Glover. As mentioned above, when Glover first met her Norton did not refer to herself as a witch: ‘She resented being called a witch,’

writes Glover. 'Later, I believe, she found it convenient for business to go along with the media and openly declare herself to be a witch.'<sup>251</sup> Declaring oneself to be a '*black*' witch may have seemed even more dramatic, and was apparently part of Norton's media strategy from the mid-1960s through to the early 1970s.

Approximately three years prior to her interview with Drewe, Norton had agreed to participate in a television programme titled *Seven Days*, screened on Channel Seven, Sydney, on 13 December 1967. Here she was shown in a pre-recorded filmed interview wearing a goat's head mask and casting a spell.<sup>252</sup> Norton had been interviewed at home by two journalists, Phil Crookes and Bryon Quigley, amidst 'all the paraphernalia of witchcraft, including an altar' and was attended by her pet cat, some salamanders, and a rat named Percy whom Norton said she was training to become a 'familiar'.<sup>253</sup> Norton apparently sought to impress Crookes and Quigley by presenting the same 'witch-hexing' persona that she would emphasise in her media interview with Drewe three years later. Crookes describes what took place during the filmed interview at Norton's home:

We found Miss Norton to be a charming person. She offered us a cup of tea and told us quite frankly that these days she was engaged mostly in hexing various people by request. She said it was the work she most preferred and added – with a mild degree of pride – that she performed it with some notable success. During the casting of the spell, Miss Norton wore a goat's head mask and rang bells, poured water and burnt incense, all the time chanting to summon the forces of the earth god. After it was all over – it took about three and a half minutes – we asked Miss Norton what spell she had cast. She told us she had cast a spell to assure the production success. The next day our camera broke down...<sup>254</sup>

The facts associated with this particular media episode speak for themselves. Norton seems to have been far removed from being a master 'hexer' – a sorcerer renowned for casting dark and evil spells – but was clearly willing to oblige in projecting a particular media image when the television cameras were rolling.

### ***Summary of main points***

- a) Norton's magical practice involved a range of different ritual activities including trance magic (dissociative mental journeys on the 'astral

plane’); Thelemic sex magic, and rituals based on Voodoo, Kundalini Yoga and Left-Hand Path Tantra. During the late 1950s, after Sir Eugene Goossens’ departure, elements of Gardnerian Wicca may also have been introduced to Norton’s coven.

- b) Norton referred to herself as ‘High Priestess at the Altar of Pan’.
- c) Norton constructed ritual altars in her apartment at 179 Brougham Street, Kings Cross, dedicating them specifically to Pan and Hecate. Pan and Hecate were the principal deities in Norton’s coven.
- d) Norton’s coven, or inner magical circle, consisted of a few close friends and may have included only seven members.
- e) The initiatory structure in Norton’s coven, as described by British Wiccan high priestess Doreen Valiente (1989) and based on Leslie Roberts’ earlier (1959) account, may have been a late modification proposed by other coven members, rather than Norton herself. Emphasis on the ‘Old Religion’ – if accurate – suggests that a shift towards Gardnerian Wicca may have occurred within Norton’s coven some time after the departure of Sir Eugene Goossens. Valiente nevertheless confirms that even at this later stage Pan and Hecate remained the principal deities in Norton’s coven.
- f) Norton’s practice of sex magic involved cunnilingus and fellatio within a ritual setting. Norton, Greenlees and Goossens all engaged in bisexual behaviour and some of their rituals involved acts of ‘triple’ sex magic.
- g) Norton’s practice of Thelemic sex magic was influenced in part by Goossens, who offered to introduce Norton to Goetic sex magic techniques that he had apparently acquired from his close friend, Philip Heseltine, a one-time associate of Aleister Crowley’s, and a member of Crowley’s O.T.O. from c.1914 onwards (see Chapter Three). Goossens’ sister, Dame Sidonie Goossens-Millar, maintained that it was Goossens’ close friendship with Heseltine that drew Goossens into the occult in the first instance.
- h) The O.T.O. method of ‘activating’ Goetic demons involved the discharge of semen onto the sigils (or ‘seals’) of those demons. The

sigils themselves were included in the magical grimoires used by the practitioners as part of their magical practice.

- i) In addition to drawing on the *Goetia*, Goossens also confirms in his correspondence with Norton that he had been experimenting with ‘cakes of light’ – Thelemic ritual offerings containing sexual and vaginal fluids and prepared according to Crowley’s formula (see Chapter Three).
- j) Norton and Goossens believed they could contact each other magically on the ‘astral plane’, even when separated by large distances. Some of their ritual and ‘astral’ activities also include elements associated with medieval witchcraft, eg. perceptions of ‘flying through the air’; ritual homage to the Devil including the notorious ‘*osculum infame*’ (kissing the anus of the Devil); encounters with spirit-familiars and the use of magical unguents to induce ‘out-of-the-body experiences’ (dissociative trance states).

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<sup>1</sup> For example, in D.L. Thompson, ‘Devil Worship Here’, *Australasian Post*, 6 October 1955; D. Barnes, ‘I am a Witch!’, *Australasian Post*, 30 December 1956; R. Norton, ‘Hitch-hiking Witch,’ *Australasian Post*, 7 February 1957 and D. Barnes, ‘Confessions of a Witch’, *Australasian Post*, 15 June 1967.

<sup>2</sup> Specifically *The Glittering Mile*, a one-hour television documentary on King Cross, screened by Channel Nine, Sydney, in 1964, which included a short interview with Norton and footage of her using her magical *athame* (ritual dagger) in a ceremonial context, and a more recent television documentary programme, *Rewind*, Channel Two, Sydney [screened 5 September 2004] which included details of Norton’s sex magic and also the controversial Honer/Agar photographs of Norton and Greenlees performing an ‘unnatural sexual act’.

<sup>3</sup> This data includes Norton photographed in front of the altar she dedicated to Pan (D.L. Thompson, ‘Devil Worship Here’, loc cit, 6 October 1955: 3) ; Norton holding ritual antlers and wearing her ‘witch’s apron’ and cat mask (D.L. Thompson, ‘Devil Worship Here’, loc.cit, 6 October 1955: 4) ; Norton and members of her inner magical circle wearing masks (D.L. Thompson, ‘Devil Worship Here’, loc cit, 6 October 1955: 5): Norton holding a snake wand in front of a magical altar which included ritual antlers, a mirror and a centrally located candle, with the word ‘Uriel’ inscribed in large capital letters on the wall ( R. Norton, ‘Hitch-hiking Witch’, loc cit. 7 February 1957: 11) and photographs taken by Vice Squad detective Bert Trevenar of the Brougham Street attic following the raid on 3 October 1955, which show both the main altar dedicated to Pan and a smaller altar or shrine, dedicated to Hecate.

<sup>4</sup> That is, *circa* 1940 onwards.

<sup>5</sup> Reproduced in the article ‘Art Models Show Their Own Art’, *Pix*, Sydney 3 July 1943: 26 and also in Owen M. Broughton, ‘The art of Rosaleen Norton’, *Arna*, Sydney 1948: 19 (where it is titled *The Self-portrait in Trance*).

<sup>6</sup> Reproduced in O.M. Broughton’s article ‘The art of Rosaleen Norton’, *Arna*, Sydney 1948: 19.

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<sup>7</sup> In addition to *Astral Scene* and *The Sphinx*, other artworks which depict Norton in a state of comatose trance include *Nightmare*, a work from the mid-1940s, and *The Initiate*, reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (1952: plate XXII). A coloured rendition of the latter work, slightly different in composition but also showing Norton's head and shoulders, had been included in the Rowden White Gallery exhibition in Melbourne in 1949.

<sup>8</sup> Norton obviously collaborated with an in-house journalist at *Pix* magazine in producing commentaries for each of the images reproduced in the 1943 article. The caption for *Astral Scene* begins: 'This Mediumistic Self-Portrait, a pencil drawing, Miss Norton says, 'depicts myself in a trance...' [capitals in text] See 'Art Models Show Their Own Art', *Pix*, Sydney, 3 July 1943: 26.

<sup>9</sup> Spiritualism is the belief that the spirits of the dead can communicate with the living through a psychic medium. In modern times Spiritualism experienced a resurgence of interest during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and was closely associated with the rise of Theosophy and with the emerging scientific interest in 'psychical research', later known as parapsychology.

<sup>10</sup> Derived from the Greek words *ektos* ('exteriorised') and *plasma* ('substance'), the term 'ectoplasm' was coined by Professor Charles Richet (1850-1935), the distinguished physiologist and one-time president of the Society for Psychical Research, to describe the mysterious substance said to issue forth from the bodies of psychic mediums during séances. Spiritualists regard ectoplasm as a materialization of the 'astral body'.

<sup>11</sup> 'Astral projection' is a term used by modern occultists and spiritualists to refer to the conscious separation of the 'astral body' from the physical body, resulting in an altered state of consciousness. See also Chapter Four.

<sup>12</sup> The sphinx was a composite mythic creature with a human head and breast; the body, feet and tail of a lion, and the wings of a bird. The Great Sphinx at Giza represents the Egyptian god Horus and has a king's head, but in ancient Greece the sphinx had a woman's head and breasts and was said to be the offspring of Typhon and Echidna.

<sup>13</sup> For details of the relationship between the Kundalini and the 'fire serpent' see Chapter Three – specifically the section dealing with the form of Tantric sex magic practised by Kenneth Grant and his followers in the Typhonian O.T.O.

<sup>14</sup> O.M. Broughton 'The art of Rosaleen Norton', loc cit: 18

<sup>15</sup> In his article 'The art of Rosaleen Norton', loc.cit., Broughton refers specifically to 'the Yoni (in which the figure of the artist is reclining)...' and says that here the Yoni 'means Receptivity to Forces from other planes and Dimensions of Being'. In *Ecstasy Through Tantra* [Llewellyn, St Paul, Minnesota, 1988:96], Dr Jonn Mumford writes that 'in Yoga and Tantra...[the Yoni refers to] the female vulva or external genitalia [and is] likened to a lotus bud, soft and sweet smelling. Hindu Tantric sculpture is unique among the ancient civilizations as always clearly depicting the soft curves and slit of the vulva on female nudes...[the] naked Goddess arched backwards, knees apart, displaying her Yoni for Puja, worshipful veneration.'

<sup>16</sup> O.M. Broughton 'The art of Rosaleen Norton', loc.cit.: 18. Broughton misspells the word as 'principals' but his point is well taken.

<sup>17</sup> Norton writes: '... the God-forms comprise a link, or half-way state ...Human consciousness...can move up into these God-forms during trance, or other exceptional conditions; likewise Deva consciousness [Norton's term, taken from Sanskrit sources, for what she refers to as "the next level of consciousness", ie the astral realm] can descend into the same form.' See transcript of interview with L.J. Murphy, Department of Psychology, University of Melbourne, 27 August 1949 (Appendix A).

<sup>18</sup> N. Drury, *Inner Visions: Explorations in Magical Consciousness*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1979: 106.

<sup>19</sup> O. M. Broughton, loc.cit: 18

<sup>20</sup> N. Drury, *Inner Visions: Explorations in Magical Consciousness*, loc.cit.: 106.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> The 'assumption of the god form' in modern ceremonial magic (see Chapter Four) is a practice whereby the magician imitates the posture, regalia and perceived qualities of a mythological deity with the intention of seeking to embody the essence of that deity through an act of ritual and symbolic identification.

<sup>23</sup> N. Drury, *Inner Visions: Explorations in Magical Consciousness*, loc.cit.: 106.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Cecily Boothman, 19 August 1986.



- <sup>25</sup> A painting of this tree, titled simply *The Tree*, showing spirit-entities clustered around a tree whose upper branches have assumed the form of Pan-horns, was acquired by Don Deaton and included in the 1982 exhibition at Exiles Bookshop, Darlinghurst, coinciding with the re-release of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (1982 facsimile edition). The painting is reproduced in *Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Walter Glover, Sydney 1984: 31. Boothman told me that this particular painting was 'especially dear' to her.
- <sup>26</sup> Interview with Cecily Boothman, 19 August 1986. My notes from this interview are still in my possession.
- <sup>27</sup> R. Norton, 'Witches Want No Recruits', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 10 January 1957.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid: 35.
- <sup>29</sup> In Mahayana Buddhism the term *Sunyata* refers to the Void, or Supreme Reality, beyond manifested form. For Norton to truly enter Sunyata, she would necessarily have to surrender all vestiges of ego in an act of transcendental Union with the Absolute – hence the term 'trance of annihilation'.
- <sup>30</sup> Personal interview with Cecily Boothman, 19 August 1986, loc.cit.
- <sup>31</sup> A photograph of the house is reproduced in N. Drury, *Pan's Daughter: The Strange World of Rosaleen Norton*, Collins Australia, Sydney 1988: 56. All three levels of the house, including the attic, which had two small recessed windows, are clearly visible in the photograph. Two of the windows facing the street on the second level were boarded up.
- <sup>32</sup> Details supplied to the author by Walter Glover, c.1981
- <sup>33</sup> D. Barnes, 'Rosaleen says she could be a Witch', *Australasian Post*, 9 October 1952: 6
- <sup>34</sup> Norton referred to these as the North and South altars respectively. It is not known what specific purpose the Southern altar served. In an interview with Dave Barnes in 1956, Norton said it 'used in certain rituals' but did not provide any details. It may possibly have been a shrine to Hecate. See D.Barnes, 'I am a Witch', *Australasian Post*, loc cit:8.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>36</sup> G. Souter and G. Molnar, *Sydney Observed*, Angus & Robertson, 1968: 68-71. Molnar provided the illustrations for this book; Souter supplied the text.
- <sup>37</sup> B. Walker and R. Neville, 'Deliver us to E-ville', *Tharunka*, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 3 July 1962: 8. This interview was apparently conducted in the basement of the Brougham Street house and there is no mention in this article of the Pan mural. This suggests that at this time Norton had access to both the attic and the basement flat. She seems to have taken her ritual stag antlers with her from one room to another because they appear in different locations in various photographs from the period.
- <sup>38</sup> Barnes' first article on Norton, 'Rosaleen says she could be a Witch' was published in *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 9 October 1952. Barnes was also the editor of the magazine.
- <sup>39</sup> D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch', loc.cit, 1956: 8.
- <sup>40</sup> D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', loc cit: 5
- <sup>41</sup> B. Walker and R.Neville, 'Deliver us to E-ville', loc cit: 8.
- <sup>42</sup> K.McGlynn, 'Going to the Devil', *Sunday Telegraph*, Sydney, 16 July 1972.
- <sup>43</sup> The byline reads: 'Rosaleen Norton has become accepted as head of all Australian covens.' Elsewhere in the same article Barnes writes: 'She [ie Norton] says Australia has about 300 witches'. This suggests that Norton may have begun to regard herself as Australia's counterpart to Gerald Gardner. He was clearly the King of the Witches in England, and she was his equivalent in Australia. See D.Barnes, 'Confessions of a Witch', *Australasian Post*, loc cit:3.
- <sup>44</sup> Interestingly, when journalist Nan Javes interviewed Norton two years later, in February 1969, she referred to herself as a 'Coven Master' and claimed 200 Sydney-based devotees and 'hundreds more throughout the country', a clear indication that she was extending the definition of her magical following.. See N. Javes, 'Witches of Sydney', *The Sun*, Sydney, 7 February 1969.
- <sup>45</sup> In the British Wiccan tradition (see Chapter Two) when membership of a witches' coven looks like exceeding 13 members, senior members may branch off and form a new coven.
- <sup>46</sup> D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', loc.cit.: 5.
- <sup>47</sup> Walter Glover advised me in 1981 (my written notes survive) that he had heard a rumour that one of the coven members was Henry Foster, who worked as an engineer in a bakery at Bondi Junction, where he was involved with oven maintenance. Glover had heard that Foster was High Priest of Norton's coven. In the Thompson article the Toad describes himself as '...a warlock...almost a wizard, although I am perhaps not fully qualified for that distinction'. This nevertheless suggests that the Toad and – if he was indeed Foster – was reasonably 'senior' in Norton's group.

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<sup>48</sup> D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', loc. cit: 4.

<sup>49</sup> This, presumably, was Norton's South altar. Thompson notes that to the right of the Pan painting was another wall with a recessed window. D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', loc. cit.: 4. This window faced onto Brougham Street. Because the house itself faced east, this allows us to confirm that the Pan altar was the North altar.

<sup>50</sup> That is to say, Rosaleen Norton's response, for she was the Cat.

<sup>51</sup> D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', loc. cit.: 5.

<sup>52</sup> If Thompson's report is accurate, this indicates that for the Toad, at least, Pan and Lucifer were one and the same.'

<sup>53</sup> D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', loc. cit.:5.

<sup>54</sup> Thompson writes: 'Miss Norton has modelled in her time, and she was as unselfconscious with the shawl off as with it on.' See D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', loc. cit.:5.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Norton also confirmed that her first magical act was in homage to Pan in an autobiographical article published two years later: '...my first act of ceremonial magic was in honour of the horned god, whose pipes are a symbol of magic and mystery, and whose horns and hooves stand for the natural energies and fleet-footed freedom. And this rite was my oath of allegiance and my confirmation as a witch.' R.Norton, 'Witches Want No Recruits', *Australasian Post*, loc cit: 35.

<sup>58</sup> D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', loc. cit: 37.

<sup>59</sup> We know that Norton's rituals featured Uriel, the Jewish archangel associated in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn with the element Earth – a photograph taken of Norton at a ritual altar in 1957 shows the name Uriel clearly written in large letters on the wall behind the altar (See R.Norton, 'Hitch-hiking Witch', loc.cit, 1957: 11). This suggests that the other 'Elemental Powers' were Raphael (Air); Gabriel (Water) and Michael (Fire).

<sup>60</sup> A talisman is a magical object, like a charm, worn to attract good fortune. The talisman is often inscribed with a 'god-name' or the image of a supernatural power believed to bring luck to the person wearing it.

<sup>61</sup> Norton may have derived this practice from British Wicca. Here it is considered both a ceremonial object and a badge of rank. In Wicca it is often worn only by the High Priestess of a Coven but here Norton implies that both men and women could wear it. Traditionally the Witches' Garter is made of green leather, buckled in silver, and lined with blue silk. For Norton to make it from cord was something of a departure.

<sup>62</sup> R. Norton's text in D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', loc.cit.:37.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> D. Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, Hale, London 1989.

<sup>65</sup> In *The Rebirth of Witchcraft* Valiente says the contact between Gardner and Norton was 'limited' (1989:154). She also notes that Norton told Gardner she was working in Sydney as a witch and already had a coven, which indicates that Norton did not derive her coven structure from Gardner, if indeed she ever had her own 'coven' in the literal meaning of the word. According to Valiente, Norton had read about Gardner in the Australian press (1989:155) and then sent him her own book. Two articles featuring large photographs of Gardner appeared in the popular tabloids in the 1950s and it may have been one of these articles that prompted Norton to make contact with him. They were 'Witchmaster!' (subtitled: 'The Devil is on our Doorstep') published in *Australasian Post* 14 July 1955, an anonymous article which also contained pictures of Aleister Crowley and one of Crowley's lovers, the Australian-born violinist Leila Waddell, and 'Witches in the Nude' by Peter Lucas (subtitled: 'Boss Gardner Won't Allow Unpleasant Spells At All') published in *People*, Sydney 5 March 1958.

<sup>66</sup> D. Valiente, *The Rebirth of Magic*, loc.cit: 155.

<sup>67</sup> Loc. cit: 156.

<sup>68</sup> Loc. cit: 156-157.

<sup>69</sup> Loc. cit: 157.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Loc. cit: 158.

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<sup>73</sup> There is a hint of mock seriousness and formality in the Toad's responses in the D.L. Thompson interview: when the Toad refers to his interviewer as 'sir' on 'brother' on several occasions. See D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here !', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 6 October 1955: 4.

<sup>74</sup> Norton's father, Albert Thomas Norton, was a native of London and Norton's mother, Beena Salek née Aschman was born in New Zealand (*Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol.15., Australian National University, Canberra 2000).

<sup>75</sup> Specifically, Crowley's *Magick in Theory and Practice* [1929], which is included in the bibliography of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Sydney 1952.

<sup>76</sup> D. Valiente, *The Rebirth of Magic*, loc.cit:159.

<sup>77</sup> Loc. cit: 158.

<sup>78</sup> D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here !', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 6 October 1955: 4.

<sup>79</sup> D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch!' loc. cit: 1956:8.

<sup>80</sup> D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here !', loc. cit: 3, 4, 5.

<sup>81</sup> Personal communication to the author from D. Robinson, 10 October 2006.

<sup>82</sup> Quoted in D. Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, loc. cit: 158.

<sup>83</sup> Personal communication to the author from Cecily Boothman, c.1986.

<sup>84</sup> According to Norton's sister, Cecily Boothman, Norton's will, which was 'written in scratchy handwriting' also specified that certain objects should pass to Cecily herself and to a close friend, Eve Finney. After Norton's death in 1979 Cecily received various books and drawings – one of them from Norton's classic 1940s period. A 'special cat art-work', Norton's last painting, was bequeathed to Eve Finney (notes supplied to the author by Cecily Boothman, c.1985).

<sup>85</sup> Notes by the author taken during an interview with Walter Glover, c.1986 during the writing of the first draft of *Pan's Daughter*.

<sup>86</sup> D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here !', loc. cit.

<sup>87</sup> N. McCann, interview with Detective Bert Trevenar, 19 June 1999, published on-line at <http://nedmccann.blogspot.com>

<sup>88</sup> Grant's major publications on sex magic and the western esoteric tradition (and which relate specifically to practices in the British branch of the Ordo Templi Orientis which he heads) date from 1972 and for this reason cannot be said to have substantially influenced Norton, especially with regard to Norton's relationship with Gavin Greenlees and Sir Eugene Goossens: indeed, it is not known whether she was familiar with any of Grant's writings during the last seven years of her life when they were available. In any case, Grant has been substantially influenced by Crowley and regards himself as a Thelemite – a follower and spiritual disciple of the Great Beast 666. Much of Grant's sex magic practice derives directly from Crowley although Grant has greatly expanded its scope and range. See also Chapter Three.

<sup>89</sup> P.B. Randolph, *Sexual Magic*, translated by Robert North, Magickal Childe, New York 1988.

<sup>90</sup> R. Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Walter Glover, Sydney 1952: 79.

<sup>91</sup> See Appendix B: 'Selected personal correspondence between Eugene Goossens and Rosaleen Norton relating to magical ideas and processes'

<sup>92</sup> Literally 'Light in extension', a reference to the alchemical light of consciousness projected into the darkness of matter – see J. Symonds, *The Great Beast: the Life and Magick of Aleister Crowley*, Mayflower/Granada, London 1973: 87 fn.

<sup>93</sup> Crowley's *Konx Om Pax* was Item 187 in the catalogue issued by The Antique Bookshop & Curios, McMahon's Point, Sydney, in October 1996. Items 188-193 were etchings and drawings by Norton. Two copies of the 1952 edition of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* were also listed for sale – for \$600 and \$550 respectively – both volumes listed as 'very scarce'.

<sup>94</sup> The image of *Fohat* (Plate XIX) was published in the 1982 facsimile reprint edition of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* without incurring any legal charges of alleged obscenity.

<sup>95</sup> During the obscenity hearings, which lasted from November 1952 - February 1953, the Crown prosecutor, Magistrate Solling, made it clear that he regarded the image of Fohat and another work titled *The Adversary*, a portrait of Lucifer, as 'obscene and an offence to chastity and delicacy'. Existing copies of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* had to have these images blacked out before the book could be released for sale.

<sup>96</sup> These notes were passed in manuscript form by Norton to the book's publisher, Walter Glover, who in turn passed them on to me c.1981, when we were working together on the re-release of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* as a facsimile edition. These unpublished notes remain in my possession.

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<sup>97</sup> Transcript of interview record with Rosaleen Norton prepared by L.J. Murphy, University of Melbourne, 27 August 1949.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> The actual charge was 'making an obscene publication' and the 'abominable crime of buggery'. See D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', *Good Weekend/Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 3 July 1999:18.

<sup>105</sup> Reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 7 October 1955. Honer and Ager also tried unsuccessfully to sell the photographs to the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mirror*, after the *Sun* declined publication. See *Daily Mirror*, 7 October 1955.

<sup>106</sup> See 'Naked Revels in Art Studio', *Truth*, Sydney, 18 November 1956:9.

<sup>107</sup> During hearings at Central Court on 7 October 1955, Detective Trevenar advised Magistrate Halpin that police had retained the photographs but that the 'films had since been burnt'. See *Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 7 October 1955.

<sup>108</sup> When police raided Honer and Ager's room they seized 42 photographs and a roll of film. Only a small selection of photographs was shown on *Rewind* on 5 September 2004.

<sup>109</sup> One of the charges brought by the Vice Squad police against Norton and Greenlees was 'the abominable crime of buggery'. When Walter Glover met with Greenlees at the time of the re-publication of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* as a facsimile edition in 1982, Greenlees told Glover that his act of sodomy with Norton in the Honer/Ager photographs was 'pure make believe' (personal communication from Glover to the author, c. January 1984). However this statement is contradicted by Dave Robinson, who first met Norton, c. 1957, knew Greenlees and Norton well, and visited their Brougham Street apartment on several occasions during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Robinson was also interviewed in the Kings Cross documentary, *The Glittering Mile*, screened by Channel Nine, Sydney in 1964. According to Robinson, Greenlees was openly bisexual, and Greenlees and Norton participated in 'a lot of anal and oral sex'. Robinson also suspects there may have been some animal sex, 'with a goat'. Robinson also expressed his personal view that Norton's fondness for anal sex may have contributed to her death in 1979 from colon cancer. Personal communication to the author, 10 October 2006.

<sup>110</sup> Reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 7 October 1955.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> See *Truth*, Sydney, 18 November 1956: 16.

<sup>113</sup> According to Norton the photographs themselves had been taken in 1953 (reported in *Truth*, Sydney, 18 November 1956), nearly three years prior to the raid on Norton's home by members of the NSW Vice Squad on 3 October 1955. However during the hearings in Central Court Vice Squad detective Bert Trevenar gave evidence that Norton had told him that the photographs had been taken in June 1955 (see *Daily Mirror*, Sydney 1956). Evidence was also given in Central Court that Norton had refused to tell police who had taken the photographs because 'she did not want to get him into trouble' (*Daily Mirror*, Sydney 1956). It is highly likely that Norton had suggested the 1953 date as a ruse and that the photographer was Eugene Goossens. For major articles on the Honer/Agar trial and its aftermath see the *Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 31 May 1956; the *Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 12 November 1956 and *Truth*, Sydney, 18 November 1956: 9, 16.

<sup>114</sup> *Truth*, Sydney, 18 November 1956: 9.

<sup>115</sup> *Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 31 May 1956.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> *Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 1 June 1956.

<sup>118</sup> According to David Salter, Mrs Goossens also modelled her continental wardrobe for a colour spread in *The Australian Women's Weekly*. See D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc cit: 17.

<sup>119</sup> Australian conductor Richard Bonyng, studied under Goossens at the Conservatorium and recalls that Goossens was frequently 'very autocratic. A proud man. We were in awe of him - even frightened some of the time.' Quoted in D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc. cit.:17.

<sup>120</sup> This bookshop was identified by Dr Marguerite Johnson as the Notanda Gallery. See M. Johnson,

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'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', conference presentation, University of Melbourne 2004.

<sup>121</sup> See N. Heseltine, *Capriol for Mother, a Memoir of Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock)*, Thames Publishing, London 1992: 75. Nigel Heseltine was Philip Heseltine's son.

<sup>122</sup> Philip Heseltine is included in a list of O.T.O. members provided by former O.T.O. practitioner Ithell Colquhoun in *Sword of Wisdom: MacGregor Mathers and the Golden Dawn*, Spearman, London 1975: 207-208.

<sup>123</sup> See Rowena Pearce, 'Cyril Scott', <http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/grainger/percy/cyril.html>

<sup>124</sup> See A. Crowley, Chapter 20: 'Talismans: The Lamen: The Pantacle' in *Magick without Tears*, New Falcon Publications, Tempe, Arizona 1982, also available on-line at [www.hermetic.com](http://www.hermetic.com).

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> C. Rosen, *The Goossens: A Musical Century*, Andre Deutsch, London 1993:339.

<sup>127</sup> See J.O. Fuller, *The Magical Dilemma of Victor Neuburg*, W.H.Allen, London 1965: 227.

<sup>128</sup> Conversation between Goossens and Trevenar, 9 March 1956. See D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc. cit.:17.

<sup>129</sup> In a signed statement that Goossens made to Trevenar on 9 March 1956 after he was charged under Section 233 of the Customs Act with bringing a variety of prohibited items into the country, he confirmed how he had made contact with Norton: 'I wrote to Miss Norton expressing my admiration for the book and her work. She wrote thanking me for my letter as the result of which we met in her home in Brougham Street over tea.' Quoted in D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc. cit.:17.

<sup>130</sup> Personal communication to the author from Walter Glover, c.1986.

<sup>131</sup> See D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc. cit.

<sup>132</sup> Some form of sex magic was included in these 'rituals and indulgences'. Goossens confirmed in his interview with Detective Bert Trevenar in March 1956 that he performed acts of oral sex on Rosaleen Norton and that he had been involved in group sex rituals with Roie and Gavin 'four or five times'. It also seems likely that the 'unknown photographer' connected with the Honer and Ager obscenity charges, a person whom Norton was anxious to protect, was none other than Eugene Goossens himself.

<sup>133</sup> Goossens was knighted at Buckingham Place in June 1955.

<sup>134</sup> Gavin Greenlees confirmed to Wally Glover in 1982 that the ceremonial masks were for use in their magical rituals at Brougham Street. Personal communication from Glover to the author c.1986.

<sup>135</sup> D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc.cit.: 16.

<sup>136</sup> For further details of this case see the newspaper clippings held by the Australian Archives, Department of the Navy, SP551, Log Books of HMC, HMS, HMA ships, 1855-1957.

<sup>137</sup> D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc.cit.:21.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc.cit.:18.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Dr Marguerite Johnson obtained copies of these letters from film-maker Geoff Burton in 2003; he in turn had obtained them from Trevenar. See M. Johnson 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc cit.: fn.2.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid: 19.

<sup>147</sup> It is a common practice in Western magical groups for members to adopt ritual names relative to their initiatory grade. Such names only have significance to other members of the magical group and they are otherwise kept secret and certainly not revealed in public. The *djinn* or *genii* are daemons or spirits in the Islamic tradition and were traditionally considered to be a higher order of beings than humans, and composed of 'more subtle' matter. According to Islamic belief, the *genii* ruled the earth before the creation of Adam and were regarded as an intermediate race of spirit-beings between angels and humans. They were believed to have special architectural skills and, according to the *Qur'an*, were employed by King Solomon to assist in erecting his magnificent temple.

<sup>148</sup> University of Melbourne, 2004 (unpublished).

<sup>149</sup> Ibid: 14.

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid: 14-15.

<sup>151</sup> Or 'really' – Goossens' handwriting is unclear.

<sup>152</sup> D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc.cit.:21.

<sup>153</sup> I. Shah, *The Secret Lore of Magic* [1957], Abacus, London 1972:11.

<sup>154</sup> There are several versions of the *Goetia* in the British Museum. The listing of spirits contained in the *Goetia* was first published by Johann Weyer, also known as Johannes Wier, or Wierius, (1515-1588) a German demonologist who chronicled the hierarchy of Hell in his *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum* (1577).

<sup>155</sup> *Goetia: the Lesser Key of Solomon. The Book of Evil Spirits*, trans. S.L.MacGregor Mathers with an introduction by Aleister Crowley, [1904] De Laurence, Scott & Co., Chicago 1916:45-46 (re-issued by Weiser, Boston 1995).

<sup>156</sup> Other than the *Goetia* (and putting aside Mathers' translation of *The Greater Key of Solomon* which contains the magical pentacles of planetary spirits but not 'seals') the only other publication of a similar nature, readily available to Goossens, would have been A.E. Waite's *The Book of Ceremonial Magic* (London: 1911) or its predecessor, *The Book of Black Magic and Pacts* (London 1898). *The Book of Ceremonial Magic*, which contains all the material from the earlier book, is a collection of grimoires and composite rituals rather than a single grimoire, and there was no connection between this publication and Aleister Crowley. Crowley was, in fact, very dismissive of Waite.

<sup>157</sup> The American pirated edition of the Mathers/Crowley *Goetia*, published in Chicago in 1916 in a small hardcover edition, removes all reference to the editorial input of Mathers and Crowley and implies that L.W.de Laurence was the editor. The title page information acknowledges that the text had been 'translated from ancient manuscripts in the British Museum, London' but does not reveal who the 'translator' is. This edition of the *Goetia* was still readily available during the 1950s when Eugene Goossens and his friend, Philip Heseltine, were seeking information on magical grimoires. In more recent times, other magical grimoires have been published in accessible English-language editions. They include the *Arbatel of Magick* (trans.Robert Turner, first published 1575), Heptangle Books, Gillette, New Jersey 1979; *The Grimoire of Armadel* (MS circa 1650-1700, trans. S.L.MacGregor Mathers with an introduction by Francis King ), Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1980, and *The Secret Grimoire of Turiel* (trans Marius Malchus, first published 1518) Sure Fire Press, Edmonds, Washington 1994.

<sup>158</sup> *Goetia: the Lesser Key of Solomon. The Book of Evil Spirits*, trans. S.L.MacGregor Mathers with an introduction by Aleister Crowley, loc cit.1916:31.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid: 46.

<sup>160</sup> J. Symonds, *The Great Beast*, Rider, London 1951.

<sup>161</sup> P-R. Koenig, 'Spermo-Gnostics and the O.T.O' , available at [www.cyberlink.ch/~koenig/spermo.htm](http://www.cyberlink.ch/~koenig/spermo.htm). According to Dave Robinson, a Wiccan practitioner who knew Norton well during the late 1950s and early 1960s and paid several visits to Brougham Street, Norton was very fond of anal sex – as was Gavin Greenlees. Robinson maintains that both Norton and Greenlees were bisexual and he also speculates that Norton's death from colon cancer in 1979 may have been either directly or indirectly connected with her practice of anal sex. Personal communication to the author, 10 October 2006.

<sup>162</sup> D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch!', loc cit.:30 December 1956.

<sup>163</sup> R. Norton 'Hitch-hiking Witch', *Australasian Post*, 7 February 1957.

<sup>164</sup> D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch!', loc cit.: 8.

<sup>165</sup> See first photograph in the Barnes article, ibid: 6.

<sup>166</sup> See R.E. Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft*, Facts on File, New York 1989: 8. North is the traditional location for the Witch's altar, although occasionally practitioners locate it in the East.

<sup>167</sup> See D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!' loc cit. 6 October 1955: 4.

<sup>168</sup> See photograph in R. Norton 'Hitch-hiking Witch', *Australasian Post*, 7 February 1957: 11

<sup>169</sup> In Western Kabbalistic magic archangels are traditionally ascribed to the four quarters as follows: Uriel (North); Raphael (East); Michael (South) and Gabriel (West).

<sup>170</sup> In modern ceremonial magic, as practised in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the so-called Banishing Ritual of the Lesser Pentagram is used to ward off negative or evil influences. The ritual is performed in a magical circle and commences in the East. The magician uses a sword to inscribe pentagrams in the air and invokes the archangels Raphael, Gabriel, Michael and Uriel at the four quarters. The banishing also includes a ritual prayer known as the Kabbalistic Cross.

<sup>171</sup> D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch!', loc.cit.: 6.

- <sup>172</sup> See D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!' loc cit. 37.
- <sup>173</sup> 'She laughed and swung a long cigarette holder into her mouth, and we recognised the smile on her face to be exactly the same as the expression on the mask on the wall...' D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch!', loc.cit.: 9.
- <sup>174</sup> See D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!' loc cit.: 37.
- <sup>175</sup> This was probably the Banishing Ritual of the Lesser Pentagram, a standard ritual used by practitioners of the Golden Dawn magical tradition to create sacred space within the magical circle.
- <sup>176</sup> N. Javes, 'Witches of Sydney', *The Sun*, Sydney, 7 February 1969.
- <sup>177</sup> Hoffmann's charges, later admitted to be false, were published on the front page of the *Sydney Sun* on 22 September 1955.
- <sup>178</sup> D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch!', loc.cit.: 9.
- <sup>179</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>180</sup> D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!' loc cit.: 37.
- <sup>181</sup> See photographs reproduced on pp. 4 and 5 of D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!' loc.cit.
- <sup>182</sup> This was confirmed by Gavin Greenlees in conversation with Walter Glover in 1982, at the launch function for the re-issue of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*.
- <sup>183</sup> These notes are in the possession of the author.
- <sup>184</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>185</sup> R. Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc cit.:43.
- <sup>186</sup> In Voodoo, Baron Samedi is a *loa*, or deity, whose role is lord and guardian of the cemetery. Baron Samedi is an aspect of Guede, 'god of the grave'. Erzulie is the *loa* of love, wealth, beauty and prosperity – and the lunar wife of the sun god, Legba.
- <sup>187</sup> This phenomenon is sometimes referred to in the literature of medieval witchcraft as 'transvection'. See R.H. Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*, Crown, New York 1959: 511 et seq.
- <sup>188</sup> R.E. Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft*, loc cit: 185.
- <sup>189</sup> Ibid: 127.
- <sup>190</sup> J.B. Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York 1972: 216.
- <sup>191</sup> J.B. Russell, *A History of Witchcraft*, Thames & Hudson, London and New York 1980: 84. *Maleficia* are acts of 'low magic' or sorcery.
- <sup>192</sup> Chapter III, J. Sprenger and H. Kramer, tr.M. Summers, *Malleus Maleficarum*, (*The Hammer of the Witches*), Folio Society, London 1968: 68 et seq.
- <sup>193</sup> Ibid: 68-69.
- <sup>194</sup> G.B. Porta, *Magiae Naturalis siue de Miraculis Rerum Naturalium* [1562], II xxvii, quoted in M.J. Harner (ed.) *Hallucinogens and Shamanism*, Oxford University Press, New York 1973: 138-139.
- <sup>195</sup> Ibid: 138.
- <sup>196</sup> Ibid: 139.
- <sup>197</sup> Ibid: 139, quoting M.B. Krieg, *Green Medicine: The Search for Plants that Heal*, Bantam, New York 1966:53.
- <sup>198</sup> J.B. Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, loc.cit 1972: 54.
- <sup>199</sup> Quoted in D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc.cit.:18.
- <sup>200</sup> Goossens says in the letter that he has received a 'monster package' by 'daemonic angel carrier', which suggests air-freight. He also says he will be returning 'very late Friday or else Saturday a.m. and asks Norton to ask her neighbour whether photographs they have taken together have been under or over-exposed due to excessive light. He also asks that the neighbour should 'get some sets ready for Europe'.
- <sup>201</sup> See also D. Salter, 'The strange case of Sir Eugene and the witch', loc.cit.:18.
- <sup>202</sup> In another letter headed 'Roie', number four in Dr Marguerite Johnson's sequence, Goossens again refers to the 'A rite', confirming this point. See 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc. cit.
- <sup>203</sup> This piece of correspondence, which has no opening remarks, is identified as 'letter 10' in Dr Marguerite Johnson's article 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc. cit.
- <sup>204</sup> In medieval demonology a succubus is a demon or discarnate spirit that takes the form of a woman and has sexual intercourse with a man. Her male counterpart is the incubus.
- <sup>205</sup> See P. Turner and C.R. Coulter, *Dictionary of Ancient Deities*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK 2000: 75.
- <sup>206</sup> In letter 10 in Dr Marguerite Johnson's sequence ( see 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc.cit.), Goossens also writes 'Asmodeus is enclosed', and within the context of the whole

sentence it is clear that he is posting Norton an illustration of Asmodeus, perhaps from London or some other overseas location. It is possible that the picture may have been a print of Asmodeus taken from Francis Barrett's *The Magus*, 1801, a famous sourcebook of western magic that included an image of the head of Asmodeus as well as other well known devils. The Barrett images may well have been available in print form during the 1950s because they have been frequently republished since 1801. There is a suggestion in the same letter that Goossens and Norton have been exchanging valuable artworks because Norton has apparently offered her drawing *Black Magic* as a gift. That being the case, the reproduction of Asmodeus that Goossens had acquired for Norton may have been a limited edition print.

<sup>207</sup> R. Cavendish, 'Asmodeus' in *Man, Myth and Magic*, Marshall Cavendish, London, 1970: 141.

<sup>208</sup> Asmodeus is the 32nd. demon, or 'evil spirit', listed in the *Goetia*. See *Goetia: the Lesser Key of Solomon. The Book of Evil Spirits*, trans. S.L.MacGregor Mathers with an introduction by Aleister Crowley, loc cit.1916:32. See also A.E. Waite, *The Book of Ceremonial Magic* [1911], University Books, New York 1961: 204 and I. Shah, *The Secret Lore of Magic*, loc.cit: 191.

<sup>209</sup> R. Cavendish, 'Asmodeus' in *Man, Myth and Magic*, Marshall Cavendish, London, 1970: 141.

<sup>210</sup> Asmodeus is sometimes associated with Samael, a leading fallen angel and, in the Jewish religious tradition, one of the supreme sources of evil.

<sup>211</sup> This has been confirmed by several commentators, most recently Dave Robinson who knew both Norton and Greenlees and was a frequent visitor to Brougham Street during the late 1950s and early 1960s. personal communication from Dave Robinson to the author, 10 October 2006.

<sup>212</sup> In another letter, number four in Dr Marguerite Johnson's sequence (see 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc.cit.), Goossens seems to be referring to this three-fold sexual partnership when he writes: 'No S.M. [sex magic] so far – perhaps tonight, but I need you and Gav.' Elsewhere (Johnson letter 5, page 3) he makes reference to 'beautiful Gav'.

<sup>213</sup> McCann asked Trevenar whether the Honer/Ager photographs obtained by the Vice Squad showed 'Eugene bugging Greenlees as well as Roie', to which Trevenar replied 'Yeah' – although he added that the photographs he had were 'mainly between Roie and Greenlees'. Interview between McCann and Trevenar conducted on 19 June 1999: see <http://nedmccann.blogspot.com>.

<sup>214</sup> Johnson letter 1, loc.cit.

<sup>215</sup> Ashtaroth is the dark or 'evil' aspect of Chesed, associated with the Roman god Jupiter in the system of 'magical correspondences' drawn up in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (see Chapter Five). Interestingly, Mathers identifies Asmodeus as the Qliphotic counterpart to Mars, Roman god of war, who is associated with Geburah on the Kabbalistic Tree. See S.L.MacGregor Mathers (trs.) *The Kabbalah Unveiled*, George Redway, London 1887:30.

<sup>216</sup> M. Johnson, 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc. cit.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid, letter 9.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid, letter 2.

<sup>220</sup> Given Norton's orientation towards the 'night' side of magic, the unusual reference to 'Arimanic spheres' may well be connected to a comment made by Goossens in letter 10 in relation to Norton's amazing 'Arimanes dream episode'. Ahrimanes (old Persian) and Ahriman (Pavlati) were names ascribed to the Zoroastrian deity Angra Mainyu, the 'wicked, evil prince of demons' who was 'the chief opponent of Ahura Mazda, the god of light'. See P. Turner and C.R. Coulter, *Dictionary of Ancient Deities*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK 2000: 53.

<sup>221</sup> M. Johnson, 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc.cit, letter 5.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Presumably the Cream d'Egypte herbal ointment, with blood base, prepared by 'Anna' in Paris, referred to in letter 7.

<sup>224</sup> M. Johnson, 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc.cit: letter 10.

<sup>225</sup> This is my expression, not Goossens'.

<sup>226</sup> See A. Crowley, *Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, Hill and Wang, New York 1969, republished Arkana, London 1989; L. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley*, St Martin's Press, New York 2000 and S. Skinner (ed.), *The Magical Diaries of Aleister Crowley*, Weiser, York Beach, Maine 2003.

<sup>227</sup> L. Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley*, loc.cit.: 416.



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<sup>228</sup> A. Owen, 'Aleister Crowley in the Desert', extract from *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2004, published on-line at [www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/642011.html](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/642011.html).

<sup>229</sup> A. Crowley, *Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, loc cit: 386, 768.

<sup>230</sup> Norton and Greenlees had been arrested at their Brougham Street apartment in September 1951 by Sergeant Francis 'Bumper' Farrell and were charged with vagrancy. They were later remanded at Central Court, Sydney, and given two weeks to find 'gainful employment'. Glover provided that employment by paying them a modest salary while they assembled images and poems for the publication of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, released the following year.

<sup>231</sup> W. Glover, unpublished written notes on Norton and her background given to the author c.1986 to assist the research for *Pan's Daughter* (Sydney 1988).

<sup>232</sup> Reported in both the Sydney *Sun* on 20 October 1955 and the Sydney *Daily Telegraph* on 21 October 1955.

<sup>233</sup> Greenlees, who was then aged 25, had in fact been sent to Callan Park Mental Hospital on 7 October 1955 and would remain in this particular hospital and later in the Alma Mater Nursing Home, Kensington, for virtually the rest of his life, although he was allowed periods of temporary release, allowing him to visit Norton and her sister, Cecily Boothman. Greenlees was not discharged from the Alma Mater Nursing Home until 1983, the year of his death. According to a statement prepared by Dr S.G. Sands, acting medical superintendent of Callan Park, and Macquarie Street psychiatrist, Dr R.J. Kiely, submitted to Justice Clegg at the Darlinghurst Court in relation to the Honer/Ager charges, Greenlees had been medically assessed as a schizophrenic. He was hallucinating voices which would perpetually torment and ridicule him and he had also begun materialising doubles of himself which 'walked around the city in the shape of other people' - he could recognise these doubles of himself because of their 'characteristic mannerisms'. Greenlees' conversation was said to be 'stilted and studded with pseudo-scientific jargon' and he had entered Callan Park in an extremely emaciated state, weighing little over eight stone - considerably underweight for a man of six foot, two inches. According to Dr Sands, Greenlees was also 'obsessed with sex' and 'wanted to escape from the real world'. He would take books on occultism into the corner of his room and 'could only be aroused to any action by constant prodding'.

<sup>234</sup> M. Johnson, 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc.cit: letter 10.

<sup>235</sup> See M. Aldrich, R. Ashley and M. Horowitz (ed.), *High Times Encyclopedia of Recreational Drugs*, Stonehill Publishing, New York 1978: 238.

<sup>236</sup> L. Grinspoon and J.B. Bakalar, *Psychedelic Drugs Reconsidered*, Basic Books, New York 1979: 81.

<sup>237</sup> M. Aldrich, R. Ashley and M. Horowitz (ed.), *High Times Encyclopedia of Recreational Drugs*, loc.cit: 110.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> See 'Two skulls for Rowie', *Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 8 April 1972. Norton also offered LSD to me when I interviewed her in her Roslyn Gardens apartment in 1977. I declined this invitation, knowing from my own previous experiences that LSD is an amplifier of subconscious processes. Norton's flat was eerie and confining and would probably have resulted in a terrifying 'trip'.

<sup>240</sup> LSD is the popular name for d-lysergic acid diethylamide.

<sup>241</sup> See M. Aldrich, R. Ashley and M. Horowitz (ed.), *High Times Encyclopedia of Recreational Drugs*, loc.cit: 258 and L. Grinspoon and J.B. Bakalar, *Psychedelic Drugs Reconsidered*, loc.cit.:11.

<sup>242</sup> The phrase 'psychedelic' was coined by Dr Humphry Osmond, a Canadian psychiatrist and friend of the well-known novelist Aldous Huxley, who became an icon of the international counter-culture as a result of his pioneering experiments with mescaline during the 1950s. Huxley's correspondence with Osmond on the nature of psychedelics and the visionary experience is featured in Huxley's posthumously published volume, *Moksha*, ed. M. Horowitz and C. Palmer, Stonehill Publishing, New York 1977.

<sup>243</sup> For details of this fascinating process see P. Stafford, *Psychedelic Baby Reaches Puberty*, Praeger, New York 1971 and J. Stevens, *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream*, Atlantic Monthly Press, New York 1987.

<sup>244</sup> S. Grof, *Realms of the Human Unconscious: Observations from LSD Research*, E.P.Dutton, New York 1976: 3.

<sup>245</sup> N. Javes, 'Witches of Sydney', *The Sun*, Sydney, 7 February 1969.

<sup>246</sup> R. Drewe, 'At last the law gives witches a spell', *The Australian*, 8 January 1971.

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<sup>247</sup> This is an interesting remark. Candlemas, also known as Imbolc, is celebrated by Wiccans in the northern hemisphere on 2 February (and Norton's interview was published on 8 January). These days Australian Wiccans celebrate Candlemas on 1 August, because the cycle of the seasons is inverted in the southern hemisphere, but here Norton was evidently still adhering to the ritual procedures adopted by Wiccans in Britain.

<sup>248</sup> R. Drewe, 'At last the law gives witches a spell', loc.cit., 8 January 1971.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> The *Qlipha*, or negative forces of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, are specifically referred to in the glossary in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc.cit. 1952:78, and are represented graphically by the image of the Werplon (plate XV:45).

<sup>251</sup> W. Glover, unpublished written notes on Norton and her background given to the author c.1986 to assist the research for *Pan's Daughter* (Sydney 1988).

<sup>252</sup> 'Witch is so charming', television programme preview, *Sun*, Sydney, 5 December 1967.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter Six

### ROSALEEN NORTON AS A MAGICAL ARTIST

Throughout her life Rosaleen Norton incorporated elements from her magical practice into her visionary art. While her early compositions drew more on graphic styles associated with popular conceptions of ghouls, demons and disembodied spirits, her work gradually became both more artistically accomplished and also more ‘authentic’ in the sense that it drew increasingly on her own personal experiences. From the age of 23 onwards, when Norton began to explore trance states through self-hypnosis, her visionary and magical art began to incorporate material drawn from her ‘inner-plane’ encounters with the principal deities of her magical pantheon – figures like Pan, Lilith, Hecate and Lucifer in his manifestation as the Adversary – as well as nightmarish entities like the Werplon (see Chapter Four).

It can be argued that Norton reached an artistic peak with her exhibition in 1949 at the Rowden White Library at the University of Melbourne (which drew on ten years’ accumulated work) and the publication of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* in Sydney three years later. During the 1960s and 1970s many of Norton’s artworks became parodies of earlier compositions as she sought to replicate earlier images in order to make a reasonably steady, if modest, income. Her palette became increasingly more lurid and garish and many of her works were crudely executed in oils, producing a body of work far less refined and accomplished than her pen and pastel works from the late 1940s and early 1950s. As a consequence it is possible to consider Norton’s artistic output in various stages, or phases, of development (and also decline). These categories are:

- a) Adolescent and other early works.
- b) Artworks from the ten-year period leading up to, and including, the 1949 exhibition at the Rowden White Library gallery at the University of Melbourne.
- c) Drawings reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (1952).

d) Later artworks (especially works produced in the 1960s and '70s.)

In the final section of this chapter I will also present a lengthy, detailed analysis in which I compare the visionary artworks of Rosaleen Norton with those of the controversial British trance-occultist Austin Osman Spare (1886-1956). Spare is now considered a major figure in the 20<sup>th</sup> century magical revival.<sup>1</sup> Both artists belong within the same milieu, emerging as 'visionary outsiders' intent on exploring atavistic and chthonic imagery associated with sex magic and altered states of consciousness.

### *Norton's adolescent and other early works*

The earliest known artwork by Rosaleen Norton is an untitled pencil drawing from the personal collection of her sister, Cecily Boothman. Produced when Norton was seven years old, it depicts a cluster of rabbits playing and skipping and having an enjoyable time.<sup>2</sup> It shows none of the

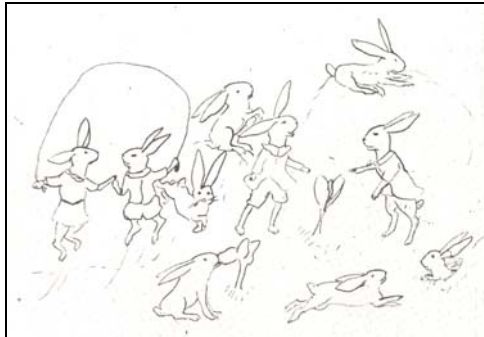


Plate 68: Norton's earliest known artwork – produced when she was seven. Courtesy Cecily Boothman

macabre or supernatural elements that would soon come to pervade her work. However, according to Norton, even her very earliest drawings – now lost, and produced when she was just 3½ years old – did draw on 'psychic' memories:

My first drawings...were mainly creatures called 'Nothing Beasts' and 'Flippers', which I knew very well as presences. The latter looked rather like the conventional sheeted ghosts, and were hostile to me; but they were kept at bay by my friends and protectors, the 'Nothing Beasts', who had animal heads surmounting a mass of octopoid tentacles, with which they seemed to swim through the ether. Apropos of apparitions, various psychic manifestations, both subjective and objective, have always been an integral part of my life; consequently I accepted them unquestionably as part of the natural order of things.<sup>3</sup>

The drawings Norton produced at Chatswood Girls' Grammar School – bizarre images of vampires, ghosts and werewolves based on Saint Saens' *Danse Macabre* – have not survived but, as mentioned in Chapter One, were sufficiently distressing to the other pupils that they hastened the process of Norton's expulsion from her school, her disruptive personal behaviour being the other main contributing factor.<sup>4</sup>

Initially disheartened by her expulsion from Chatswood Girls' Grammar School, Norton decided to enrol at East Sydney Technical College and studied art for two years under the tutelage of the noted sculptor, Rayner Hoff (1894-1937), who at that time was head of the Art School. Hoff was something of an artistic revolutionary and had arrived in Australia in 1923 with an impressive reputation: as a student at Nottingham Art School in Britain (1910-15) he had received silver and gold medals in a national competition and he had also won the Prix de Rome at the end of his diploma studies.<sup>5</sup> At East Sydney Technical College he supported the cause of modernism, making the first significant break with the academic Neoclassicism that had dominated Australian sculpture up to this time.<sup>6</sup> Strongly influenced by European Art Deco and personally attracted to Graeco-Roman mythic imagery,<sup>7</sup> Hoff believed that a vivid and uninhibited imagination was needed for artistic development, and he had apparently formed the view that Norton had these qualities in abundance. 'He freed me from routine and let me spend my time at figure drawing and composition,' Norton recalled in an autobiographical article published in 1957, 'and since for the first time I was encouraged to work continuously at my own art form, I became an exemplary student.'<sup>8</sup>

It was while attending East Sydney Technical College that Norton also became one of Australia's first female pavement artists,<sup>9</sup> although this was to be a very brief career. Norton had a favoured location at the bottom of Rowe Street, near the General Post Office in Martin Place, and at this spot she would draw on the pavement to attract attention from passers-by. On her first morning she earned herself seventeen shillings, one penny,<sup>10</sup> at the time a small fortune for a struggling student. Part of the appeal of her location in Rowe Street was that it was just below the Millions Club, and the members of this social club had a tradition of throwing pennies out of the window for a joke. According to Walter Glover the idea behind this activity was that the people below would think pennies were raining from heaven.<sup>11</sup> However, on one occasion while exhibiting her art on the pavement, Norton was hit on the

forehead by a falling coin. According to her sister Cecily Boothman, 'It dealt her quite a blow. She decided that the site was too dangerous, and did not go back.'<sup>12</sup>

Norton was still living in the family home in Lindfield and had already begun to stimulate her imagination by performing private rituals in her bedroom, using robes, Chinese joss sticks and wine which she had taken from a stock supply hidden by her parents. Meanwhile, although Rayner Hoff was encouraging her creative process at East Sydney Technical College, Norton was still tied to domestic routines at home and often wondered how she could employ her artistic talents to earn herself a regular income and obtain her independence.

***Artworks from the ten-year period leading up to, and including, Norton's 1949 exhibition***

Norton's adolescent macabre drawings inclined towards a formulaic horror-comic style and were not especially distinctive. It was after making contact with *Pertinent* magazine in the early 1940s (see Chapter One) that her recognisable artistic style began to emerge for the first time. As mentioned previously, the first of Norton's works accepted by *Pertinent* were published in the magazine's third edition, released in October 1941 when the artist was 24 years old. Three line-works appeared in this edition, *The Borgias*, *Esoteric Study* and *Elementals*. Of these, *The Borgias* (reproduced in Chapter One) is by far the most accomplished. The heads of three mysterious and quietly menacing figures are shown clustered together in a conspiratorial formation; a hand is poised above a bowl and is pouring what may well be poison from a small vial into a translucent bowl. A coiled snake with a darting forked tongue writhes threateningly in the foreground. Here Norton is drawing partly on an Art Nouveau style reminiscent of Aubrey Beardsley: the drawing is characterised by distinctive dark arcs and the snake is shown virtually in silhouette. The sneering expression on the face closest to us has a look of arrogant disdain that Norton would apply to her depictions of other authority figures<sup>13</sup> in later artworks, especially some of the drawings reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* a decade later.<sup>14</sup>

The pencil drawing *Esoteric Study* is of particular interest because the accompanying commentary states that Norton's basic composition was 'actually executed whilst in a hypnotic trance'.<sup>15</sup> It depicts Oriental forms

swirling in a vortex thronging with fanged demons whilst a horned goat-headed figure looks on approvingly in the background. *Elementals*, meanwhile, is described as ‘a conception of what may be amongst us and about us in the unseen world. Shapes of mortally formless evil elemental and disembodied spirits...’<sup>16</sup> The least convincing of the three reproduced works, *Elementals* shows ghoulish heads clustered together above a female figure who may be based on Norton herself.

Other drawings by Norton were published in *Pertinent* in the November and December 1941 editions and some were offered for sale as prints.<sup>17</sup> The November edition of *Pertinent* included *The Rite of Spring*, a pencil drawing of an exuberant, prancing centaur symbolising ‘the Spring of life with fierce and joyous exultation’<sup>18</sup> and *Sorcery*, a portrait of a horned version of Merlin surrounded by serpentine demons and shown wearing a strange conical headpiece reminiscent of the tower in which the wizard was said to have been imprisoned.<sup>19</sup> December’s *Pertinent* included three line studies with supernatural themes. Two of them, *Nightmare* and *Desolation* were compositions featuring ghouls, skulls and images of death and harkened back to Norton’s more formulaic early work. However, *The Goat of Mendes*,

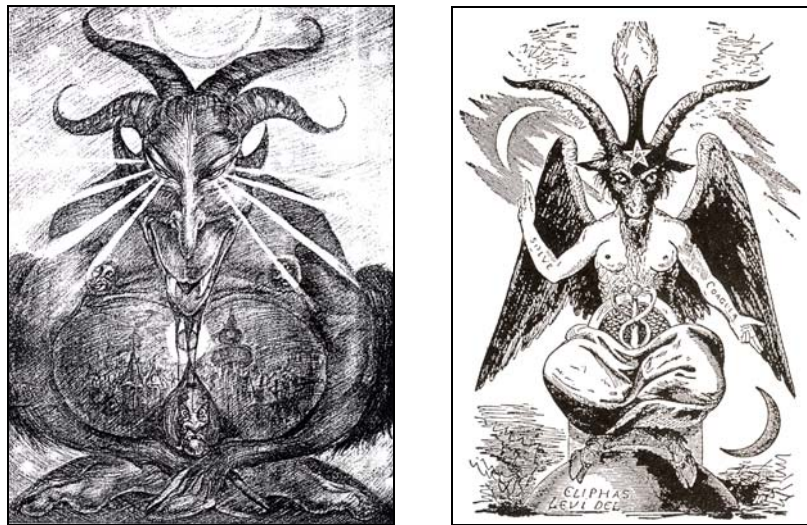


Plate 69: Norton’s *Goat of Mendes* and Eliphas Lévi’s 19<sup>th</sup> century depiction of Baphomet

a watercolour portrait of a devilish, hermaphroditic goat-headed entity otherwise known as Baphomet and associated with the allegedly heretical

activities of the medieval Knights Templar, had more presence and projected a genuine sense of menace.<sup>20</sup> The Goat of Mendes has been associated with Pan by French ceremonial magician Eliphas Lévi and occult historian and Golden Dawn member A.E. Waite;<sup>21</sup> Norton depicted him in a squatting position with four horns, fangs and large bulbous breasts, and with mysterious beams of light emanating from his eyes.

Nevertheless, in a developmental sense, Norton's work in *Pertinent* can still be considered transitional. Norton's mature style, more clearly evident in the 1949 Rowden White Library exhibition and in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* published in 1952, had not yet emerged in 1941. Just two years later, however, Norton would show a substantial leap forward with the reproduction of several of her most recent drawings in *Pix* magazine. One of these, *Astral Scene*, referred to earlier (reproduced in Chapter Four) and produced c.1943, showed Norton in a comatose state of trance while a magical horned entity manifested itself beside her.<sup>22</sup> This artwork is of interest for several reasons. Firstly, it is more inventive than most, if not all, of its predecessors: the comatose Norton is shown facing away from the viewer while a mysterious supernatural being with ram's horns looks on protectively within an atmosphere of swirling magical forces. From a compositional viewpoint this pencil drawing contrasts markedly with *The Goat of Mendes* which is virtually two-dimensional. Secondly, Norton's graphic style has already become more assured. *Astral Scene* is a skilfully rendered drawing and the artist (shown in trance), the atmospheric occult sigils, and the mythic spirit-being are convincing and convey an authentic sense of 'magical reality' – it is perhaps the first work in Norton's *oeuvre* to achieve this.<sup>23</sup> And thirdly, *Astral Scene* is one of the earliest known works by Norton that depicts her magical process, namely her ability to enter a state of trance through self-hypnosis in order to contact supernatural beings in this way.<sup>24</sup> For all of these reasons, *Astral Scene* is perhaps the most notable artwork produced by Norton in the early 1940s.

One of the most important roles played by *Pertinent* in Norton's career, apart from the fact that it published several of her artworks in the early 1940s and helped promote her work commercially, was that it also enabled her to meet her future lover and artistic collaborator, Gavin Greenlees. As mentioned earlier,<sup>25</sup> two of Greenlees' poems had been published in *Pertinent* in 1943 when he was just 13 years old. Greenlees and Norton had a mutual interest in surrealism, poetry and fantasy and their creative contributions to *Pertinent* apparently brought them together, although exactly how this came about has



not been established. It is thought that they first met each other toward the end of World War Two, while Norton's husband, Beresford Conroy, was serving with the AIF in northern New Guinea.<sup>26</sup> By mid-July 1949 Norton and Greenlees knew each other sufficiently well to hitch-hike together from Sydney to Melbourne.



*Esoteric Study*



*The Rite of Spring*



*Desolation*



*Elementals*

Plate 70: Four of Norton's drawings published in *Pertinent* in 1941

Norton's task in coming to Melbourne was to find a gallery where she could exhibit 46 pictures representing ten years' artistic work.<sup>27</sup> At this time, on her own admission, both she and Greenlees were 'flat broke'.<sup>28</sup> Fortunately a mutual contact named Ian Stapleton came to their assistance. Stapleton was co-editor of the University of Melbourne student newspaper *Farrago*



Plate 71: Gavin Greenlees and Rosaleen Norton with Ian Stapleton in Melbourne, 1949

and proved to be an enthusiastic ally.<sup>29</sup> Impressed by the selection of works that Norton had brought with her, Stapleton quickly became a type of publicity agent acting on the artist's behalf. Not only did he book the gallery at the Rowden White Library at the University of Melbourne so Norton's exhibition could be held there, but he also put up some money for out-of-pocket expenses.<sup>30</sup>

Among the works that Norton had taken with her to Melbourne were some of her best pen and pastel drawings of the mid to late-1940s : *Timeless Worlds*, *Lucifer*, *Triumph*, *The Adversary*, *The Initiate*, *Merlin*, *Loosing of the Whirlwind* and an early version of *Individuation*. These works would all feature in the forthcoming show. A total of forty-six works would be on display in the Rowden White Library exhibition; it was scheduled to run from 1-23 August 1949, the gallery opening from 10 am to 9 pm. Professor A.R. Chisholm had agreed to give the welcoming address.

A small four-page exhibition catalogue was prepared that included a full-page essay on the artist and some of the featured drawings. Almost certainly written by Norton herself,<sup>31</sup> it is quoted here in full because it reveals Norton's perceptions of her own creative process and philosophy, and includes references to what Norton clearly believed to be the revolutionary nature of her work. Norton undoubtedly saw herself as an 'outsider' in the contemporary Australian art world, presenting herself as an artist willing to incorporate unfamiliar archetypal and visionary elements into art-forms intended to challenge local 'values' and extend conventional artistic boundaries:

'Modern' Australian art of the last decade is principally noted for its imitation, with greater or less degrees of success, of the European art following the formal revolution of the Post-Impressionists. Our few distinctive artists belong mainly to the older school, and our young artists are hampered by a pathetic obsession with merely temporal values, which expresses itself in their limited formal experimentalism and equally limited 'social realism'.

The work in this exhibition is remarkable in its uninhibited return to that storehouse of timeless archetypal imagery on which the visionaries of all ages have drawn, a return which owes nothing to contemporary fashion or an attitude of idolatry towards the past. Surrealist? Certainly not in the orthodox sense; there is here little Freudian imagery, conscious or otherwise, and the artist expresses a doctrine quite opposed to the pragmatic materialism of Surrealist manifestoes [sic]. Perhaps the wider category used by Herbert Read, 'Superrealism', to include all varieties of fantastic 'literary' art, would encompass best the spirit of these pictures.

In style, again, there is no obvious influence. With frequent alleged influences, those of Goya, Blake, Norman Lindsay and, for some obscure reason, Beardsley, there is no real stylistic affinity.<sup>32</sup> This true originality is the fruit of a continual attitude of honesty towards the subject, which consists, in several of these works, of so-called 'psychic' experience. The artist has none of the intellectual's embarrassment before the 'supernatural'; her art is a healthy reaction from the narrow materialism of the 30's towards an integral statement of man's experience, human, demonic and divine.

Her imagery, drawn with a classical feeling for line, is used once more to symbolize the intangible forces of which human life is the playground. Like the Yeats of *A Vision*,<sup>33</sup> she has felt the need for a basic vocabulary of symbols, from whose elements her highly personal vision is compounded. This imagery is sometimes familiar, almost banal, as in *Lucifer*, where the faun (whose resemblance to those of Lindsay is, again, merely superficial) is the obvious expression of a devout Pantheism; again, as in *The Initiate*, it is more esoteric, and the result of deeply felt inner experience which tends to break artistic bounds. Perhaps the most satisfying work lies somewhere between these extremes, in personal statements of broad human themes such as *The Adversary*, *War*,

and *Individuation*, fertile side-alleys such as the mathematical mysticism of *The Blueprint*, social satire as in *The Possessed*, and a remarkable wedding of candid realism to fantasy as in the *Self-Portrait*. On a lighter plane, a strong talent for the satirical grotesque is evident in such smaller drawings as *Punishment of Hop-Frog* and *Adam and Eve*.

By her lack of parochialism and temporal preoccupation, Rosaleen Norton offers a unique example to young Australian artists.<sup>34</sup>



Plate 72: An early version of *Individuation*, exhibited in Melbourne in 1949

Here Norton is somewhat defensively positioning herself as a visionary Australian artist concerned with themes that extend well beyond the artistic frontiers of her contemporaries. Norton is keen to identify her own unique qualities by emphasising the guiding principles of Pantheism and esoteric philosophy which underpin her creative work. Norton also stresses her lack of indebtedness to other artists even though the influence of Norman Lindsay and, on occasion, other figures like Beardsley, is clearly evident in some of her earlier compositions.

Several of the exhibited artworks would later be reproduced in colour in Walter Glover's *Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (1984), providing us with some sense of the strong visual impact they would have had, displayed on the walls of the university library.<sup>35</sup> Given the conservative and conventional nature of mainstream Australian society in the immediate post-World War Two era, Norton should, perhaps, have anticipated a potentially hostile response to her blatantly pagan, sexual images. *Pan* was essentially a portrait of a naked leering Devil; *Timeless Worlds* depicted a naked female demon riding ecstatically through the sky on the back of a griffin; *Loosing of the Whirlwind* showed a black serpentine demon emerging from a vortex of swirling forms beside a triumphant naked she-devil; *Triumph* and *Individuation* both featured naked hermaphrodites with their breasts and penis in full view; *The Initiate* showed two naked women engaged in a warm sexual embrace, while *Lucifer* depicted the figure of the Adversary standing proudly naked above a horned satyr and a female demon, the latter clearly modelled on Norton herself; breasts and genitalia were once again clearly visible for all to see.

Nevertheless, despite the confrontational sexual nature of many of the artworks exhibited in the Rowden White Library, the images themselves displayed a marked development in both form and conception when compared to most of the work Norton had published in *Pertinent* a few years earlier. Norton's artistic rendering of human anatomy was now far more convincing, her metaphysical compositions more assured and original. In addition, Norton's depictions of mythic deities in many instances now reflected her personal metaphysical experiences while in a state of trance. Continuing the compositional style established in the early-1940s drawing *Astral Scene*, which depicted Norton in trance beside a manifested spirit-being, Norton had now produced a dramatic coloured work in pencil and pastel that was in the same genre and every bit as impressive: *Sphinx and Her Secrets* (a work which is also reproduced in the Owen M. Broughton 1948 *Arna* article referred to earlier). This particular composition showed Norton in a horizontal comatose state while Egyptian god-forms and an image of Pan emerged from the astral realms and towered above her.

Mythic encounters were also a feature of several other works in the 1949 exhibition. *The Gnostic*<sup>36</sup> is clearly based on the esoteric symbol of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life with its central Middle Pillar<sup>37</sup> and shows Norton – naked with arms outstretched – embracing mythic beings who have appeared



above her and who have emanated from higher spheres on the Tree (see Chapter Two for references to the Kabbalah). One of these beings is located on the central axis itself, embodying a fusion of the two polarities of good and evil, while a *Qliphothic* demon leers at us from the left-hand side of the composition – an appropriate rendition since this devilish entity belongs symbolically on the ‘negative’ or left-hand side of the Tree.<sup>38</sup> On the right-hand side is a benign feminine deity with a large diamond on her brow. The symbolism of this four-sided geometrical figure may link this goddess to the fourth *sephirah*, or sphere of consciousness, on the Tree of Life known as *Chesed* (representing Mercy), although traditionally this sphere is considered masculine.<sup>39</sup> The symbol of the diamond recurs in *The Initiate* which shows two beautiful naked women embracing each other within a diamond of golden light, rendered in colour pastel. At their feet we are shown a sphere inscribed with a hexagram, or Star of David motif. Interpreted in a Kabbalistic context, the Star of David hexagram consists of two interpenetrating triangles: the symbol itself represents the fusion of the triangle of Spirit (the Supernal

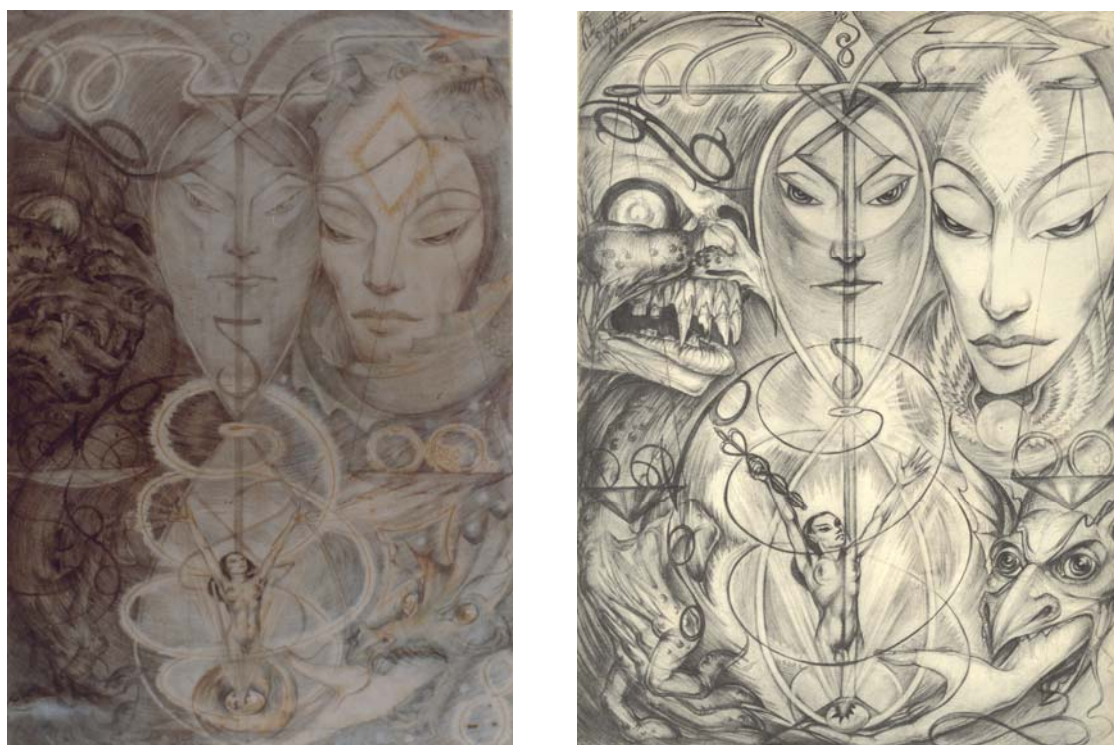


Plate 73: Norton's *The Gnostic* (left), exhibited in Melbourne in 1949 (Plate 35 in *The Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton*). A drawing based on the earlier painting, retitled *Esoteric Study* (right), was included as Plate XII in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*

triad of *Kether*, *Chokmah* and *Binah*, the first three emanations on the Tree of Life) with the obverse triangle of Physical Form or matter. Regarded this way the Star of David is a visual representation of the esoteric maxim ‘as above, so below’: the fusion of the Macrocosm and Microcosm. With this in mind, *The Initiate* (reproduced later in this chapter, in the section dealing with works from *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*) probably represents a state of symbolic harmony rather than spiritual passion, although it is possible that Norton may have sought to represent both of these aspects in the drawing when she produced it. Norton’s face appears low down in the work, as if in a state of trance, and on the left-hand side two disembodied hands are presented cupped together in a diamond form. In the top right-hand side of the picture a small female form is presented travelling ‘astrally’ within a diamond (or yoni)<sup>40</sup> form, indicating that this work is essentially a depiction of an inner-planes encounter (see Chapter Four for details of Norton’s astral journeys in trance).

Norton’s impressive figurative work, *The Adversary*, which featured on the cover of the 1949 Rowden White exhibition catalogue, offers another example of the mythic encounter (reproduced in Chapter Four). Here the imposing figure of the Adversary, an aspect of Lucifer, confronts a much smaller human being, symbolically cutting him down to size.<sup>41</sup> One of Norton’s iconic images, this work was finely executed by the artist and captures the drama of the encounter between a mere mortal and a ‘higher’ spiritual being: a line drawing based on the same composition would be included by the artist in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* in 1952.<sup>42</sup> Finally, within the same genre, reference should be made to *Witches’ Sabbath*,<sup>43</sup> in which a naked woman – possibly based on Norton herself – is shown engaged in a passionate sexual embrace with a black panther while a winking nun and a leering devil look on. This was a mythic encounter of quite another kind, and this particular picture was one of four artworks that would arouse strong controversy during the 1949 exhibition, leading to a court hearing and charges of alleged obscenity (see below).

Other fine works in the Rowden White Library exhibition included *The Blueprint*, in which a benign form of Pan, representing the Logos – the guiding spiritual force in the cosmos – peers into his crystal bowl, carefully watching the forms emerging in the lower worlds, and *Triumph*, a work divided symbolically into two distinct realms: the domain of dark magical forces, or *Qlipha* (again, shown appropriately on the left-hand side of the picture), and the domain of light ruled by a naked golden-bodied

hermaphrodite who raises an arm in celebration while a transcendent being looks on from a higher spiritual sphere.

Norton probably expected that her exhibition in the Rowden White Library would be attended mainly by students and a few curious academics. However, two days after the opening of the exhibition Victorian police entered the library and seized four of the most controversial pictures on show. Charges would subsequently be laid under the Police Offences Act of 1928 alleging that these particular works – *Witches' Sabbath*, *Lucifer*, *Triumph* and *Individuation* – were decadent and obscene, and 'likely to arouse unhealthy sexual appetites' in those who saw them.



Plate 74: *Triumph* (Plate 10 in *The Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton*)

The raid on 3 August followed a visit to the exhibition earlier in the day by two policemen, Detective John Olsen and Inspector Tannahill. Olsen had spoken to Norton about the controversial nature of some of the exhibited works and discussed with her various complaints he had received about the drawings being 'lewd and disgusting'. One person had described the works as



‘stark sensuality running riot’,<sup>44</sup> while another claimed the exhibition produced ‘as gross a shock to the average spectator as a witch’s orgy’.<sup>45</sup>

On 4 August, just three days after the opening of the exhibition, the acting Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Professor Paton, ordered the removal of five further paintings from the Library because a woman student had complained that the pictures were obscene.<sup>46</sup> Norton was extremely unimpressed by this response to her work. ‘Obscenity,’ she countered, ‘like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. This figleaf morality expresses a very unhealthy attitude.’<sup>47</sup>

When Detective Olsen initially asked Norton for an explanation of *Witches’ Sabbath* – a controversial work that would later be retitled *Black Magic* – she replied that it was a ‘symbolistic’ drawing: the female figure depicted was a witch, the panther personified the powers of darkness, and their embrace represented the initiation of the witch into the ‘infernal mysteries’.<sup>48</sup> In the ensuing legal sessions at Carlton Court, which took place while the exhibition was still being shown at the University of Melbourne, the Crown prosecution alleged that works of this sort could ‘deprave and corrupt the morals of those who saw them’.<sup>49</sup>

During the court hearings the police detectives argued their case vigorously before the presiding Stipendiary Magistrate, Mr Addison, claiming that Norton was exhibiting artworks inspired by medieval demonology. However, in Norton’s defence, Mr A.L. Abrahams countered this claim by stating that these allegedly obscene pictures were mild compared with illustrations published in *The History of Sexual Magic*, a book that had already been cleared by the censors and which was readily available in Australia. ‘We have to cater for people with normal reactions to sex,’ Abrahams noted, ‘not morons, the subnormal and neurotics.’<sup>50</sup> Emphasising the point still further he added: ‘The Act under which this prosecution is launched is based on a case heard during Queen Victoria’s reign in 1836...’<sup>51</sup>

The Warden of Melbourne University Union, Mr R.R. Barbour, also presented evidence which indirectly supported Norton. It was Barbour who had given Norton permission to hold the exhibition at the university, and he provided testimony during the court proceedings stating that he did not personally find Norton’s drawings sexually exciting.<sup>52</sup> Keen to reinforce this point, Abrahams then asserted that for Norton to be declared guilty as charged, her art would

have to be found to be of a nature 'likely to corrupt those whose minds were open to immoral influences'. Stipendiary Magistrate Addison accepted Abrahams' argument, finding in Norton's favour and dismissing the charges of obscenity brought against her under the Police Offences Act 1928. Costs of £4/4/- were awarded against the Victorian police department.<sup>53</sup>

Norton was delighted with her court victory but dismayed that the publicity generated by the charges of obscenity had not led to any sales at the exhibition.<sup>54</sup> 'Here I am with a million pounds' worth of publicity, 46 pictures on my hands, a lot of peep-sees and no buyers, and nowhere to sleep unless another friend bobs up,' she told a journalist from *Truth* magazine. 'I'm flat broke and unless I can cash in on the four pictures mentioned in the court case, I look like walking back to Sydney and then starving...'<sup>55</sup> When asked the likely purchase price she would place on the four controversial artworks, Norton replied:

Just give me a two-week show somewhere in the city and then I'll hand over any one of them for breakfast in bed, a pillow slip, and two nice sheets. It's all right being a notorious person but a sweet bed and the next meal mean a lot.<sup>56</sup>

However Norton's wish for an additional exhibition in a more central city location, such as Flinders Street in the heart of Melbourne, did not eventuate. Having spent several miserable days at the People's Palace and the Salvation Army Hostel she now found herself 'nearly £50 in the red'. The exhibition at the Rowden White Library had generated enormous publicity but no actual income. 'It's dreadful to think an artist has to get a bed from night to night, but that's how it has been...' she told the *Truth* journalist, adding despondently '...I've had art..<sup>57</sup>

Norton remained long enough in Melbourne, however, to undertake a series of tests and interviews with psychologist L.J. Murphy at the University of Melbourne: the highly informative transcripts from these sessions have been referred to earlier. Twenty-seven of the exhibited artworks were also photographed in colour by Professor Oeser, Head of Melbourne University's psychology department, and it was these colour slides that were sent by Professor Oeser's widow to Walter Glover in 1982, thereby facilitating the publication of the *Supplement to the Art of Rosaleen Norton* two years later.<sup>58</sup> Norton herself was able to purchase a full set of large colour prints from Professor Oeser, which was some small consolation for her after the

disappointing financial outcome of the Melbourne exhibition. A handwritten letter from Norton to Professor Oeser has survived, in which Norton expresses relief at being able to purchase a new set of colour prints, having lost her own copies in transit while returning to Sydney.<sup>59</sup>

***Drawings reproduced in The Art of Rosaleen Norton (1952)***

The circumstances which brought Rosaleen Norton, Gavin Greenlees and Walter Glover together have already been described in Chapter One. Glover effectively became Norton's and Greenlees' employer when he provided them with the opportunity to earn a small salary in order to avoid the charge of vagrancy brought against them in 1951 by the NSW Vice Squad. Glover also negotiated an agreement with Norton which made him the copyright holder of all her past, present and future artworks.<sup>60</sup>

Following lengthy discussions with Norton and Greenlees, Glover agreed to finance publication of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*. It would be released as a limited edition art book and would include a selection of major drawings by Norton with accompanying poems by Gavin Greenlees. When the final selection was made, 31 drawings by Norton had been chosen, together with 24 poems by Greenlees. Two of Norton's own poems would also be included, together with relevant extracts from her magical diaries.<sup>61</sup>

Together with the major works selected for the Rowden White Library exhibition, the drawings reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* represent the high point of Norton's artistic career. In later years she would parody many of her major compositions, producing hastily drawn copies of some of her best known works in return for modest financial gain. Norton sometimes bartered artworks for gin and tonics in the Prince of Wales Hotel in Sydney's Haymarket, where she used to drink frequently. On other occasions she would paint replicas of her portraits of Pan and Lucifer for prices ranging from £5 for a small work to £100 for a large canvas. However, in late 1951 Norton had found a financial sponsor in Walter Glover and such acts of barter and self-parody were not required. For the most part the black and white artworks included in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* are of a similar calibre to the major works exhibited in the 1949 Melbourne exhibition.

*The Art of Rosaleen Norton* is especially significant because it contains many of Norton's most recognisable, iconic images. Most of them are modified

pencil renditions of the coloured pen and pastel works exhibited at the Rowden White Library three years earlier. Replicated images in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* – that is to say, works exhibited in Melbourne and then redrawn for black and white reproduction – include *The Bells* (Plate VII); *The Jester* (Plate XI); *The Gnostic* (retitled *Esoteric Study*, Plate XII); *The Adversary* (Plate XVI); *Witches' Sabbath* (retitled *Black Magic*, Plate XVII);<sup>62</sup> *The Angel of Twizzari* (Plate XXI); *The Initiate* (Plate XXII); *At Home* (Plate XXX) and *Individuation* (Plate VI). The last of these was a substantially re-worked depiction of a winged hermaphrodite, now widely considered one of Norton's strongest images and a vast improvement on the original 1949 version.

Several completely new artworks were also included in the 1952 publication. These included *The Master* (Plate XXXI), a dramatic drawing reversed out in white against a black field depicting the horned god Pan as master of the zodiac; *Fohat* (Plate XIX), a devilish, horned figure with a greatly extended serpentine penis (reproduced in Chapter One); *Eloi* (Plate XIII), a



Plate 75: Norton's revised and greatly improved version of *Individuation* (Plate VI in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*) and *The Initiate* (Plate XXII in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*)

magisterial leonine figure identified by Norton as ‘the planet of Jupiter’;<sup>63</sup> *Geburah* (Plate X), an imposing naked figure with a male torso and the head of a hawk, and *Lilith* (Plate IV), a fine depiction of the legendary she-devil accompanied by a black panther.

Once again Norton demonstrated a mastery of human anatomy in her new work; the naked torsos are sculptural, finely hewn and well proportioned, and the mythic figures themselves have an engaging presence. *Geburah* and *The Master* are especially striking, as is her bold depiction of Lilith, shown with pointed cat’s ears and snakes writhing in her hair. Norton’s depiction of the humanoid insect monster, the Werplon (*Qlipha*, Plate XV) is genuinely disturbing and the dynamism of spontaneous ritual performance is well captured in both the Voodoo-inspired *Rites of Baron Samedi* (Plate XIV) and the frenetic *Symphony in Three Movements* (Plate XXIV). Norton also introduces an occasional element of whimsical humour and light-hearted satire with her depictions of a magical teapot (*At Home*, Plate XXX), magical furniture springing to life (*A Room at Castle Issusselduss*, Plate XXIX), a winking nun (*Black Magic*, Plate XVII), pompous and sanctimonious theologians (*Masque of Eidolons*, Plate XXVII),<sup>64</sup> a weeping pig and haughty socialite woman (*Entombment of Count Orgaz*, Plate XXIII), and a cluster of authority figures dangling on puppet-strings (*The Jester*, Plate XI).<sup>65</sup> There is even a sense that Norton’s she-devil and goddess images are sometimes idealised, or greatly exaggerated, versions of herself.<sup>66</sup>

Norton’s personal notes on the imagery and symbolism in the drawings selected for *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* have survived in manuscript form.<sup>67</sup> They are of considerable interest because they reflect Norton’s broad range of interests and knowledge, encompassing such areas as Jungian archetypal psychology, Kabbalah, Buddhism, Western astrology, Kundalini Yoga, ancient Egyptian mythology, Voodoo, medieval witchcraft and demonology, ancient Greek philosophy, Hindu mythology, parapsychology, spiritualism and Theosophy. Norton’s notes are also valuable for the commentaries they provide about major artworks that were published in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* but not included in the 1949 Melbourne exhibition. Norton’s portrait of Lilith, ‘Queen of Air and Darkness’ and ‘symbol of the Night’ (Plate IV),<sup>68</sup> is one such work.

As noted in Chapter Four, Norton was well aware of Dr Carl Jung’s commentary on Lilith – which is included in *Psychology of the Unconscious*

(1919) – because she refers to Jung’s text in her personal notes accompanying the drawing. As Jung had written, according to an ancient tradition Lilith was Adam’s wife before Eve and she employed the magical names of God in order to elevate herself into the air. Later she transformed into a Lamia, a potential threat to all women bearing children.<sup>69</sup> Despite this interpretation, Norton’s manuscript notes describe the figure of Lilith (Plate IV) as an ‘image of the unconscious with its power to align images and draw together those spirits who have true affinity – holding man by the soul image’.<sup>70</sup> Gavin Greenlees presented a similarly positive view of her in his accompanying poem, describing Lilith as the ‘Queen of Night and Sympathy’.<sup>71</sup> In her drawing Norton shows Lilith catching fish on a line, the fish being interpreted here as ‘children’. According to Norton, the writhing serpents in Lilith’s hair are ‘phallic symbols of creativity’ and the sun and a moon drawn above her head represent the male and female polarities of consciousness.<sup>72</sup>

Norton’s commentary on another work, *Fohat* (Plate XIX, reproduced in Chapter One), is also of considerable interest. The image of *Fohat*, a goat-headed being with a serpentine phallus, caused major controversy in 1952 when it was found to be ‘obscene and an offence to chastity and delicacy’ (see Chapter One). As noted earlier, it was one of two works included in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* which Magistrate Solling, representing the Crown, ruled should be blacked out before publication of the book could proceed.<sup>73</sup>

In her manuscript notes Norton writes that her drawing of *Fohat* sought to convey ‘the dynamic energy of cosmic ideation...The goat is a symbol of energy and creativity: the serpent of elemental force and eternity’.<sup>74</sup> She also describes her drawing in the context of Kundalini Yoga, a mystical tradition which, as mentioned in Chapter Three, utilises sexual energies for the release of cosmic consciousness. Norton’s annotation reads as follows:

*Kundalini* – the undifferentiated elemental and potential creative power of the Self (collective unconscious, personal and impersonal or racial), generally symbolised as the serpent and traditionally associated with the spinal cord. When latent it manifests itself only sporadically and partially in the sex force and sometimes in artistic creativity. Active, it confers supernormal powers in various directions. Kundalini is generally represented as a serpent: the serpent penis of *Fohat* is the same symbol used here to denote macrocosmic creativity. The phoenix is an emblem of immortality.<sup>75</sup>

Equally benign, but also a drawing which caused deep offence in Melbourne in its 1949 incarnation, was Norton’s *Individuation*. The revised, and greatly

improved version of this work (Plate VI) shows a naked winged hermaphrodite standing in a sacred circle inscribed with esoteric symbols, its curling arms outstretched and tapering off into slender pointed claws. The figure has cat's ears, small round breasts and a thin pencil-like phallus, and its face is perhaps modelled on Norton herself. The title of the work presents a key to its interpretation: 'individuation' was Jung's term for psychic unity or inner wholeness.<sup>76</sup> Norton's commentary indicates that her intention was indeed to demonstrate a universal mystical principle, the cosmic union of opposites:

*Individuation* – The unified Self which contains all the opposites (such as the conscious and unconscious minds, masculinity and femininity, the animus and the anima etc.) in polarisation symbolised by the Hermaphrodite figure. Whenever the Hermaphrodite is shown it indicates polarisation (unity of opposites) and/or equilibrium. See notes on Jung. Unified Self represents psychic totality – the impersonal and the personal combined.<sup>77</sup>

Norton also comments on the nature of the magical circle and its symbolic embellishments. The significant features here, writes Norton, are 'the signs of the Zodiac – Time – on the *ouroboros*, the snake that bites its own tail meaning eternity. Also the wheels of time...' <sup>78</sup>

Another image seen for the first time in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* is that of *Geburah* (Plate X). *Geburah* presents a menacing humanoid form with talons, a pointed reptilian tail, and lightning bolts zig-zagging from both hands, and could easily be mistaken for a hawk-headed demon. *Geburah* takes its title from the Hebrew name of the fifth sphere on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, signifying severity and strength.<sup>79</sup> In her commentary notes Norton describes *Geburah* as 'the sphere of rightful destruction typified by the planet Mars and by the Egyptian god Horus, who ruled wisely, having destroyed Set, the God of Evil'. She also notes that 'the Martian forces [are] represented as destructive of false ideas...hence the scorpion's tail' and adds an astrological observation that 'Scorpio (the astrological sign)...governs all the strong, dynamic powers in life and artistry that spring from polarised opposition – these constructive powers help, and are part of, the Creative.'<sup>80</sup>

Yet another potentially hostile image, seen for the first time in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, is that of *The Master* (Plate XXXI), the final illustration in





Plate 76: *Geburah* (Plate X in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*)

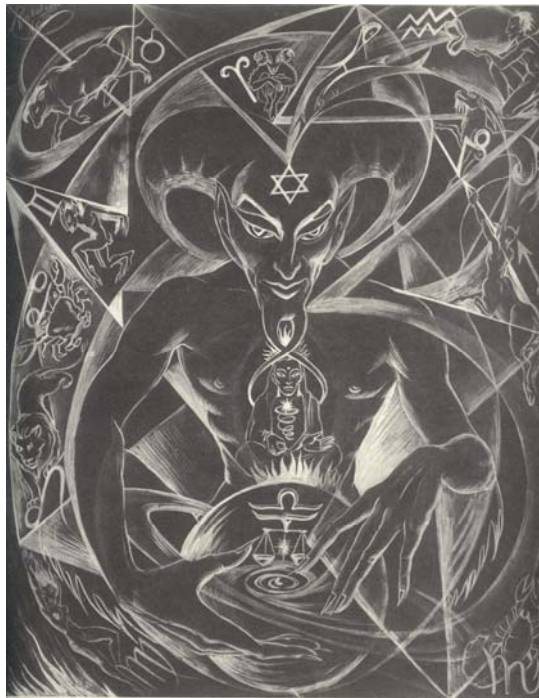


Plate 77: *The Master* (Plate XXXI in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*)



the book. Here Norton shows us a mysterious horned entity who could easily be mistaken for a figure of evil for he is drawn in fine white pencil against a black background and is presented very much as a figure of the night. Portrayed as a master-controller, as a supernatural ruler who governs from within the swirling vortex of the Zodiac, it soon becomes evident that Norton's 'Master' is none other than Pan himself. Norton describes him in her commentary notes as 'the Master Magician, creator of worlds...in psychological terms the psyche, or Self, moulding the ego or minor self'. As with Lilith, Norton's notes locate the dynamic role of 'The Master' within an archetypal Jungian context: 'According to Jung...[there is] a subliminal greater ego dwelling in the Unconscious which, as it were, conditions and forms the Conscious Ego... the 'thinker' becomes the object of that which is thought.'<sup>81</sup> For Norton, and perhaps also for Greenlees, the figure of Pan represents supreme Reality. Greenlees' accompanying poem begins:

*Beyond all forms, beyond the seasons with their animals,  
Divinatory rounds of the expanding eye. He dwells.  
Centre of Emptiness they call him;  
Heart of Heaven from beyond meaning...*<sup>82</sup>

### ***Norton's Archetypal 'God-forms'***

When one surveys the drawings in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* as a whole, most of the major works are archetypal, depicting the sacred 'god forms' that according to Norton inhabit 'the world of Thought'. Norton clearly believed she was breaking through to dimensions of knowledge and awareness normally inaccessible to human consciousness. She describes this process in the Introduction to *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*:

There are senses, art forms, activities and states of consciousness that have no parallel in human experience. In addition to this, there [is] an overwhelming deluge of both Universal and Self knowledge, presented (often in allegorical form) from every conceivable aspect... metaphysical, mathematical, scientific, symbolic etc. These [comprise] a bewildering array of experiences, each complete in itself yet bearing an inter-blending and significant relationship to every other facet.<sup>83</sup>

Norton believed that her personal quest to explore visionary states of awareness was rather like that of an actor engaged in an ongoing series of symbolic or metaphysical dramas:

One such experience could be compared with simultaneously watching and taking part in a play in which all art forms, such as music, drama, ceremonial ritual, shape, sound and pattern blend into one. These plays were either allegorical or symbolic and generally represented something which had a personal bearing on my own life in addition to their general significance.... all forms, abstract and actual...appear in their real perfection as part of the very essence of Archetypal Form itself which is omnipresent.<sup>84</sup>

### ***Norton and Surrealism***

When we consider that Norton's clearly stated artistic intention was to depict the visionary, archetypal realm through her drawings it is interesting that although she had earlier downplayed the influence of Surrealism in the catalogue text accompanying the 1949 Rowden White Library exhibition she nevertheless made reference to two well known Surrealist artists, Roberto Matta Echaurren (1911-2002) and Yves Tanguy (1900-1955), in the Introduction to *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*.<sup>85</sup> Sydney-based painter and art critic, James Gleeson, widely regarded both then and now as Australia's leading Surrealist artist, was not especially attracted to Norton's work, describing it in September 1952 as 'dated and in some ways rather adolescent' although he conceded that she had drawing talent and a sense of rhythm.<sup>86</sup> However, at the time Gleeson made these comments his own work had been heavily influenced by the more theatrical style of Salvador Dali and his paintings were considerably more formal and structured than they have been in more recent times.<sup>87</sup> In contrast to the formalism of Gleeson's painting, Norton was clearly much more influenced by the spontaneity of trance states and visionary encounters beyond her total control. In terms of her artistic process, Norton was more akin to those Surrealists who, in the words of art critic and historian Anna Balakian, 'tried to shut out all outside disturbances and ... give free play to the inner powers of association of words and the images which these suggested'.<sup>88</sup>

Norton's interest in painters like Matta and Tanguy is not really surprising because as a guiding philosophy the Surrealists sought access to what they called the *sur*-reality – the 'greater reality' of dreams and psychic symbols.<sup>89</sup> We know from the transcripts of Norton's sessions with psychologist L.J. Murphy that she had explored automatic drawing early in her artistic career<sup>90</sup> and this in itself reflects an artistic orientation shared with several members of the Surrealist movement: in addition to Matta and Tanguy, figures like Wolfgang Paalen (1907-1959) and Max Ernst (1891-1976) had also

practised automatic drawing and painting in order to facilitate the direct flow of imagery from the subconscious mind. Significantly, all of these Surrealist artists shared Norton's interest in metaphysics and the magical traditions.

Paalen, an Austrian painter who lived for a time in Mexico, developed a spontaneous art technique known as *fumage*. Paalen would hold canvases freshly coated with oil paint above a candle so that the smoke would trace eerie random patterns in the wet paint. He then overlaid these images with surreal, supernatural detail, as in his major work of 1938, *Conflict of the Principles of Darkness*.<sup>91</sup> Similarly, the German Surrealist artist Max Ernst developed a process known as *frottage* in order to provoke spontaneous artistic input from his imaginative faculties. Utilising this technique, Ernst would rub lightly with pencil upon sheets of paper placed upon his wooden floor boards, thus allowing the uneven patterns in the grain to come through on his paper as a texture. When Ernst looked carefully at his *frottages* he found a mystical process coming into play. 'When gazing at these drawings,' he wrote, 'I was surprised at the sudden intensification of my visionary faculties and at the hallucinatory succession of contradictory images being superimposed on each other.'<sup>92</sup>

The Cuban painter Wifredo Lam (1902-1982) would also have been very much a kindred spirit within the international Surrealist movement although it is not known whether Norton was familiar with his work.<sup>93</sup> Born in Sagua la Grande, Cuba, in 1902, Lam joined the Surrealist movement in 1940 and after its dispersion in Europe, returned to his native country. Four years later he visited Haiti where he was introduced to the voodoo cult and the ritual practice of *vevers*, employing magical sigils to summon the deities. Introduced to techniques of trance, Lam learned to open his consciousness to the *loa* divinities who would in turn bestow upon him their magical energies, manifesting their curious atavistic forms in his paintings. As with Norton's distinctive artforms, Lam's *oeuvre* features a pantheon of devils, gods and spirits, in turn half-human and half-animal, presented as images of spirit-possession and self-transformation.<sup>94</sup> While Norton was spiritually and metaphysically aligned with pantheism and the symbolism of the Night, Lam was intrigued by the somewhat comparable image of the Forest, which for him represented 'that world without limits with the mystery of its space indefinitely prolonged beyond the veil of its tree-trunks and leaves'.<sup>95</sup>

The two Surrealists whom Norton specifically refers to in her Introduction, Matta and Tanguy, were both strongly influenced by the practice of ‘automatism’, which first became fashionable in the 1920s. In 1926 Tanguy produced a series of automatic drawings, scratchings, arabesques, loops and tufts, which, when transferred to a canvas coated with colour, seemed to produce what José Pierre has called ‘a universe of smoke, brushwood [and] ghosts, which seem to defy gravity’.<sup>96</sup> Tanguy is also interesting for another reason. Many of his paintings are grey and eerie, like chthonic landscapes of the netherworld. As a youth Tanguy used to dive into the sea in search of bones and pebbles washed by the waves, and there is a strong sense in his paintings of an ocean of hidden images – of forms about to manifest from a more ethereal source.<sup>97</sup> It is perhaps this mysterious and elusive aspect of Tanguy’s work that appealed so strongly to Rosaleen Norton.

The Chilean-born painter Matta, a colleague of Tanguy, took up automatic painting just prior to World War Two producing a series of canvases he called ‘inscapes’ or ‘psychological morphologies’. These were characterised by a remarkable sense of freedom, the spontaneous use of colour, and the exploration of cosmic realities beyond the ego. As Valerie Fletcher has observed, Matta ‘sought a spiritualized space infused with an astral light’ employing colours which would suggest ‘a limitless void’.<sup>98</sup> Matta had also studied the mystical writings of the French ceremonial magician Eliphas Lévi, an occultist who was well known to Norton and who was listed in her bibliography.<sup>99</sup> Matta’s paintings would certainly have appealed to Norton’s sense of wonderment as well as to the spontaneous, adventurous side of her nature. Also, like Norton, Matta was very aware of the inhuman excesses of industrialisation and several of his works allude to what he called the ‘horrible crisis of society’. Both artists, to this extent, were alienated by mainstream ethics and morality, and both considered themselves cultural outsiders.

### ***Later artworks***

A selection of Norton’s later artworks, consisting of paintings from the 1960s and early 1970s, was included in Walter Glover’s *Supplement to the Art of Rosaleen Norton*, published in 1984.<sup>100</sup> Fortunately, since these later paintings were reproduced in colour and included alongside several of the artworks that had been photographed by Professor Oeser at the University of Melbourne in 1949, it is possible to compare Norton’s ‘later’ style of the 1960s and 1970s with her iconic works of the late 1940s and early 1950s.

The fact that none of the paintings in the Deaton exhibition sold individually when they were auctioned in October 1982 and that they were subsequently sold off collectively as a 37-piece 'job lot' to Jack Parker, proprietor of the Southern Cross Hotel in St Peters,<sup>101</sup> is indicative of their lack of overall quality. By comparison with major pencil and pastel works like *The Adversary*, *The Blueprint*, *Lucifer*, *The Sphinx and Her Secrets*, *Timeless Worlds* and *The Initiate*, all of which were well conceived and meticulously executed works from the Rowden White exhibition, most of the later works on show at Exiles Bookshop were lurid or roughly crafted paintings, many of them hastily produced and poorly painted. They included two impasto portraits titled *Demon* and *Fur Fur the Storm Demon*, showing the heads of demons peering out from a hazy grey vortex and storm clouds respectively; a painting titled *Khamsin*, featuring two demonic faces manifesting in the humps of a camel; a grotesque and crudely rendered portrait of Woden, and two inconsequential animal portraits, *Squid* and *Rabbit*. Other works of only passing quality from the Deaton exhibition included *Roie with Snake*, showing Norton sitting naked beneath the head of a protective, arched cobra; *Image*, a confronting painting of a leering female face with strongly slanted feline eyes; *The Cat*, which showed a humanoid ginger cat standing beside a tree occupied by a demonic being, and *Snakes*, a more sinister rendition of Norton's earlier c.1952 line drawing *Lilith*. Norton had also parodied her controversial c.1949 work *Witches' Sabbath* in a much more crudely painted rendition titled *Montage*. The most accomplished paintings in the Deaton exhibition were *Three Sisters*, which showed three demonic female heads in a blaze of fiery smoke<sup>102</sup> and *Fire Bird* which depicted a naked and aggressive fire-goddess riding on the back of an eagle, her head ablaze with streaming flames. The latter work featured a 'double image' effect so that the shape of the bird's wings and the female figure's outstretched arms revealed the face of a black panther (one of Norton's 'images of the Night') hidden in the background and seemingly propelling the fire-goddess forward on her hellish journey through the sky.

Given that Norton is known to have used LSD during the mid-1970s<sup>103</sup> it is possible that the vivid palette, intense colours and expressionistic style of some of her 1970s paintings may reflect her use of psychedelic drugs. Several of the paintings from this period, exhibited at Exiles Bookshop in 1982, were produced in the highly coloured, almost iridescent style associated with psychedelic poster art in the late 1960s /early 1970s California counter-culture. Works like *Witch and Family Secrets*, with its exultant naked witch-

priestess and fiery imagery, and the intense and vibrantly coloured portrait, *The Goddess*, where the head of the female deity manifests amidst searing flames, would not have seemed out of place alongside works by the American psychedelic artists Michael Bowen, Wes Wilson, John Hamilton and Bonnie MacLean – well-known figures in the 1960s counterculture.<sup>104</sup>

It is also interesting to note that several of Norton's later images have a stridently demonic flavour: they are characteristically skewed further in the direction of black magic and the imagery of the 'Left-Hand Path' than most of the works from the Rowden White exhibition or the drawings reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*. Several of the later paintings make a pointed visual reference to the Kundalini fire-serpent and some also have an erotic, sexual flavour that may well have been influenced by Norton's exploration of Tantric sex magic. These paintings include *The Temptress*, which shows a naked, blue-bodied witch surrounded by a large coiled snake, her head ablaze with fire;<sup>105</sup> *Witch and Family Secrets*, referred to above, which depicts a serpent rising up from flames as a protector of the witch-priestess herself, and *Satan*, where a female human head has merged with that of a snake amidst hellish waves of fire. The head of Pan, a writhing snake, a surging fire and the head of a witch (who may well be an aspect of Lilith or Hecate), are all featured in Norton's expressionistic painting *Clairvoyant*. A related work, *The Cauldron*, shows two humanoid/animal creatures dancing in ritual ecstasy on rooftops above chimneys which in this painting double as fiery magic cauldrons. One of the dancing figures is male and has a tail and the head of a snake; the other is female, with firm pointed breasts and the smiling head of a pig.

Finally, with regard to Norton's later work, specific reference must once again be made to *Fur Fur the Storm Demon*, but for historical rather than artistic reasons. This work, like most of Norton's paintings and drawings, is undated but was probably produced c.1975: a photograph exists of Norton holding another version of *Fur Fur the Storm Demon*, which is very similar in content and produced in the same artistic style. The photograph itself, which shows Norton displaying *Fur Fur the Storm Demon* in front of a large portrait of Pan, can be dated to the period when Gus de Brito interviewed Norton for an article that was published in the *Sunday Mirror* in August 1975.<sup>106</sup> The key point of



*Fire Bird*



*Fur Fur the Storm Demon*



*The Goddess*



*Three Sisters*



*Witch and Family Secrets*



*Satan*

Plate 78: Six examples of Norton's later work, characterised by a vivid palette, intense colours and a tendency towards lurid expressionism

interest, however, is the name of the demon itself. The reference to 'Fur Fur' is taken directly from the medieval *Goetia* or *Lesser Key of Solomon* and shows that in the mid-1970s Norton had lost none of her fascination with the magical grimoires to which she had been introduced by her former partner in sex magic, Sir Eugene Goossens, as his 'one and only pupil' in this particular branch of the so-called 'black arts'.<sup>107</sup> Furfur is the 34th of the 72 demons profiled in the *Goetia*, and although Norton has spelt his name 'Fur Fur' there can be no mistaking the identity of the demon Furfur based on the contents of Norton's painting and his description in the text of the medieval grimoire:



The thirty-fourth Spirit is Furfur. He is a Great and Mighty Earl, appearing in the Form of a Hart with a Fiery Tail. He never speaketh truth unless he is compelled, or brought up within a triangle.<sup>108</sup> Being therein, he will take upon himself the Form of an Angel. Being bidden, he speaketh with a hoarse voice. Also he will wittingly urge Love between Man and Woman, He can raise Lightnings and Thunders, Blasts and Great Tempestuous Storms. And he giveth True Answers both of Things Secret and Divine, if commanded. He ruleth over 26 Legions of Spirits.<sup>109</sup>

Clearly Norton had continued with her study of demonology well into the 1970s and as a consequence several of her images are even ‘darker’ in their magical expression than they were two decades earlier.<sup>110</sup> Her later magical images, that is to say, artworks produced in the 1960s and 1970s, are associated with a heavier impasto style of painting, with a lack of compositional refinement, and in some cases with more debased expressions of occult spirituality. Norton seems to have reached her artistic ‘peak’ in the period of the late 1940s and early 1950s – coinciding with the Rowden White Library exhibition and publication of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* – and these heights are rarely glimpsed in her later work, which, for the most part, is far less accomplished in an artistic sense, and very often derivative in relation to the work which preceded it.

### ***The trance magic and visionary art of Austin Osman Spare***

I turn now to a consideration of the British visionary artist Austin Osman Spare (1886-1956), a highly distinctive figure in the Western magical tradition. Spare is of considerable interest in any research study of Rosaleen Norton because of the many comparisons that can be made between the work of the two artists and because both were personally involved in the practice of trance magic.



Plate 79: Austin Osman Spare – a self-portrait from 1923



The most intriguing similarity between the two artists relates to their visionary exploration of magical imagery through techniques of self-hypnosis, and there are several other parallels in their personal lives and artistic careers. However, as far as is known, Spare and Norton had no knowledge of each other, either directly or indirectly.<sup>111</sup>

Within their respective individual contexts both Spare and Norton regarded themselves as artistic ‘outsiders’, largely alienated from the mainstream cultural trends of the day<sup>112</sup> and both spent most of their impoverished lives in squalid circumstances.<sup>113</sup> Both were skilled figurative artists whose art-school training contributed substantially to their graphic style, both professed a particular affinity with the painter El Greco,<sup>114</sup> both exhibited their work extensively in popular meeting places like pubs or coffee shops in order to reach an appreciative audience,<sup>115</sup> and both had a strong love for animals, especially cats.<sup>116</sup> However, there are more specific parallels between Spare and Norton that suggest they should be regarded as visionary artists within the same esoteric genre. As occult practitioners, both considered themselves pantheists;<sup>117</sup> both were well versed in the literature of the Western esoteric tradition, Theosophy,<sup>118</sup> Eastern mysticism, and modern psychoanalysis (especially the works of Freud and Jung);<sup>119</sup> both were attracted to the practice of sex-magic and were familiar with the magical writings of Aleister Crowley (Spare knew Crowley personally);<sup>120</sup> both explored medieval magical grimoires like the *Goetia* and were fascinated by the sigils or ‘seals’ associated with elemental spirit-beings; and both were familiar with the philosophy and magical significance of the Kabbalah. Both artists also developed and utilised their own, personal techniques of self-hypnosis and trance in order to produce their distinctive visionary art-works as a direct result of their magical methods. There is a clear parallel between the trance states associated with the Zos/Kia cosmology of Austin Osman Spare (described below) and the trance magic of Rosaleen Norton (described in Chapter Four), which in turn draws attention to the unique contributions of both Spare and Norton as ‘visionary outsiders’ operating within the context of the Western esoteric tradition.

One of five children, Austin Osman Spare was born at home in Snowhill, near Smithfield, London, on 30 December 1886. The son of a policeman,<sup>121</sup> Spare had two elder brothers and two sisters – one of whom, Ellen, was younger than him. The family later moved to south London and Spare attended St Agnes' School in Kennington Park.<sup>122</sup> In 1902 Spare left school and began

working for a company named Powells, a manufacturer of stained glass, where he distinguished himself by producing five stained-glass panel designs for one of his senior work colleagues.<sup>123</sup> However Spare was also taking formal art training at Lambeth Evening Art School, where his precocious artistic talent was noticed. At the age of 16, while he was still working for Powells, Spare won a £40 scholarship and a silver medal from the prestigious art journal *The Studio*, enabling him to study at the Royal College of Art, South Kensington,<sup>124</sup> and in 1904 one of his black-and-white bookplate designs was displayed at the Royal Academy. This particular work had been produced when he was 14, making him the youngest exhibited artist in the history of that institution.<sup>125</sup> The President of the Academy, John Singer Sargent, proclaimed Spare to be a genius<sup>126</sup> and Spare attracted the attention of art connoisseur Pickford Waller, from whom he would receive several commissions for bookplates.<sup>127</sup> He was later commissioned to illustrate Ethel Wheeler's *Behind the Veil* (1906) and a book of aphorisms by J.Bertram and F.Russell titled *The Starlit Mire*, published by the distinguished arts patron John Lane (1911). Around the same time an article on Spare by Ralph Straus also appeared in *The Book Lovers Magazine*.<sup>128</sup>

In 1916 Spare founded the quarterly magazine, *Form*, joined later by Frederick Carter who became co-editor. The magazine was sponsored by John Lane who hoped it would emulate the earlier success of *The Yellow Book*, an avant-garde literary publication renowned for its erotic and provocative illustrations by Aubrey Beardsley, with whom Spare was sometimes compared.<sup>129</sup> However in May 1917 Spare was enlisted, against his will, to join the Royal Army Medical Corps<sup>130</sup> and no further editions of *Form* were issued under the patronage of John Lane.<sup>131</sup> In 1919 Spare visited France as a special war artist documenting the aftermath of the Great War: several works based on sketches from this period are included in the collection of the Imperial War Museum.<sup>132</sup> After his sojourn in Europe, Spare returned to the genre of journal publishing. Between October 1922 and April 1924 he co-edited an illustrated literary magazine, *The Golden Hind*, which included the work of such notable writers as Aldous Huxley, Alec Waugh and Havelock Ellis.<sup>133</sup>

However, since 1905 Spare had also been involved in creating and publishing his own distinctive and highly unconventional books and it was these self-published limited-edition works that would identify his unique contribution to the Western esoteric tradition while simultaneously consigning him to the

periphery of mainstream artistic circles. Although he had been praised by John Singer Sargent, and also by the renowned portrait painter Augustus John, who regarded Spare as one of the great graphic artists of his time,<sup>134</sup> others found Spare's magical compositions deeply confronting. According to Kenneth Grant, Spare's esoteric imagery prompted the noted playwright and critic George Bernard Shaw to remark: 'Spare's medicine is too strong for the average man.'<sup>135</sup>

Spare's self-published works, which he illustrated, designed, and financed himself, include the following titles: *Earth:Inferno* [265 numbered copies, 1905]; *A Book of Satyrs* [300 copies, first edition 1907, 300 copies, second edition 1909]; *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy* [380 copies, 1913]; *The Focus of Life: The Mutterings of Aaos* [650 copies, 1921] and *Anathema of Zos: The Sermon to the Hypocrites* [100 copies, 1927].<sup>136</sup> In the same way that *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* helped define Norton's persona as 'The Witch of Kings Cross' in Sydney during the 1950s, so too Spare's distinctive and unconventional publications placed him clearly within the context of the Western magical tradition through their references to sigil magic and esoteric symbolism. While Spare had earlier been considered a possible successor to Aubrey Beardsley and was sometimes compared to other notable graphic artists like Charles Ricketts (illustrator of Oscar Wilde's *The Sphinx*) and Harry Clarke (illustrator of Goethe's *Faust* and Poe's *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*), his own publications were polemical in style, graphically complex, and unorthodox in presentation. His two major esoteric works, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy* and *The Focus of Life: The Mutterings of Aaos*, explored sigil magic and the images of the subconscious and were written in an abstruse and inaccessible style that made few concessions to any mainstream readership, despite the spectacular graphic images that accompanied both texts. *Earth: Inferno*, *A Book of Satyrs*, and *Anathema of Zos: The Sermon to the Hypocrites*, meanwhile, were satirical works which drew attention to the misery of the human condition and the emptiness and shallow hypocrisy of the privileged classes in contemporary society. *Anathema of Zos* is a vitriolic and bitter invective directed specifically at the 'Mayfair' artistic elite that had initially supported Spare when his artworks were exhibited in prominent West End galleries.<sup>137</sup>

Spare's *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy* (1913) is widely regarded as his major work. It develops his concept of Kia, which is central to his magical philosophy, and also contains practical instructions for

creating magical sigils and automatic drawings. In addition, it places Spare's magical explorations within the context of modern psychological approaches to the subconscious mind.

### *Zos and Kia*

Spare first makes reference to the term 'Zos' in *Earth: Inferno* (1905) in a black-and-white line illustration titled *Chaos*.<sup>138</sup> Here a naked man draws aside a curtain revealing a cluster of tangled human forms representing what Spare calls the 'inferno of the Normal'. The accompanying text reads 'Oh! come with me, the Kia and the Zos, to witness this extravagance.' Although Spare does not develop his idea of the polarity between Zos and Kia in *Earth: Inferno*, he nevertheless provides tantalising clues. On page 22 he writes: 'Alas ! we are children of Earth,' indicating that the term Zos refers to human manifestation, the incarnate, the physical. Alongside the preceding image, *Despair*, which shows four forlorn human beings, one of them a prostrate naked woman, Spare writes: 'Revere the Kia and your mind will become tranquil.'<sup>139</sup> In *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, Spare explains for the first time what he means by 'Zos'. A small, but nevertheless definitive, text-reference is inserted graphically into an illustration teeming with magical sigils, and the text reads: 'The body considered as a whole, I call Zos.'<sup>140</sup> Spare's definition of Kia, meanwhile, is included in the introductory section of the book: 'Kia', writes Spare, is 'the absolute freedom which being free is mighty enough to be "reality" and free at any time...'<sup>141</sup> Later in the book Spare also refers to Kia in sexual terms: as 'the ancestral sex principle' and the 'unmodified sexuality'.<sup>142</sup>

As Gavin W. Semple notes in his recently published essay on the art and magic of Austin Spare there is a clear distinction between Zos, representing 'all that which is embodied or manifest', and Kia, representing the Absolute.<sup>143</sup> Spare had been reading an English-language translation of the Kabbalistic text *The Zohar*<sup>144</sup> prior to working on *Earth: Inferno*,<sup>145</sup> and it has been suggested that Spare's reference to Kia may have a Kabbalistic origin. Semple believes that Kia may be an inversion of the Kabbalistic term *AiqBekar*,<sup>146</sup> a reference to 'the Kabbalah of Nine Chambers' and the secret Kabbalistic code system of Temurah<sup>147</sup> but an alternative suggestion from William Wallace seems more plausible. Wallace believes that Kia probably derives from the Kabbalistic Hebrew word *Chiah* which denotes the highest form of the world of *Atziluth*, the 'Absolute'.<sup>148</sup> This would certainly appear closer to Spare's own meaning of the word. In the Kabbalah, *Chiah*, or *Chiyah*

is an aspect of *Neshamah*, the soul, one of the three principal spiritual agencies mentioned in the *Zohar*, the others being *Nefesh* (life) and *Ruah* (spirit).<sup>149</sup> Even though he was coining his own special term, *Kia*, Spare nevertheless aligned it conceptually with the mystical idea of the Absolute, or Void – the supreme reality in the Kabbalah – and, as discussed below, Spare's notion of the 'void moment' is central to his magical process.

In *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy* Spare uses his concept of *Kia* to refer to the primal, cosmic life-force which can be channelled into the human organism, *Zos*. In one of his later esoteric texts Spare refers to the life-force as 'a potency',<sup>150</sup> and his magical technique for arousing the elemental energies latent within this life-potency – a technique he termed 'atavistic resurgence',<sup>151</sup> – involved focusing on magical sigils which he employed as vehicles of his magical will. When the mind was in what Spare called a 'void' or open state – achieved, for example, through meditation, exhaustion or at the peak of sexual ecstasy – magical sigils could be used to send 'commands' to the subconscious mind. Later these magical commands would be intentionally forgotten in order to remove them from conscious awareness but in the meantime, according to Spare, they would 'grow' within the seedbed of the subconscious mind until they became 'ripe' and manifested once again in the familiar world of conscious reality, thereby achieving the magician's initial intent. Spare summarises this magical process in his esoteric text, *The Witches' Sabbath*: 'The ecstatic moment is used as the fecund instant of wish endowment; for at that period of reality, the will, desire and belief are aligned in unison.'<sup>152</sup>

### ***Background to Spare's magical philosophy***

Spare's approach to magical states of consciousness draws on a variety of sources, encompassing archetypal mythic imagery from ancient Egypt, a fascination with the sexual energies of the subconscious mind,<sup>153</sup> and techniques learned through his close personal relationship with an unusual psychic mentor whom he always referred to simply as Mrs Paterson. Spare's magical approach was also shaped by his fascination with death,<sup>154</sup> by his interest in Taoism, which places great emphasis on the flow of positive and negative life-energy,<sup>155</sup> and by his personal conviction that the psychic energies, or 'karmas',<sup>156</sup> of previous incarnations, remained as latent potentials within the mind of every human being 'Ability,' writes Spare in his esoteric tract, *Axiomata*, 'is an endowment from our past selves.'<sup>157</sup> Spare believed that these karmic energies could be activated by the magical will.<sup>158</sup>

Spare also maintained that the ancient Egyptians understood the complex mythology of the subconscious mind: their animal-headed deities provided proof that they understood the process of spiritual evolution:

They symbolised this knowledge in one great symbol, the Sphinx, which is pictorially man evolving from animal existence. Their numerous Gods, all partly Animal, Bird, Fish... prove the completeness of that knowledge...The cosmogony of their Gods is proof of their knowledge of the order of evolution, its complex processes from the one simple organism ... They knew they still possessed the rudimentary faculties of all existences, and were partly under their control. Thus their past Karmas became Gods, good and evil forces, and had to be appeased: from this all moral doctrine etc. is determined. So all Gods have lived (being ourselves) on earth, and when dead, their experience or Karma governs our actions in degree: to that extent we are subject to the will of these Gods...This is the key to the mystery of the Sphinx. <sup>159</sup>

Frank Letchford, who was a close friend of Austin Spare from 1937 until the artist's death in 1956, <sup>160</sup> confirms in his biography, *From the Inferno to Zos* (1995), that ancient Egyptian culture and mythology impacted strongly on Spare's art and magical philosophy throughout his life :

The influence upon Austin of Egyptian art writing and practice were strong. The incidence of Egyptian deities like Isis, Osiris, Horus, Nuit and of amulets, talismans, sigils and magical symbols is varied in his work... According to the Egyptian religion the human 'being' is composed of four parts: the body itself, the astral double, the soul and the spark of life from the Godhead. In all Austin's writings, aphorisms, drawings and sketches are found charms, symbols and symbolic figures, namely, the sun, the moon, cats and gods, part-human, part-animal. <sup>161</sup>

The gods and goddesses of ancient Egypt had a profound impact on Austin Spare because they seemed to embody the principle of spiritual evolution through animal and human karma. <sup>162</sup> However, Egyptian cosmology was not his first point of reference: Spare first learned about the transformative potentials of the subconscious mind from an elderly woman called Mrs Paterson, who was a friend of his parents and used to tell his fortune when he was young. Spare's relationship with his own mother was not close and he soon came to regard Mrs Paterson as his 'second mother'. <sup>163</sup> She was illiterate but generous in spirit, and would often help neighbours and friends in distress. Mrs Paterson appeared to have an extrasensory ability to project thought-forms. According to Spare she was able to 'reify' ideas and thoughts to visible, sometimes even tangible, appearance: 'If in her occult prognostications she discovered an event or incident which she could not describe verbally, she would reify the scene...' <sup>164</sup> Spare describes her

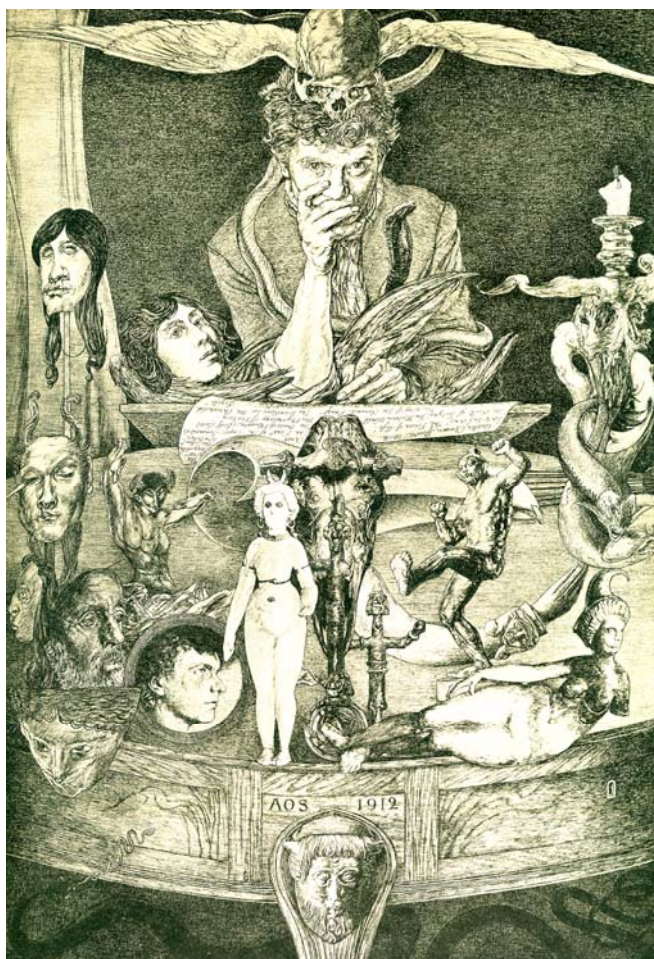


Plate 80: Spare and his atavisms – a self-portrait from *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy* (1913)

technique in the following way: ‘She used to tell my fortune when I was quite young...She was a natural hypnotist. She would say, “Look in that dark corner,” and, if you obeyed, she could make you visualise what she was telling you about your future.’<sup>165</sup>

The Thelemic magician and occult writer Kenneth Grant, referred to earlier, first met Spare in 1949<sup>166</sup> and had extensive contact with him during the last eight years of his life.<sup>167</sup> Grant believes that it was because of his close relationship with Mrs Paterson that Spare became attracted to older women, and that this was due, in part, to the fact that as a child he had watched her transform herself visually from an old crone into a young woman through the magical process of ‘reification’:

The wrinkled crone had appeared to change into a large-limbed voluptuous girl. So deep was the impression – whether actual or imagined – that for the rest of his life Spare was fascinated by the idea of sexual potency in ageing women...He used this theme in his witch drawings where he frequently combined the hag and the girl in one picture, if not in one image.<sup>168</sup>

The archetypal image of the Universal Woman, or Goddess, in all her various aspects – from sensual maiden through to aged crone – became a central feature in Spare's personal mythology. Spare first refers to her in *Earth: Inferno* where, in an illustration titled *Earth*, she is shown and captioned 'lying barren on the Parapet of the Subconsciousness' while humanity itself is depicted 'sinking into the pit of conventionality'.<sup>169</sup> Spare uses this graphic image to call for what he termed the 'resurrection of the Primitive Woman'.<sup>170</sup> Grant writes that, for Spare, the 'Goddess, the Witch Queen, the Primitive or Universal Woman... is the cypher of all "inbetweenness"',<sup>171</sup> and she is experienced in the unity of Self-love, that is to say, in the ecstatic union of Zos and Kia. 'Nor,' adds Grant, 'is she to be limited as any particular "goddess" such as Astarte, Isis, Cybele, Kali, Nuit, for to limit her is to turn away from the path and to idealize a concept which, as such, is false because incomplete, unreal because temporal.'<sup>172</sup>

One of Spare's most significant compositions, *The Ascension of the Ego from Ecstasy to Ecstasy*,<sup>173</sup> shows the Goddess as a beautiful naked maiden welcoming Spare to higher realms of awareness. Spare is depicted, appropriately, with wings extending from his head, symbolic of ecstatic flight. Spare's 'ego', or persona, is shown merging with an earlier animal incarnation, and the two shapes transcend each other in the form of a primal skull, a motif representing the 'death' of the ego. Spare believed he could retrace his earlier animal incarnations or 'karmas' back to the very source of life itself, the universal 'Oneness of Creation' he called Kia, and that these residual animal energies could in turn become a source of magic power.

Spare's *The Ascension of the Ego from Ecstasy to Ecstasy* provides us with an important insight into this magical process. Although sexual union with a female partner was not his only method for attaining an ecstatic state,<sup>174</sup> Spare frequently combined his magical will with the climax of sexual orgasm in his quest for creative inspiration.<sup>175</sup> According to Spare, at the peak of sexual ecstasy, the personal ego (Zos) and the universal life-force (Kia) are



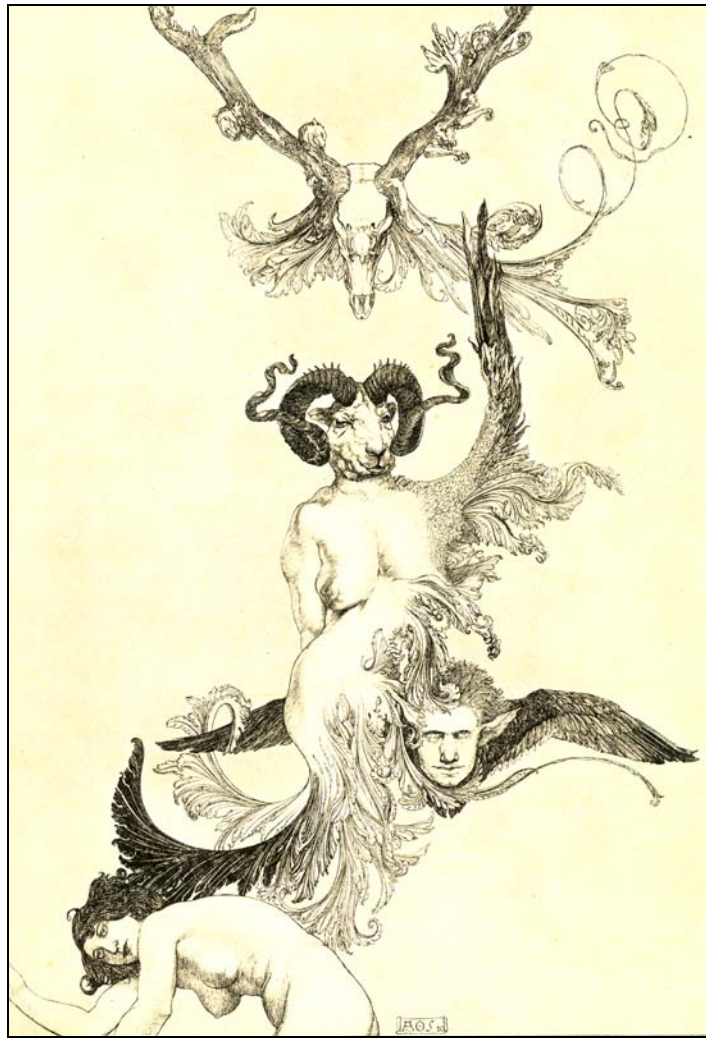


Plate 81: Ausin Osman Spare: *The Ascension of the Ego from Ecstasy to Ecstasy*  
from *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*

united in a state of blissful and transcendent openness: inspiration flows forth from Kia and is transmitted through the primordial Goddess herself.<sup>176</sup>

‘Inspiration, writes Spare in *The Book of Pleasure*, ‘is always at a void moment.’<sup>177</sup>

In Spare’s system of trance-magic two processes are associated with ecstatic states. The first of these employs a technique that Spare termed the Death Posture: by its very nature an ecstatic peak-moment is characterised by the surrender, or ‘death’, of the ego, and the process could therefore be regarded as a simulation of death itself.<sup>178</sup> ‘Because every other sense is brought to

nullity by sex intoxication’, writes Spare, ‘it is called the Death Posture.’<sup>179</sup>  
As Gavin Semple notes:

The Death Posture involves a total negation of conceptual thought and perceptual awareness, and the assumption of the Void, Kia, by its practitioner; its aim is ecstasy, the bliss of union with the Absolute in Self-Love.<sup>180</sup>

The second of Spare’s magical processes involved the creation and use of ‘sentient’ magical sigils that could act as vehicles or ‘messengers’ to the subconscious mind. This method embodied both Will and Desire, the magical sigils being used to implant the ‘Great Wish’ within the subconscious mind at the peak-moment of ecstasy. The ecstatic peak itself could be attained through sexual union, but there were other methods of attaining it as well, which are referred to below. Considered together, the two processes became a central feature of Spare’s unique approach to trance-magic and his quest for union with Kia, the bliss of the Absolute.

### ***The Death Posture***

Spare’s intent in utilising the Death Posture was to ‘incarnate’ the dynamic and inspirational life-force of Kia, the source of artistic genius<sup>181</sup> and sexual freedom. Gavin Semple writes that the Death Posture ‘employs the flesh itself as the effigy or sigil of Belief, and through its “death” and resurrection... [initiates] the Great Work. The work is the ecstatic fusion of the Zos and the Kia (Ego and Self), the Self-Love which gives the title of Spare’s book.’<sup>182</sup> Here the attainment of ecstasy is primarily an end in itself. However, because Kia is also the ‘ancestral sex principle’<sup>183</sup> and the source of ‘unmodified sexuality’,<sup>184</sup> the union of Zos and Kia inevitably leads to expressions of what Spare terms the ‘new sexuality’. In *The Book of Pleasure* Spare writes: ‘Know the Death Posture and its reality in the ascension from duality...The Death Posture is the reduction of all conception to the Neither-Neither [Spare’s term for the Absolute or true Self]<sup>185</sup> till the desire is contentment by pleasing yourself...the restoration of the new sexuality and the ever original self-love in freedom are attained.’<sup>186</sup>

Spare describes the actual method as follows:

Lying on your back lazily, the body expressing the emotion of yawning, suspiring while conceiving by smiling, that is the idea of the posture. Forgetting time with those things which were essential reflecting their meaninglessness, the moment is beyond time and its virtue has happened.

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

Gazing at your reflection till it is blurred and you know not the gazer, close your eyes (this usually happens involuntarily) and visualize. The light (always an X in curious evolutions) that is seen should be held onto, never letting go, till the effort is forgotten; this gives a feeling of immensity (which sees a small form ♡) whose limit you cannot reach. This should be practised before experiencing the foregoing. The emotion that is felt is the knowledge which tells you why.<sup>187</sup>

Spare describes the mystical impact of the Death Posture:

The Ego is swept up as a leaf in a fierce gale – in the fleetness of the indeterminable, that which is always about to happen, becomes its truth. Things that are self-evident are no longer obscure, as by his own will he pleases; know this as the negation of all faith by living it, the end of duality of consciousness.<sup>188</sup>

According to Frank Letchford, the essential purpose of the Death Posture – a practice Spare believed should be performed daily<sup>189</sup> – was to ‘incarnate’ a transformative magical process:

...the body is allowed to manifest spontaneously... His idea was to form a new body, it was a time for re-birth, incarnating and reincarnating. He *wills* his own death. He awaits the transfiguration, an inversion and reversion, a continuation of evolution; that which he desires will come to pass.<sup>190</sup>

In addition to utilising the Death Posture, however, Spare also wished to develop a method for focusing his magical desires. This led him to formulate his own unique system of atavistic magical sigils.

### ***Magical sigils***

Spare’s use of magical sigils, which he began to develop into a workable system from 1906 onwards,<sup>191</sup> was based on the understanding that the dynamics of the subconscious mind depend entirely on symbols and images, that the ‘language’ of the subconscious is pictorial rather than verbal.<sup>192</sup> As Spare observes in his essay *Mind to Mind and How*:

There is a Grimoire of graphic symbology and vague phonic nuances that conjoin all thought and is the language of the psychic world. Mind is a continuant [sic] and all concepts are relatable to perceptions and contact, therefore real; the continuum of all

aspects of memory and learning is consciousness – the past again becoming explicit...<sup>193</sup>


Spare believed that the human psyche contained all the residual ‘karmas’ of previous incarnations. Kia, as the Absolute, and as the source of all being, encompassed all evolutionary phases of life that had so far existed on the planet. As Spare notes in *The Book of Pleasure*: ‘By sigils and the acquirement of vacuity, any past incarnation, experience, can be summoned into consciousness.’<sup>194</sup> Spare’s sorcery – he himself labelled it as such<sup>195</sup> – utilised the process of atavistic resurgence in order to summon ‘elementals’, or karmic ‘automata’,<sup>196</sup> from the subconscious mind for magical purposes. Even when he lived alone in a small run-down flat in South London, Spare maintained that he was always surrounded by elemental forces and that these ‘spirits’ were his allies or ‘familiars’.<sup>197</sup>


As mentioned earlier, Spare was fascinated by medieval magical grimoires like the *Goetia* and *The Greater Key of Solomon* and was intrigued by the magical seals ascribed to various elemental spirits. It has been suggested that these magical seals may have been a source of inspiration for the ‘cryptic letter-forms and devices’ found in *The Book of Pleasure*<sup>198</sup> and that Spare was almost certainly influenced by the magical scripts found in Cornelius Agrippa’s *Three Books of Occult Philosophy or Magic*, a work first published in 1533.<sup>199</sup> Spare appears to paraphrase the Renaissance magician’s writings on sigils and also transcribed two of his signs in a page of sketches for the *Book of Pleasure* vignettes.<sup>200</sup> However, whereas the magical seals in the grimoires were linked either to specific demons like those identified in the *Goetia*, or to planetary spirits (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars etc.) like those referred to in Cornelius Agrippa’s *Three Books of Occult Philosophy or Magic*,<sup>201</sup> Spare’s great innovation was in realising that magical seals or sigils could be personalised. As Gavin Semple has noted:


While the grimoires dictate the use of specific magical seals for the binding and control of spirits and demand a high degree of faith (ie. consciously formulated belief) in their efficacy, and in the theurgic system of which they form a part, Spare realized that *any* symbols must be effective provided they are congruent with the patterns of the operator’s innate beliefs and personal aesthetic. This is certain to be the case if they are drawn from his or her own subconsciousness.<sup>202</sup>



Recognising that they would have to reflect his own magical credo, Spare created his own individualised sigils. In *The Book of Pleasure* he provides a summary of his method: ‘Sigils are made by combining the letters of the

alphabet simplified...the idea being to obtain a simple form which can easily be visualised at will, and has not too much pictorial relation to the desire...Verily, what a person believes by Sigils, is the truth, and is always fulfilled.'<sup>203</sup> In effect Spare was seeking to focus his magical will on a single graphic symbol so that his intent or purpose could more readily be grasped as a totality. He did this by first expressing his 'will' (or 'desire') in sentence form and then by combining the basic letters, without repetition, into a unified glyph or sigil. In *The Book of Pleasure*, Spare provides an example of how a sigil can be created from the sentence: 'This is my wish, to obtain the strength of a tiger...'

This my wish 

To obtain 

The strength of a Tiger 

Combined as one Sigil  or 

Spare then describes the personal conditions required for success in projecting the sigil into the subconscious mind:

Now by virtue of this Sigil you are able to send your desire into the subconsciousness (which contains all strength); that having happened, it is the desire's realization by the manifestation of the knowledge or power necessary.

First, all consciousness of the Sigil has to be annulled; do not confuse this with concentration – you simply conceive the Sigil any moment you begin to think. Vacuity is obtained by exhausting the mind and body <sup>204</sup>...the time of exhaustion is the time of fulfilment. At the time of exhaustion or vacuity, retain only and visualize the Sigil form – eventually it becomes vague, then vanished and success is assured...the desire for identification carries it [ie. the Sigil] to the corresponding subconscious stratum, its destination....Hence the mind, by Sigils, depending upon the intensity of desire, is illuminated or obsessed ( knowledge or power) from that particular Karma (the subconscious stratum, a particular existence and knowledge gained by it) relative to the desire...Knowledge is obtained by the sensation, resulting from the unity of the desire and Karma. Power, by its 'actual' vitalization and resurrection.<sup>205</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Spare believed that it was crucially important that once the sigil was despatched into the subconscious at the moment of 'vacuity' (the

‘void moment’), the instruction then had to be forgotten so that the process of manifesting desire could become ‘organic’. As Spare explains:

Belief to be true must be organic and subconscious. The desire to be great can only become organic at the time of vacuity and by giving it (Sigil) form. When conscious of the Sigil form (any time but the magical ) it should be repressed, a deliberate striving to forget it; by this it is active and dominates at the unconscious period; its form nourishes and allows it to become attached to the subconscious and become organic; that accomplished is its reality and realization.<sup>206</sup>

It is reasonable to ask whether Spare’s concept of magical sigils actually worked, and the anecdotal evidence is certainly intriguing, if not persuasive. The occultist Kenneth Grant who, as mentioned earlier, had extensive contact with Spare towards the end of his life, describes a situation where Spare needed to move a heavy load of timber without assistance. A sigil was required which could generate great personal strength and Spare employed the tiger sigil, referred to above, in order to access reserves of strength he did not consciously realise he possessed. According to Grant’s account:

Spare closed his eyes for a while and visualised a picture which symbolised a wish for the strength of tigers [ie the sigil above]. Almost immediately he sensed an inner response. He then felt a tremendous upsurge of energy sweep through his body. For a moment he felt like a sapling bent by the onslaught of a mighty wind. With a great effort of will, he steadied himself and directed the force to its proper object. A great calm descended and he found himself able to carry the load easily.<sup>207</sup>

In 1955 Spare produced a pastel-portrait titled *Elemental Materialisation* depicting the same tiger atavism.<sup>208</sup> In the lower left-hand corner of the composition a sheet of paper reveals the appropriate magical sigil, accompanied by a drawing of a tiger’s head. Spare is shown on the right-hand side, staring intently with his fist clenched. Sigils are also drawn on the centre of his forehead, indicating that he was concentrating on them as he sought to impose his magical will. The figure of a brooding tiger, the magician’s ally, or ‘familiar’, lurks in the background. *Elemental Materialisation* is one of the few didactic magical portraits from Spare’s later period and clearly depicts the process of atavistic resurgence.

Spare’s sigil-process can be summarised as follows:

- \* A magical sigil may be employed to embody a desire or command in relation to what a person wishes to do or become.

- \* Latent karmic potentials already reside within the psyche of the individual and lie dormant in the subconscious.
- \* Once despatched through willed concentration, the magical sigil activates 'elementals' or 'karmic automata' related to the magical 'wish' or 'desire'.
- \* The wish or desire then becomes 'organic' in the atavistic realms of the subconscious. It automatically loses its effect if consciously remembered.
- \* The powers activated by the sigil finally manifest in the realm of consciously perceived 'reality', either as events or personal attributes. As Kenneth Grant has written, 'Sigillization leads... to the realization of belief.'<sup>209</sup>

### ***Automatic art***

In addition to developing his concept of the Death Posture and the Zos/Kia cosmology, Spare also explored the spontaneous creative process of automatic drawing. It has been argued that Spare can legitimately claim to be the first Surrealist artist because his earliest atavistic artworks preceded the 1924 Paris Surrealist Manifesto by at least a decade.<sup>210</sup>

Throughout his life Spare was interested in spiritualism and Theosophy,<sup>211</sup> and his attraction to automatic drawing is directly linked to the psychic automata, or elementals, which he believed surrounded him at all times. *The Book of Pleasure* includes an illustration titled *The Dwellers at the Gates of Silent Memory* which shows a reflective naked woman sitting in a state of repose. What appears to be a tree, but is actually an extended skull with antlers, extends upwards from her head, and perched upon the 'branches' are several birds, or more specifically, 'bird karmas'. Nearby, a disembodied winged head floats in space. Spare's accompanying text, titled 'The Sub-Consciousness', contains a reference to what he calls the 'Storehouse of Memories with an Ever-Open Door' and he goes on to write:

Know the sub-consciousness to be an epitome of all experience and wisdom, past incarnations as men, animals, birds, vegetable life, etc. etc. everything that exists, has and ever will exist. Each being a stratum in the order of evolution. Naturally then, the lower we probe into these strata, the earlier will be the forms of life we arrive at; the

last is the Almighty Simplicity. And if we succeed in awakening them, we shall gain their properties, and our accomplishment will correspond.<sup>212</sup>

The karmic entities referred to in *The Book of Pleasure* as the ‘Dwellers at the Gates of Silent Memory’ provide a key to Spare’s automatic art. Spare thought of them as ‘the nascent selves swarming at our periphery, always *behind* our attention. It is through interaction with these desire-bodies, and their integration into our subjective continua, that we interact directly with Self, through the infinite permutation of its expression.’<sup>213</sup> It was these psychic entities that Spare evoked in producing his automatic drawings; he maintained that they could be perceived in a darkened room:

Darken your room, shut the door, empty your mind. Yet you are still in great company – the Numen and your Genius with all their media, and your host of elementals and ghosts of your dead loves – are there! They need no light by which to see, no words to speak, no motive to enact except through your own purely formed desire.’<sup>214</sup>

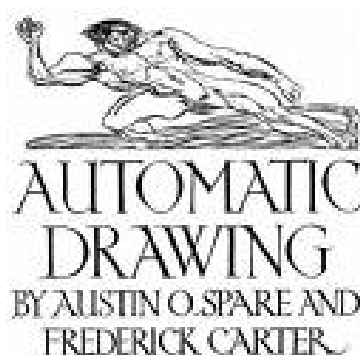
According to his friend, journalist Hannen Swaffer (1879-1962), Spare used self-hypnosis to facilitate the ‘automatic’ process. Frank Letchford refers to Swaffer’s account in his biographical study, *From the Inferno to Zos*:

In [1929] Hannen Swaffer published a little book entitled *Adventures with Inspiration* in which there is a paragraph describing Austin’s method of work on automatic drawings. Staring into a mirror to induce self-hypnotism, he sets to work, sometimes for hours, awakening to find that he has covered hundreds of pages with most beautiful drawings. Try as he would, he could not stop, but if he wished to draw he could not. In this way he filled a drawing book of fifty sheets.<sup>215</sup>

Spare denied that he was acting like a psychic medium on such occasions, always maintaining that his contact with elementals and karmic automata was subject to his magical will.<sup>216</sup> However, Letchford’s account suggests that, at least on some occasions, these entities operated spontaneously and were beyond Spare’s artistic control.

An article titled ‘Automatic Drawing’, co-authored by Austin Spare and Frederick Carter, and published in *Form* in 1916,<sup>217</sup> throws further light on the process:





Automatic drawing, one of the simplest of psychic phenomena, is a means of characteristic expression and, if used with courage and honesty, of recording subconscious activities in the mind. The mental mechanisms used are those common in dreams, which create quick perceptions of relations in the unexpected, as wit, and psycho-neurotic symptoms. Hence it appears that single or non-consciousness is an essential condition and as in all inspiration, the product of involution not invention. Automatism being the manifestation of latent desires (or wishes) the significance of the forms (the ideas) obtained represent the previously unrecorded obsessions. Art becomes, by this illuminism or ecstatic power, a functional activity expressing in a symbolical language the desire towards joy unmodified – the sense of the Mother of all things...

In the ecstatic condition of revelation from the subconscious, the mind elevates the sexual or inherited power...and depresses the intellectual qualities. So a new atavistic responsibility is attained by daring to believe – to possess one's own beliefs – without attempting to rationalize spurious ideas from prejudiced and tainted intellectual sources.

Automatic drawings can be obtained by such methods as concentrating on a Sigil – by any means of exhausting mind and body pleasantly in order to obtain a condition of non-consciousness – by wishing in opposition to the real desire after acquiring an organic impulse toward drawing.

The hand must be trained to work freely and without control, by practice in making simple forms with a continuous involved line without afterthought, ie. its intention should just escape consciousness. Drawings should be made by allowing the hand to run freely with the least possible deliberation. In time shapes will be found to evolve, suggesting conceptions, forms and ultimately having personal or individual style. The mind in a state of oblivion, without desire towards reflection or pursuit of materialistic intellectual suggestions, is in a condition to produce successful drawings of one's *personal* ideas, symbolic in meaning and wisdom. By this means sensation may be visualized.<sup>218</sup>

The *Form* article clearly indicates that Spare's approach to automatic drawing is linked to his concept of atavistic resurgence. Spare's artistic intention is to create a spontaneous and unimpeded flow of imagery that proceeds directly from his karmic atavisms, from the 'Dwellers at the Gates of Silent Memory' that are actually residual metaphysical personifications of his own inner being.

Two limited-edition collections of Spare's automatic art have been published since the artist's death in 1956. The first of these, *A Book of Automatic Drawings*, was published by Catalpa Press, London, in 1972 in a hardcover quarto format, in an edition of 1000 copies. The drawings themselves were from a sketch-book dated 1925, designed as a complete work. As Ian Law indicates in his introduction to the 1972 edition, the compositions featured in *A Book of Automatic Drawings* were reproduced 'in the exact size, style and sequence that Spare indicated'.<sup>219</sup> The edition contains twelve full-size visionary images, executed in the meticulous and highly accomplished linear style that had led some critics to compare his work with that of Dürer and Holbein. Many of the images seem perverse and excessively ugly: the limbs of most of his humanoid figures are hideously distorted, many have horns or demonic shapes extending from their limbs, and several are surreal bird – or animal – fusions. However, Spare believed that the act of transfiguring the grotesque could be liberating.<sup>220</sup> In his posthumously published text, *The Witches' Sabbath*, Spare refers to the traditional image of the 'ugly witch' and argues, in keeping with the transformative powers he associated with Mrs Paterson, that this sort of ugliness could produce a new aesthetic of its own:

The witch...is usually old, usually grotesque, libidiously learned and is as sexually attractive as a corpse; yet she becomes the entire vehicle of consummation. This is necessary for transmutation; the personal aesthetic culture is destroyed; perversion is also used to overcome the same kind of moral prejudice or conformity...he who transmutes the traditionally ugly into another aesthetic value, has new pleasures beyond fear...<sup>221</sup>

A second collection of Spare's automatic art, *The Book of Ugly Ecstasy*, was published by Fulgur in London in 1996, in both general and limited-edition hardcover formats. Once again the illustrations were taken directly from one of Spare's sketch-books. The original hand-drawn volume had been purchased from the artist in October 1924 by the art connoisseur Gerald Reitlinger for £20; it contained 58 automatic drawings, of which only 23 could be considered complete.<sup>222</sup>



Plate 82: An atavistic image from Spare's posthumously published work, *The Book of Ugly Ecstasy*

The 1996 edition contains only the 23 finished artworks, all of them meticulously reproduced. In style, subject matter and quality, the automatic drawings in *The Book of Ugly Ecstasy*, resemble those in *A Book of Automatic Drawings* but are, perhaps, even more grotesque. Distorted human shapes transform into clawed, bestial phantasms with multiple eyes or drooping bulbous breasts; horned devils emerge, one from the other, in a nightmarish sequence of bestial emanations; other creatures have truncated limbs or are simply malformed. However, as Robert Ansell writes in his introduction:

...the mystery of their creation may be illumined by a single candle flame. In this light the viewer will find these aberrations slowly become familiar and induce a process of subtle sublimation.<sup>223</sup>

Spare once wrote: ‘Out of the flesh of our Mothers come dreams and memories of the Gods.’<sup>224</sup> Spare’s visionary *oeuvre*, teeming with atavistic forms and spirit-creatures from the nether-regions, embodies its own sense of magical authenticity: it is the unique vision of an artist who was also a sorcerer, and who was highly aware of the permutations of human form and expression.



Plate 83: Austin Osman Spare, *Farewell to Synthesis* – ‘Out of the flesh of our Mothers come dreams and memories of the Gods’

### ***Differentiating Spare and Norton***

Norton’s trance magic differs from that of Austin Spare in several distinctive ways, confirming in turn that her method is not simply derivative. As noted in Chapter Four, according to Norton the gods and goddesses exist *in their own right*. They are transcendent beings and they ‘contact’ humanity on the inner planes only through their projected ‘god forms’, which Norton maintained

would then appear to the occultist in a manner that the viewer could comprehend. The so-called 'astral' or 'inner plane' domain which Norton explores during her trance journeys is therefore a type of middle ground between the sacred realm of deity and the world of familiar reality.

For Spare, by way of contrast, deity is an aspect of Kia – the Absolute – and even the figure of the Universal Woman is a manifestation of this higher, abstract life-force. Spare's trance method lies in seeking what he calls the 'void moment'. He then opens his consciousness to an influx of atavistic automata – residual psychic energies he believed were 'karmas' from his own earlier bird, animal and human incarnations. Spare's occult practice seeks to embody these automata through an act of magical 'obsession', a term Spare actually uses to describe his process.<sup>225</sup> While Spare always denied that he was acting like a passive psychic medium, his technique of seeking the 'void moment' and then 'opening the door to the Dwellers on the Threshold' allowed his psyche to be overrun with psychic impressions from his subconscious mind.<sup>226</sup> Norton, however, did not act in this way. Her trance episodes were willed and consciously determined, and did not involve either magical 'obsession' or 'possession'.<sup>227</sup> Characteristically, none of Norton's drawings was produced using the 'obsessive' technique of automatic art. Spare claimed to be a Surrealist, and was perhaps the *first* Surrealist,<sup>228</sup> but Norton consistently denied that she should be labelled as such, the reason being that her artistic method was not surrealist but descriptive. Norton was essentially a representational artist, portraying in a figurative way the archetypal beings and metaphysical entities encountered on the inner planes of the psyche. Her art is essentially a type of magical reportage.

There is no denying that Norton's magical inclination is towards the 'night' side of the psyche and, as noted earlier, through her practice of sex-magic, Tantra and Kundalini yoga, she aligns herself more with the so-called 'Left-Hand Path' associated with Thelemic magick than with the mystical theurgy of the Golden Dawn.<sup>229</sup> However when Norton portrays 'dark forces', they are the *Qliphoth* or 'negative energies' of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, and Norton captions them as such. On the other hand, Spare's 'ugly ecstasies', produced as automatic drawings, are, to use his term, his own karmic atavisms. *They are ultimately aspects of himself.*

Spare focuses both his cosmology and his magic on the potentials of the human organism. In his *Logomachy of Zos* he makes such pronouncements as

‘Man is a potentiality of *anything* becoming actuality,’<sup>230</sup> and ‘The only attribute of God is man...,’<sup>231</sup> and ‘God is absolutely my own Idea; otherwise God cannot exist’.<sup>232</sup> As Gavin Semple has noted, Spare sought through the Death Posture to make a magical sigil out of his own body, to ‘flesh’ his desires through an act of magical will.<sup>233</sup> As Spare succinctly states: ‘*All ways to Heaven lead to flesh.*’<sup>234</sup> Spare’s method is also essentially retrogressive – his ecstatic journey takes him into his previous incarnations and progressively back to the source of all manifestation: Kia.<sup>235</sup> This is spiritual evolution in reverse. Norton’s magical quest is quite different. Having decided that Pan is the overlord of the manifest universe, her task is to pay homage to him as a sacred being, to depict him in her drawings and paintings and in the large mural where he presides over her ritual altar, and to seek his presence on the inner planes of being. Never does she seek to incarnate him *in the flesh*, to use Spare’s term. Her drawing of Lucifer as the Adversary, which shows a small, somewhat intimidated human being encountering a much more substantial metaphysical deity,<sup>236</sup> demonstrates that it is ultimately the gods and goddesses who are in control. For Norton the deities are respected as figures of awe; for Spare they are aspects of the life-force to be embodied or ‘incarnated’.<sup>237</sup>

Nevertheless, both artists share one important characteristic: they are both essentially *chthonic* in their artistic processes – although in different ways. It is important to remember, as Marcus M. Jungkurth points out in a recent essay, that Spare’s artistic *oeuvre* derives, essentially, from the mythological Underworld. Spare’s magical name was *Zos vel Thanatos* – ‘Death is all’ – and during his career as a visionary artist and trance magician Spare identified himself with Thanatos, Death, which was one of the bynames of the Greek god of the Underworld, Hades.<sup>238</sup> Spare’s images arise from the Underworld of his densely populated psyche. His artistic atavisms are incarnations of his personal karmas that lie just beneath the surface of awareness and through acts of metaphysical ecstasy he induces them to swarm into his art.

Norton’s art is similarly chthonic in emphasis. Many of her most potent occult drawings throng with *Qliphothic* demons and serpentine imagery that emanate from the nether regions of the psyche. Her instinctive *inspirational* attraction, however, is towards the ecstatic Kundalini fire-snake – the latent cosmic power that lies dormant in the primal sex *chakra* at the base of the spine, where it can be awakened into potent manifestation. A powerful example of this creative impulse can be found in Norton’s coloured rendition of Pan

entwined by a spiral serpent, produced *circa* 1943 and included [*Pan*, Plate 1] in the *Supplement to the Art of Rosaleen Norton* – published posthumously in 1984 (reproduced in Chapter Four).<sup>239</sup> As Kirsti Sarmiala-Berger notes, with reference to this particular work, ‘The coils of the phallic snake, rising out of the black container, combine the duality of life and death into a single cycle of recurrent transformation.’<sup>240</sup> Like Spare, Norton’s artistic sorcery arises from the psychic depths but the thrust of her sexual and magical ecstasy depends also on awakening the fire-serpent – and then worshipping Pan as the source and overlord of her primal existence.

### *Summary of main points*

- a) Rosaleen Norton’s recognisable artistic style first emerges in the 1940s – especially in drawings published in *Pertinent* (1941) and *Pix* magazine (c.1943). One especially significant early work, *Astral Scene*, shows Norton utilising a state of trance to contact metaphysical entities.
- b) *Pertinent* brings Norton and Greenlees together creatively. Two of Greenlees’ earliest poems are published in *Pertinent* in 1943, when he is only 13 years old. By 1949 Norton and Greenlees have met each other. They hitchhike to Melbourne and arrange a major exhibition of Norton’s pen and pastel drawings at the Rowden White Gallery, University of Melbourne.
- c) In the catalogue essay that accompanies her 1949 exhibition, Norton identifies herself as an ‘outsider’ in the Australian art-world and writes that she is inspired mainly by Pantheism and esoteric philosophy. She has little in common with her contemporaries.
- d) During the 1949 exhibition, members of the Victorian police force charge Norton with exhibiting works that are decadent and obscene. The four offending drawings are *Witches’ Sabbath*, *Lucifer*, *Triumph* and *Individuation*. The charge of obscenity is later dismissed in court.
- e) While still in Melbourne, Norton is interviewed at length by L.J. Murphy, a psychologist at the University of Melbourne. Twenty-seven of the exhibited artworks are photographed in colour by Professor Oeser, Head of the Psychology Department – most of these works will

later be published posthumously in the *Supplement to the Art of Rosaleen Norton* (1984), released five years after Norton's death.

- f) In 1951 Norton begins selecting a range of drawings for inclusion in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, published the following year – they will be accompanied by poems by Gavin Greenlees and additional texts and poems written by Norton herself. The selected drawings include images of Pan, Lilith, Eloi and other metaphysical entities like the Werplon and a winged hermaphrodite. Two particular images cause offence at the time of publication: *Fohat* and *The Adversary* – a legal ruling determines that these images must be blacked out if publication is to proceed. *Fohat* depicts a goat-headed deity with an enormous serpentine phallus. It is a distinctly *chthonic* work and Norton's commentary links it to the sex-magical potency of the Kundalini fire-serpent. In the Introduction to *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Norton also acknowledges an affinity to the work of the surrealists Tanguy and Matta – both of whom have chthonic, nether-world inclinations. Some of Norton's images also reveal the primal influence of Voodoo.
- g) The thrust of Norton's publication is quintessentially Gnostic. Norton maintains that the visionary images in her drawings derive from dimensions of knowledge and awareness *normally inaccessible* to human consciousness. It is her experiential contact with sacred god-forms while in a state of trance that in turn gives rise to her visionary artistic images.
- h) Fire-snakes feature prominently in Norton's later work of the 1960s and '70s. Examples include *Witch and Family Secrets* and *The Temptress*. Other works in this period are specifically demonic – they include *Satan* and *Fur Fur the Storm Demon*, a painting inspired by the *Goetia*.
- i) In many ways Norton's work parallels to that of British trance magician Austin Osman Spare, whose work is similarly chthonic and is based on atavistic imagery derived from ecstatic and visionary states of awareness. Spare's atavisms, however, derive ultimately from his own personal subconscious – from his accumulated 'karmas' and primal memories. Norton's chthonic imagery derives, by way of contrast, from the *Qliphothic* realms associated with the nether regions of the



## Kabbalistic Tree of Life and from primal sources of sexual and magical energy associated with the Kundalini fire-serpent.

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<sup>1</sup> Spare's significance as a major figure in the 20<sup>th</sup> century magical revival depends not only on his status as a major visionary artist but also his substantial influence on Chaos Magick, which arose in Britain in the late 1970s and utilised his concept of magical sigils.

<sup>2</sup> This pencil drawing is reproduced in N. Drury, *Pan's Daughter: The Strange World of Rosaleen Norton*, Collins Australia, Sydney 1988:7. Following publication of this book the original drawing was returned to Cecily Boothman, who has since died. The present location of the drawing is unknown.

<sup>3</sup> R. Norton, 'I was Born a Witch', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 3 January 1957: 4.

<sup>4</sup> Personal communication to the author by Cecily Boothman, c.1986.

<sup>5</sup> G. Sturgeon, *The Development of Australian Sculpture: 1788-1975*, Thames & Hudson, London 1978: 98.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid: 95.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid: 104

<sup>8</sup> R. Norton, 'Hitchhiking Witch', *Australasian Post*, 7 February 1957:10.

<sup>9</sup> Personal communication from Walter Glover, c.1986.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Personal communication from Cecily Boothman, c.1986.

<sup>13</sup> Especially authority figures in the mainstream religious denominations.

<sup>14</sup> See for example *Fishers of Men* [Plate II:19] *Entombment of Count Orgaz* [Plate XXIII: 61] and *Masque of Eidolons* [Plate XXVII: 69].

<sup>15</sup> 'Rosaleen Norton's Art: Depicting the Sinister and the Occult', *Pertinent*, vol.3, Sydney, October 1941:46.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Readers of *Pertinent* were invited to contact Norton c/- the magazine and it was stated that reproductions of some of her works were for sale in a special artist's print edition produced on 'heavy art paper... perfectly suited to framing and hanging'. See *Pertinent*, vol.4, Sydney, November 1941: 51.

<sup>18</sup> 'More occult fantasy from the portfolio of Rosaleen Norton', *Pertinent*, vol.4, Sydney, November 1941: 51.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid: 54. Another version of this work, in pencil and pastel, would be exhibited at the Rowden White Gallery at the University of Melbourne in 1949 with a different title: *Merlin*. According to one particular legend of Merlin which originated in Brittany, the famous wizard was imprisoned in a tower by his lover Vivian when she turned his own magical spells against him.

<sup>20</sup> Baphomet, or the Goat of Mendes, had been depicted as an incarnation of the Devil in a famous print by the French ceremonial magician Eliphas Levi (1810-1875) and Norton may well have seen this print reproduced in various books on the magical traditions. Levi's *Goat of Mendes* similarly shows the hermaphroditic goat-headed Devil with breasts and horns and in a seated position. Levi's figure, however is winged, has a flaming torch between its horns, and also has a caduceus-like phallus – these features are omitted in the Norton portrait. In 1307 King Philip IV of France accused the Knights Templar of worshipping Baphomet. With the

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aid of Pope Clement V, the king had members of the Knights Templar arrested and their possessions confiscated. Many members of the order were put on trial and tortured in order to extract confessions of sacrilegious practices. See entry 'Knights Templars' in W.H. Harris and J.S. Levey (ed.) *The New Columbia Encyclopedia*, Columbia University Press, New York 1975: 1490.

<sup>21</sup> In a footnote to Eliphas Levi's *The History of Magic* (1913), which Waite translated from French and edited with annotations, Waite notes that Levi believed the 'hypothetical idol was Baphomet was a symbolical figure representing the First Matter of the Magnum Opus which is the Astral Light [and he further suggests] that it signified the god Pan...' See E. Levi, *The History of Magic* (trs. A.E. Waite), Rider, London 1969: 211 fn.

<sup>22</sup> *Astral Scene*, *Pan* and a work titled *Lunacy* were reproduced in the article 'Art Models Show their own Art' in *Pix*, Sydney, 3 July 1943: 26. A photograph of Norton posing naked in a studio for another artist (Selina Muller) was also included on the following page.

<sup>23</sup> Another pencil drawing, produced around the same time, titled *Nightmare*, also showed a magical entity manifesting above the comatose naked body of the artist, depicted in a state of trance. *Nightmare* is a more conventional drawing, however, and includes stylised elements that reflect Norton's earlier, less sophisticated style. Of the two drawings, *Astral Scene* is clearly the more innovative.

<sup>24</sup> *Nightmare* is the other. See fn.23.

<sup>25</sup> See fn.27, Chapter One.

<sup>26</sup> Norton had met Conroy in 1935 and they were married in Sydney on 24 December 1940. They were divorced in 1951 According to Norton's sister, Cecily Boothman (personal communication to the author, c.1986) Norton and Greenlees first met each other in 1945 when Greenlees was 15 years old. They had certainly become lovers by late 1949, when they returned to Sydney from Melbourne and moved into their apartment at 179 Brougham Street, Kings Cross.

<sup>27</sup> 'Candid Reflections on Art by Rosaleen Norton', *Truth*, Melbourne, 27 August 1949: 21.

<sup>28</sup> R. Norton, 'Hitchhiking Witch', *Australasian Post*, loc cit: 11.

<sup>29</sup> A photograph of Ian Stapleton, Rosaleen Norton and Gavin Greenlees was published in *Truth*, Melbourne, 27 August 1949: 21

<sup>30</sup> In 'Hitchhiking Witch' (*Australasian Post*, loc cit: 11) Norton refers to Ian Stapleton as 'John Bolton', acknowledging that this was not his real name. In fact, Ian Stapleton was co-editor of the Melbourne University newspaper *Farrago*, and a picture of Stapleton, Gavin Greenlees and Roie was published in the Melbourne *Truth* on 27 August 1949:21.

<sup>31</sup> Theoretically Greenlees or Stapleton could also have written it, but the specific references in the text, including references to [Jungian] archetypes, Pantheism, Norman Lindsay (for whom Norton occasionally modelled), Herbert Read's "Superrealism", W.B. Yeats' *A Vision*, allusions to specific aspects of modern art history, and commentaries on particular artworks, suggest strongly that Norton was herself the author.

<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, just a few months later, Norton would admit in an interview with *People* magazine, that she admired Beardsley, Leonardo, Tanguy, Van Gogh, Dore, Tchelitchev and Dali and that she regarded Norman Lindsay and William Dobell as 'Australia's only great artists'. See 'She Hates Figleaf Morality', *People*, Sydney, 29 March 1950: 27.

<sup>33</sup> This controversial metaphysical work by the distinguished poet W.B. Yeats included a substantial amount of cosmological, alchemical, astrological, Kabbalistic and Neoplatonic material and was first published privately in 1925, presumably because it was so unlike Yeats' main body of literary work. Yeats' principal publishers, Macmillan, did not issue an edition until 1937. See W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, Macmillan, London (revised edition) 1962 and S.J. Graf, *W.B. Yeats: Twentieth Century Magus*, Weiser, York Beach, Maine 2000.

<sup>34</sup> This is the complete text of the accompanying essay in the catalogue for the exhibition titled 'The Art of Rosaleen Norton' at the Rowden White Library, University of Melbourne, 1-123 August, 1949.

<sup>35</sup> The full list of works from the 1949 exhibition included in *Supplement to the Art of Rosaleen Norton* (Walter Glover, Sydney 1984) is as follows: *Pan*; *Timeless Worlds*; *The Invocation*; *The Blueprint*; *Merlin*; *Loosing of the Whirlwind*; *The Bells*; *Triumph*; *Sphinx and Her Secrets*; *A Tune*; *The Tree*; *The Jester*; *Lucifer*; *At Home*; *The Gnostic*; *War*; *The Adversary*; *The Djinn*; *The Initiate* and *The Possessed*. *The Djinn* is not identified in the *Supplement to the Art of Rosaleen Norton* as one of the works exhibited in Melbourne in 1949 but it was in fact listed in the exhibition catalogue.

<sup>36</sup> Retitled *Esoteric Study* when Norton reworked this image as a pencil drawing and included it in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (Plate XII :39)

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<sup>37</sup> The Middle Pillar on the Tree of Life is defined by the central alignment of the following *sephiroth*: Kether; Tiphareth, Yesod, Malkuth. See section on the Kabbalah in Chapter Two.

<sup>38</sup> In western culture the left-hand side has been viewed traditionally as symbolically negative. The Latin word for 'left' was *sinister*, from which the present English meaning derives.

<sup>39</sup> In the Kabbalah *Chesed* is the sphere of the Merciful Father. However Norton sometimes focused on female counterparts to familiar images – her *Sphinx and Her Secrets* from the same era presents the Sphinx as totally feminine.

<sup>40</sup> See O.M. Broughton, 'The Art of Rosaleen Norton', *Arna*, Sydney 1948, referred to earlier. Broughton noted that in *The Sphinx* (as it was titled in this article) Norton is shown lying comatose within a *yon*i form, symbolising the female sexual organs. Here the shape is very much a *yon*i and not a diamond, whereas in *The Initiate*, the two female beings embrace each other within a clearly defined diamond shape.

<sup>41</sup> As mentioned earlier, Norton believed that the essential role of the Adversary was to bind and limit man 'when it appears he is growing too big for his boots. He tries to trick man, not with malicious intent, so much as his exposing the limitations of the ego and man's pride in his own existence.' Notes based on my interview with Norton at Roslyn Gardens, 1977. See N. Drury, *Inner Visions: Explorations in Magical Consciousness*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1979:106.

<sup>42</sup> See *The Adversary*, plate XVI, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc cit. 1952:47.

<sup>43</sup> Retitled *Black Magic* in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc cit.:49.

<sup>44</sup> See 'She Hates Figleaf Morality', *People*, Sydney, 29 March 1950: 26.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 4 August 1949.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 20 August 1949.

<sup>49</sup> Reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 August 1949.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 20 August 1949.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Not all the works were for sale. Only 29 out of the 46 pictures on display were available for purchase, at prices ranging between 1 and 30 guineas. *Lucifer* and *Merlin* were the two most expensive works in the show, listed at 30 guineas each (details taken from the exhibition catalogue).

<sup>55</sup> 'Candid Reflections on Art by Rosaleen Norton', *Truth*, Melbourne, 27 August 1949: 21.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> The new publication featured twenty works from the 1949 Rowden White exhibition.

<sup>59</sup> A photocopy of this letter is the possession of the author. Norton paid £3/10/- for the complete set of colour prints.

<sup>60</sup> Glover advised me c.1986 that he had a signed contract with Norton to this effect, but I have never seen it. Since Glover is no longer alive the contract may now be in the possession of his son, Walter Glover Jnr.

<sup>61</sup> See R.Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Walter Glover, Sydney 1952: 18, 48 for examples of Norton's poetry.

<sup>62</sup> It is both interesting and revealing that *Witches' Sabbath* was retitled *Black Magic* in the 1952 publication. As noted in Chapter One, Norton had read various histories of demonology while still in her twenties but she appears not to have had a working knowledge of black magic (*Goetia*) at the time this particular drawing was produced. Eugene Goossens offered to instruct Norton in the use of magical seals (ie. the magical sigils found in the medieval grimoires) and describes her in one of his letters (undated, but *circa* 1953-55) as 'my best – and only – pupil' in this particular area of magical specialization (see Chapter Five). Prior to meeting Goossens, Norton had endeavoured to reflect her interest in the 'black arts' by including a magical sigil within her revised composition *Black Magic* (reproduced in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, 1952: Plate XVII). However, although the 'demonic' sigil has been inserted for graphic impact next to the winking nun, it does not accurately depict any of the demonic seals reproduced in the major medieval grimoires, including the *Goetia* itself. It would be fair, in fact, to describe the symbol Norton has drawn as a visual parody of an authentic demonic sigil because it is very clumsily constructed. This supports my view that until meeting

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Goossens, Norton's knowledge of grimoires and demonology was relatively superficial. It was Goossens who had the practical knowledge and techniques in this area of magic, having presumably learned them from Philip Heseltine, a disciple of Aleister Crowley (like Crowley, Heseltine was interested in practical *Goetia* – see Chapter Three).

<sup>63</sup> Norton identifies Eloï as such in her unpublished notes that were drawn up and presented to Walter Glover when she was selecting drawings for inclusion in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*.

<sup>64</sup> *Masque of Eidolons* shows a motley parade of phantasms, several identifiable as figures from different denominations of the Christian Church. One of the figures in the procession sports horned buttocks, another cloven hooves, wings and bare breasts. A sanctimonious priest following up the rear is depicted with a serpent lunging across his shoulder, in turn flanked by a padre who looks haggard and drained of all vitality. Gavin Greenlees' accompanying poem is biting and critical. He called it 'a sonata...written in the glow of ecclesiastical spooks: landscape of faces hypnoforce, faces of dead shells marching'.

<sup>65</sup> *The Jester* pokes fun at different figures of authority – a priest, a judge, a headmaster, a scientist, and two totalitarian leaders: the Kaiser and Karl Marx. In his accompanying verse Greenlees refers to the 'shadow play of dolls' and Norton depicts these figures of high public office simply as mannikins on strings.

<sup>66</sup> Figures like Lilith, the lovers in *The Initiate*, the naked female figure embracing the black panther in *Black Magic* and the dancer in *Rites of Baron Samedi* all have shapely, sensuous bodies and in particular, large firm breasts – an attribute that Norton herself did not possess. Norton was relatively slim and flat-chested as one can see from the 1943 photograph which shows her modelling naked for fellow artist Selina Muller ['Art Models Show their own Art', *Pix*, Sydney, 3 July 1943: 27]. Nevertheless, Norton was not self-conscious about her body. She often walked around naked in the company of her fellow coven members and was similarly unselfconscious when sitting topless during journalistic interviews. See D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here!', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 6 October 1955.

<sup>67</sup> These notes were passed to me by Walter Glover c.1986 at the time I was researching *Pan's Daughter* and are still in my possession.

<sup>68</sup> R. Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc. cit. 1952: 23.

<sup>69</sup> C.G. Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious* [first American edition 1919], Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., London 1919: 153-154.

<sup>70</sup> See fn.70.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid: 22.

<sup>72</sup> Manuscript notes from Rosaleen Norton passed to me by Walter Glover c.1986.

<sup>73</sup> For details of the trial relating to the obscenity charges brought against *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* see *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 5 February 1953 and *The Sun*, Sydney, 5 February 1953. In addition to *Fohat*, the other image which had to be blacked out was *The Adversary*.

<sup>74</sup> Manuscript notes from Rosaleen Norton passed to me by Walter Glover c.1986.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> In his autobiographical work *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* Jung refers to the mandala as the symbol of individuation: '...the mandala is the centre. It is the exponent of all paths. It is the path to the centre, to individuation....the goal of psychic development is the self.' See C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Collins/Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1963:222.

<sup>77</sup> Manuscript notes from Rosaleen Norton passed to me by Walter Glover c.1986.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. The ouroboros is a well known spiritual symbol in medieval alchemy and represents the cycles of life and Nature, the fusion of opposites, and the transcendence of duality.

<sup>79</sup> See D. Fortune, *The Mystical Qabalah* [1935], Benn, London, seventh impression 1966: 173.

<sup>80</sup> Manuscript notes from Rosaleen Norton passed to me by Walter Glover c.1986.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> R. Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (Introduction), loc. cit. 1952: 76.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid: 15.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid: 12.

<sup>86</sup> Gleeson is quoted in 'Witches, demons on rampage in weird Sydney sex book,' *Sun*, Sydney 11 September 1952.

<sup>87</sup> Interestingly, James Gleeson's more recent surrealist paintings have become much more spontaneous and cosmological and are now closer to the free-form style Norton was aiming for. For an interview with James

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Gleeson regarding his own creative process see N. Drury and A. Voigt, *Fire and Shadow: Spirituality in Contemporary Australian Art*, HarperCollins, Melbourne 1999:15-27.

<sup>88</sup> A. Balakian, *Surrealism: The Road to the Absolute*, Allen & Unwin, London 1973:128.

<sup>89</sup> The Surrealist painter and sculptor Max Ernst (1911-1976) writes: 'When it is said of the Surrealists that they paint constantly changeable dream-reality, this does not mean that they paint a copy of their dreams (that would be descriptive, naïve naturalism), or that each individual builds his own little world of dream elements, conducting himself amicably or maliciously within it (that would be a "flight from time"), but that they freely, bravely and self-confidently move about in the borderland between the internal and external worlds which are still unfamiliar though physically and psychologically quite real ("sur-real"), registering what they see and experience there, and intervening where their revolutionary instincts advise them to do so.' See Max Ernst, extract from *Beyond Painting* in L.R. Lippard (ed.) *Surrealists on Art*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 1970:135-136.

<sup>90</sup> See transcripts of interview with Rosaleen Norton conducted by L.J. Murphy at the University of Melbourne, 27 August 1949: Appendix A.

<sup>91</sup> See C. Barreda, *Paalen*, Museum of Modern Art, Mexico City 1967.

<sup>92</sup> Quoted in L. Lippard (ed.), *Surrealists on Art*, loc cit: 121.

<sup>93</sup> Volume 1 of Lam's definitive Catalogue Raisonné 1923-1960 was published in an English language edition in 1996. See L. Laurin-Lam, *Wifredo Lam*, Acatos, Lausanne 1996.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Quoted in G. Xuriguera, *Wifredo Lam*, Filapacchi, Paris 1974 :23.

<sup>96</sup> J. Pierre, *A Dictionary of Surrealism*, Eyre Methuen, London 1974:153.

<sup>97</sup> See J.T. Soby, *Yves Tanguy*, Museum of Modern Art, New York 1955.

<sup>98</sup> See Valerie Fletcher, 'Matta' in *Crosscurrents of Modernism : Four Latin American Pioneers*, Hirschhorn Museum / Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington D.C., 1992: 247. This volume also contains material on Wifredo Lam.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. Levi produced a graphic image of the Goat of Mendes (Baphomet) referred to earlier.

<sup>100</sup> Of the 48 works reproduced in *Supplement to the Art of Rosaleen Norton*, 28 were included in the Don Deaton exhibition at Exiles Gallery, 1-7 October 1982.

<sup>101</sup> See K. Booth, 'Demon Drinks: Rosaleen's satanic art puts pub patrons off their brew', *People*, Sydney , December 1984 and the report in the *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 22 December 1984.

<sup>102</sup> Norton had two older sisters, Cecily and Phyllis, so this work is presumably titled with reference to Norton's siblings, even though the images in the painting bear no physical resemblance to any of the family members. The painting appeared on the jacket of N. Drury, *Pan's Daughter*, loc cit. 1988.

<sup>103</sup> As mentioned earlier, Norton offered me an LSD trip when I interviewed her in her Roslyn Gardens apartment in 1977. I declined her offer.

<sup>104</sup> See T. Owen and D. Dickson, *High Art: A History of the Psychedelic Poster*, Sanctuary Publishing, London 1999.

<sup>105</sup> The painting shows the 'Temptress' with the head of a cat and the figure seems to be modelled on Norton herself.

<sup>106</sup> G. de Brito, 'A Witch's Warning', *Sunday Mirror*, Sydney 17 August 1975.

<sup>107</sup> See section 'Norton, Greenlees and Goossens, and the influence of Aleister Crowley' in Chapter Five.

<sup>108</sup> In the Western magical tradition, demons are *evoked* within a ceremonial triangle whereas higher beings like gods and goddesses are *invoked* within a sacred ceremonial circle. The triangle is the ritual motif associated with magical evocation.

<sup>109</sup> S.L. MacGregor Mathers (trs.), *Goetia: the Lesser Key of Solomon*, De Laurence Scott & Co., Chicago 1916: 33.

<sup>110</sup> *Snakes* is an excellent example of this tendency and depicts a naked she-devil with double-banked rows of eyes, leering at the viewer. She is painted in sinister hues of blue, black and lime yellow and has snakes writhing in her hair. A reptilian tail extends from her spine and trails behind her. The figure shown in *Snakes* appears to be a more 'demonic' version of *Lilith*, Plate IV in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc cit. 1952: 23.

<sup>111</sup> The first publications to explore Spare's magical approach in depth – K. Grant, *The Magical Revival*, Muller, London, and N. Drury and S. Skinner, *The Search for Abraxas*, London – were both published in 1972, twenty years after the publication of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* and just seven years before Norton's death, and it is unlikely that Norton had access to Spare's privately published books, which for many years

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have remained extremely rare items in the secondhand book market. Norton does not refer to Spare in her bibliography.

<sup>112</sup> The autobiographical essay included in the catalogue accompanying Rosaleen Norton's art exhibition at the University of Melbourne in 1949 shows that she did not believe she had any true artistic 'contemporaries' and she shunned the so-called 'contemporary' trends emerging in Australian art at that time. Similarly, although Spare was briefly fashionable in London's West End early in his career he felt more at home in his vastly less glamorous environment in the slums of south London. See Steffi Grant's personal profile of Spare (whom she first met in the 1940s) in K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks !: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, London 1998: 13-25. In 1927 Spare also published an invective directed against the 'Mayfair set' titled *The Anathema of Zos: a Sermon to the Hypocrites*. See R. Ansell, *The Bookplate Designs of Austin Osman Spare*, The Bookplate Society/Keridwen Press, London 1988: 6.

<sup>113</sup> Norton and her lover Gavin Greenlees lived in run-down terrace houses in the Kings Cross and Dalrymple districts of Sydney and Spare lived for most of his life in confined and impoverished conditions in slum-flats located south of the Thames in the Southwark area of London.

<sup>114</sup> Frank Letchford, a close friend of Spare's, writes in *Inferno to Zos* (First Impressions, Thame, UK 1995: 273) that many had wrongly assumed that Spare had been inspired primarily by William Blake, 'his real tradition being with El Greco'. Norton acknowledges her artistic debt to El Greco in her satirical drawing Entombment of Count Orgaz (Plate XXIII of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, 1952). Spare also acknowledges his attraction to artists like Bosch, Grünewald, Cranach, Dürer, Michelangelo and Leonardo in his posthumously published text *The Living Word of Zos*. See K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks !: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 267.

<sup>115</sup> Spare held exhibitions at the Elephant and Castle in Southwark and in other 'public houses' in the Borough and Brixton, although he also held exhibitions at mainstream London art galleries, including Bruton Galleries, The Baillie Gallery, The Ryder Gallery, Lefevre Galleries and Archer Gallery. See R. Ansell, *The Bookplate Designs of Austin Osman Spare*, The Bookplate Society/Keridwen Press, London 1988: 6, and W. Wallace, *The Early Work of Austin Osman Spare*, Catalpa Press, Stroud, UK 1987: 20-21. Norton had ongoing 'exhibitions' at the Apollyon and Kashmir coffee-shops in Kings Cross, Sydney.

<sup>116</sup> Steffi Grant, a personal friend of Spare, writes that 'He was mad on cats. They crawled all over his place... cosy tame strays wandering straight in and out of the 'kitchen', which was his back room...' See Grant's introduction in K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks !: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, London 1998: 15. Norton was similarly fond of cats and was photographed with one of her many feline pets in Dave Barnes' article 'Confessions of a Witch', *Australasian Post*, Sydney 15 June 1967: 2.

<sup>117</sup> Norton's pantheism, expressed as ritual homage to Pan, is discussed in Chapter Three. Spare declares in *The Logomachy of Zos* ; 'I am a Pantheist...because I can conceive God in You and You in Me... God in us all and in all potencies...' See K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks !: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 210.

<sup>118</sup> According to his close friend, Frank Letchford, Spare read the Theosophical works of Annie Besant and H.P. Blavatsky and was also strongly influenced by Taoism. See F.W. Letchford, *Inferno to Zos*, First Impressions, Thame, UK 1995 :231.

<sup>119</sup> Norton acknowledged a specific debt to Jung and his theory of archetypes in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* [Sydney, 1952] as well as in her interviews with the psychologist L.J. Murphy at the University of Melbourne. Spare appears to have incorporated elements of Freudian psychology into his Zos/Kia conception although Steffi Grant recalls that he used to refer to Freud and Jung as 'Fraud and Junk'. See *Zos Speaks !: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 23.

<sup>120</sup> Spare joined Crowley's occult order, the Argenteum Astrum, as a probationer in 1909. His magical name was *Yihoveaum*, a combination of the Hebrew JHVH and the Eastern symbol AUM. He also contributed drawings to Crowley's biennial publication, *The Equinox*. See W. Wallace, *The Early Work of Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: chronology section (no page number).

<sup>121</sup> His parents were Philip Newton Spare and Eliza Ann Adelaide Osman. Philip Spare was a constable in the City of London police force.

<sup>122</sup> Spare lived briefly in Golders Green and later in Bloomsbury but mostly lived south of the Thames. See S. Grant, introduction, *Zos Speaks !: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 18.

<sup>123</sup> See R. Ansell, *The Bookplate Designs of Austin Osman Spare*, The Bookplate Society / Keridwen Press, London 1988: 1.

<sup>124</sup> R. Ansell, *The Bookplate Designs of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 1.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid : 2.

<sup>126</sup> See I. Law, 'Austin Osman Spare' in G. Beskin and J. Bonner (ed.) *Austin Osman Spare 1886-1956: The Divine Draughtsman*, exhibition catalogue, The Morley Gallery, London, 1987: 5 and K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, Muller, London 1975: 11.

<sup>127</sup> R. Ansell, *The Bookplate Designs of Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 2.

<sup>128</sup> It was published by Otto Schutzer & Co., 1909. See W. Wallace, *The Early Work of Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit 20.

<sup>129</sup> See R. Ansell, *The Bookplate Designs of Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 5. *The Yellow Book* was published between 1894 and 1897. Henry Harland was its literary editor and Beardsley its art editor until 1896. Spare himself did not acknowledge any direct influence from Beardsley although he was very familiar with his graphic work.

<sup>130</sup> F.W. Letchford, *From the Inferno to Zos*, First Impressions, Thame, UK 1995: 99.

<sup>131</sup> *Form* was revived in 1921, but issued in a more modest format.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid: 105.

<sup>133</sup> *The Golden Hind* was co-edited with Clifford Bax and published by Chapman & Hall, London..

<sup>134</sup> See K. Grant, introduction to A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure* [1913], facsimile reprint, 93 Publishing, Quebec, Canada 1975.

<sup>135</sup> See K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, Muller, London 1975: 16. According to Robert Ansell this quote is hearsay and no documentary evidence has so far been produced to support it.

<sup>136</sup> K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks!: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 286-288.

<sup>137</sup> R. Ansell, *The Bookplate Designs of Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 6. Ansell writes that Spare was acclaimed the 'darling of Mayfair' between 1907 and 1913. The latter date coincides with the release of Spare's most revolutionary and confronting work, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*.

<sup>138</sup> A.O. Spare, *Earth:Inferno*, London 1905: 21.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid: 18.

<sup>140</sup> A.O. Spare. *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, London 1913: 45.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid: iii.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid: 7.

<sup>143</sup> G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, London 1995: 11.

<sup>144</sup> Specifically, S.L. MacGregor Mathers' translation of Knorr Von Rosenroth's selection of key texts from the Zohar, *Kabbala Denudata*, published in an English language edition as *The Kabbalah Unveiled*, Redway, London 1887.

<sup>145</sup> F.W. Letchford, *From the Inferno to Zos*, loc cit: 79.

<sup>146</sup> G.W. Semple, 'A Few Leaves from the Devil's Picture Book' in A.O. Spare, *Two Tracts on Cartomancy*, Fulgur, London 1997: 21fn.

<sup>147</sup> Temurah, or Temura, is a Kabbalistic coding technique intended to work as a disguise. The first half of the Hebrew alphabet is written in reverse order and located above the remaining section so that the letters form vertical pairs:

k y th ch z v h d g b a  
l m n s o p tz q r sh t

Here k=l, y=m, th=n and so on. A given word can be disguised in Temurah by substituting the code letter in each case. See C. Poncé, *Kabbalah*, Garnstone Press, London 1974: 172.

<sup>148</sup> W. Wallace, *The Early Work of Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 13

<sup>149</sup> G.G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, revised edition, Schocken, New York 1961: 240.

<sup>150</sup> A.O. Spare, *Axiomata*, Fulgur, London 1992: 9. According to publisher, Robert Ansell, this work is based on previously unpublished texts from the early 1950s.

<sup>151</sup> 'Atavistic resurgence' has been defined as 'the return into the sorcerer's consciousness of latent powers and knowledge, resurrecting the 'dead' from the pre-human strata; typically manifesting through bestial and elemental forms, evoked by intense nostalgia.' See G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 48.

<sup>152</sup> A.O. Spare, *The Witches' Sabbath*, Fulgur, London 1992:7. This is a posthumously published text, based on manuscripts dating from the early 1950s and is not one of Spare's self-published works.

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<sup>153</sup> Spare was familiar with the writings of Freud, Krafft-Ebbing and Havelock Ellis, all specialist authors in the field of the psychology of sexuality.

<sup>154</sup> One of Spare's magical names was *Zos vel Thanatos* which, according to Frank Letchford, was derived 'from the theory posited by Dr Sigmund Freud of the eternal conflict between Eros (love) and Thanatos (the so-called Death-wish).' See F.W. Letchford, *Inferno to Zos*, loc cit: 137. In ancient Greek mythology, Thanatos was the Greek god of Death, the brother of Sleep and the son of Night.

<sup>155</sup> According to Frank Letchford, a close friend of Spare's, 'The Tao was one of *the* most important influences upon Austin' (see F.W. Letchford, *Inferno to Zos*, loc.cit:231) and it is of interest that the coloured self-portrait of Spare titled *Prayer* [1906], reproduced opposite the title page in William Wallace's *The Early Work of Austin Osman Spare 1900-1919*, loc.cit, shows the artist wearing a Taoist yin-yang pendant around his neck. Spare makes a very Taoist remark in his posthumously published text *The Living Word of Zos*: 'I believe in the life; in the flesh of infinite variety. We are eternity, with - as now - a fleeting and fluxing consciousness. Possibilities of being are limitless...' See K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks!: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 273.

<sup>156</sup> For an explanation of 'karmas' see fn 162 below.

<sup>157</sup> A.O. Spare, *Axiomata*, loc cit: 19. This publication is not one of Spare's self-published works but a more recent publication based on previously unpublished manuscripts assembled and edited long after his death in 1956.

<sup>158</sup> Spare illustrated these 'karmas' in his graphic compositions. Examples may be found in *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy* [1913] on pages 49 and 57.

<sup>159</sup> A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, loc.cit: 52-53.

<sup>160</sup> Letchford provides these dates in his foreword to William Wallace, *The Early Work of Austin Osman Spare 1900-1919*, loc cit.

<sup>161</sup> F.W. Letchford, *From the Inferno to Zos*, loc cit: 161.

<sup>162</sup> The Hindu concept of karma is based on the principle of cause and effect, and states that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The renowned Indian spiritual teacher Vivekananda (1862-1902) described karma as 'the eternal assertion of human freedom...our thoughts, our words and deeds are the threads of the net which we throw around ourselves.' In Hindu philosophy the law of karma extends beyond the physical world into the mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of life and applies not only to physical actions but to every conscious thought and action that arises in everyday life. According to the karmic philosophy of life, positive thoughts and actions produce a positive outcome and create good karma. Negative thoughts and actions result in negative outcomes and create bad karma. Austin Spare may have developed his interest in karma through reading the Theosophical writings of Madame H.P. Blavatsky and Annie Besant.

<sup>163</sup> K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, Muller, London 1975: 9.

<sup>164</sup> K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 10.

<sup>165</sup> Quoted in G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 7

<sup>166</sup> K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 21.

<sup>167</sup> Grant's close friendship with Spare, and their voluminous correspondence, are documented in K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks!: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit.

<sup>168</sup> K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 23.

<sup>169</sup> A.O. Spare, *Earth: Inferno* [1905], loc cit.

<sup>170</sup> K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit:71.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid:73.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, loc.cit: 6.

<sup>174</sup> Nevertheless, Steffi Grant claims in her Introduction to *Zos Speaks!* that Spare had numerous lovers. Many of them were local women who also modelled for him. Grant writes that 'He said that until he was forty-five he never thought of anything except sex; that he was seriously in love every single week. He must have been very attractive to women, and never found any difficulties in satisfying his desires.' See K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks!: Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 18.

<sup>175</sup> To this extent, Spare's approach resembles the Thelemic sex magic of Aleister Crowley, discussed in Chapter Three. However, Spare was already developing his Zos/Kia cosmology as early as 1906 ( elements of



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it appear in *Earth: Inferno*) so it would appear that Spare did not derive his sexual practice from Crowley, even though he was briefly a member of Crowley's sex-magic order, the Argenteum Astrum, 1909-1910.

<sup>176</sup> K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 61.

<sup>177</sup> A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, loc.cit: 48.

<sup>178</sup> In *The Focus of Life*, Spare actually defines it in these terms: the Death Posture, he writes is 'a simulation of death by the utter negation of thought.' See A.O. Spare, *The Focus of Life* [1921], Askin Publishers, London 1976:18.

<sup>179</sup> A.O. Spare, *Metamorphosis by Death Posture*, quoted in K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit:61.

<sup>180</sup> G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 29.

<sup>181</sup> In *The Book of Pleasure*, Spare writes: 'Magical obsession is that state when the mind is illuminated by sub-conscious activity evoked voluntarily by formulae at our own time, etc. for inspiration. It is the condition of Genius.' (p.41)...The chief cause of genius is realization of "I" by an emotion that allows the lightning assimilation of what is perceived...Its most excellent state is the "Neither-Neither" [Kia], the free or atmospheric "I" (p.43)...My formula and Sigils for sub-conscious activity are the means of inspiration, capacity or genius, and the means of accelerating evolution.' (p.48), loc cit.

<sup>182</sup> G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit:26.

<sup>183</sup> A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, loc.cit: 7.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Spare says specifically that the Self is the 'Neither-Neither'. It is the Absolute because it transcends duality. See A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, loc.cit: 33.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid: 18.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> In *The Book of Pleasure*, Spare writes with regard to the Death Posture: 'Let him practise it daily, accordingly, till he arrives at the centre of desire.' loc.cit:19.

<sup>190</sup> F.W. Letchford, *Inferno to Zos*, loc.cit:119.

<sup>191</sup> The first publication of one of Spare's pictographic magical sigils appears in the illustration 'Existence', included in *A Book of Satyrs*, 1907. The illustration itself is dated 1906 and also includes the motif of the vulture-head, one of Spare's symbols for Kia. However, as Robert Ansell has pointed out in a personal communication to the author (June 2007), sigils do not appear in Spare's art throughout his career. For the most part they are a feature of his art between 1909 and 1912, and much later, between 1948 and 1956.

<sup>192</sup> As Gavin Semple astutely observes, 'A sigillic language enables the sorcerer to think in symbols... allowing consciousness to prevade hitherto occluded regions; the sigil acts as a "courier" in the transference across the threshold.' See G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, London 1995: 33.

<sup>193</sup> A.O. Spare, 'Mind to Mind and How' in *Two Tracts on Cartomancy*, Fulgur, London 1997: 32.

<sup>194</sup> A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, loc.cit: 48.

<sup>195</sup> Gavin W. Semple's edition of Spare's *Two Tracts on Cartomancy* (Fulgur, London 1997) contains a text written by Spare himself. It is titled *Mind to Mind and How* 'by a Sorcerer', and makes reference to the rationale underpinning Spare's magic of Zos/Kia: 'The law of sorcery is its own law, using sympathetic symbols' (page 31).

<sup>196</sup> According to Kenneth Grant, Spare regarded elementals as a 'dissociated part of the subconsciousness'. See K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Spare*, loc cit: 22. Gavin Semple similarly defines 'elemental automata' as 'residual fragments of consciousness, independent and motivated within a specific field of activity and influence. Once rendered perceptible these are delegated by the sorcerer to new functions according to intent.' See G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, London 1995:48.

<sup>197</sup> In his introduction to the 1975 facsimile reprint of *The Book of Pleasure* (93 Publishing, Quebec) Kenneth Grant writes: 'Towards the end of his life, when Spare lived more or less reclusively in a Dickensian South London slum, he was asked whether he regretted his lonely existence. "Lonely !," he exclaimed, and with a

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sweep of his arm he indicated the host of unseen elementals and familiar spirits that were his constant companions; he had but to turn his head to catch a fleeting glimpse of their subtle presences.'

<sup>198</sup> G.W. Semple, 'A Few Leaves from the Devil's Picture Book' in A.O. Spare, *Two Tracts on Cartomancy*, Fulgur, London 1997:21.

<sup>199</sup> Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535) first published his text in 1533 and an English translation appeared in 1651. A revised edition of Book One ('Natural Magic') of *Occult Philosophy or Magic*, edited by Willis F. Whitehead, was published in 1897 and would have been accessible to Spare. This particular edition was subsequently reissued by Aquarian Press, London, in 1971. Agrippa's so-called *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy* was issued as a limited-edition facsimile reprint by Askin Publishers, London in 1978.

<sup>200</sup> G.W. Semple, 'A Few Leaves from the Devil's Picture Book', loc.cit:21.

<sup>201</sup> See H.C. Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy or Magic* [1533], ed. W.F. Whitehead, Aquarian Press, London 1971: 113.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, loc.cit: 50.

<sup>204</sup> Exhaustion could be brought about in a variety of ways. Spare cites 'Mantras and Posture, Women and Wine, Tennis, and the playing of Patience, or by walking and concentration on the Sigil etc. etc.' See A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, loc.cit: 51.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid: 45.

<sup>207</sup> Kenneth Grant's account of atavistic resurgence, first published in *Man, Myth and Magic*, vol.6, Marshall Cavendish, London 1970, is quoted in N. Drury and S. Skinner, *The Search for Abraxas*, London 1972: 66.

<sup>208</sup> The pastel portrait *Elemental Materialisation* is reproduced in colour as Plate 17 in the gallery catalogue *Austin Osman Spare 1886-1956: The Divine Draughtsman*, prepared by Geraldine Beskin and John Bonner to coincide with an exhibition of Spare's works at the Morley Gallery, London 1987. The pastel, which is owned by Jimmy Page, guitarist with the well-known rock-group Led Zeppelin, was included in the exhibition.

<sup>209</sup> K. Grant, *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 37.

<sup>210</sup> Kenneth Grant writes in his introduction to Spare's *Book of Zos vel Thanatos*: 'Spare's relationship to the Surrealist Movement, which he claims to have anticipated by at least a decade, remains to be explained. The Movement was a phenomenon of major occult importance. It not only explored and explicated the creative potential of the subconscious, it also influenced powerfully the direction of the Arts, bringing to the fore the subjective treatment of external 'reality'. The Movement was, of course, intimately related to the researches of Freud, whose exploration of subconscious mechanisms fired the Surrealists to experiment with the method of 'free association'. Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* was first published in English translation in 1913, the year in which *The Book of Pleasure* (1909-1913) appeared. The latter showed that Spare's knowledge of the predominating role of the Subconsciousness in Art and Sorcery had already matured and was well in place by the time his book appeared.' See K. and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks ! : Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 158.

<sup>211</sup> An observation forwarded by Robert Ansell, June 2007.

<sup>212</sup> A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure (Self-Love): The Psychology of Ecstasy*, loc.cit: 47.

<sup>213</sup> G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, loc cit: 31.

<sup>214</sup> A.O. Spare, *The Logomachy of Zos*, an unpublished manuscript quoted in G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 31.

<sup>215</sup> F.W. Letchford, *Inferno to Zos*, loc cit: 161-163.

<sup>216</sup> G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 37.

<sup>217</sup> The article appeared in issue no.1, volume 1 of *Form*, April 1916, and was re-published in a facsimile edition by 93 Publishing, South Stukely, Quebec, Canada in 1979, in an edition of 250 copies.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> I. Law, introduction to A.O.Spare, *A Book of Automatic Drawing*, Catalpa Press, London 1972.

<sup>220</sup> See R. Ansell, introduction to A.O.Spare, *The Book of Ugly Ecstasy*, Fulgur, London 1996.

<sup>221</sup> A.O. Spare, *The Witches' Sabbath*, Fulgur, London 1992:5.

<sup>222</sup> R. Ansell, introduction to A.O.Spare, *The Book of Ugly Ecstasy*, loc cit.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> In *The Book of Pleasure* Spare writes: 'Magical obsession is that state when the mind is illuminated by sub-conscious activity evoked voluntarily by formula at our own time, etc. for inspiration. It is the condition of genius.' A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure*, London 1913: 41.

<sup>226</sup> Spare appears to admit this in *The Book of Pleasure* when he writes : 'Depending on its degree of intensity and resistance shown at some time or another, the Ego has or has not knowledge of the obsession; *always is its expression autonomous, divorced from personal control.*' [my emphasis in italics] See A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure*, loc. cit: 41.

<sup>227</sup> 'Possession' is a term used in both anthropological and esoteric literature to describe a situation where a trance medium believes he or she has become 'possessed' by a spirit or discarnate entity which then takes over aspects of the personality either totally or in part, and appears to operate independently of the person concerned. Spirit possession is a feature of voodoo and modern spiritualism.

<sup>228</sup> A claim supported by the distinguished British surrealist, Ithell Colquhoun: note to the author from Robert Ansell, June 2007.

<sup>229</sup> Norton clearly aligns herself with the 'Left-Hand Path' in her interview with D.L. Thompson and uses this expression in the second half of the article, which she wrote herself (see D.L. Thompson, 'Devil Worship Here', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 6 October 1955: 370). Research scholar Richard Sutcliffe has recently described the 'Left-Hand Path' as 'an umbrella term of self-designation used by certain contemporary ritual magicians and is usually taken to incorporate practitioners of Thelemic magick (beginning with Aleister Crowley), Tantric magick, and Chaos Magick (inspired by both Crowley and the magickal techniques devised by the occult artist Austin O.Spare, 1886-1956). The notion of the Left-Hand Path is derived from the Tantric term *vama-marga* ('left-path'), ie. the Left-Hand Path in Tantrism.' See R. Sutcliffe, 'Left-Hand Path Ritual Magick' in G. Harvey and C. Hardman, *Pagan Pathways*, Thorsons, London 2000:110.

<sup>230</sup> A.O. Spare, *The Logomachy of Zos*, in K.and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks! : Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, London 1998: 184

<sup>231</sup> Ibid: 169.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid: 168.

<sup>233</sup> G.W. Semple, *Zos-Kia: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, London 1995: 26.

<sup>234</sup> A.O. Spare, *The Logomachy of Zos*, loc.cit: 172.

<sup>235</sup> Spare writes: 'I believe in the Eternity of the Ego whether I am carnate, discarnate, reincarnate or whatever metamorphosis I suffer. For I am *change* and forever ultimate, however I may appear.' A.O. Spare, *The Living Word of Zos*, in K.and S. Grant, *Zos Speaks! : Encounters with Austin Osman Spare*, loc.cit: 172

<sup>236</sup> This drawing is *The Adversary*, reproduced as Plate XVI in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc cit: 47.

<sup>237</sup> As Spare notes in *The Logomachy of Zos*, 'My gods have grown with me...they are my potentials.' See A.O. Spare, *The Logomachy of Zos*, loc.cit: 188.

<sup>238</sup> M.M. Jungkurth, 'Neither-Neither: Austin Spare and the Underworld', in *Austin Osman Spare: Artist, Occultist, Sensualist*, Beskin Press, London 1999.

<sup>239</sup> R. Norton, *Supplement to The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Walter Glover, Sydney 1984: 1.

<sup>240</sup> K. Sarmiala-Berger, 'Rosaleen Norton – a Painter of Occult and Mystical Pictures' in *Overland*, 162, Autumn 2001: 62.

## Chapter Seven

### THEORIES AND DEFINITIONS OF MAGIC

Having presented data relating to Rosaleen Norton's magical beliefs and cosmology in Chapters Four and Five it is appropriate to consider a range of formal academic definitions of magic, most of them obtained from anthropological and sociological sources, and then to compare these academic descriptions of the magician's world with a range of comparable definitions and commentaries provided by influential magical practitioners themselves. The latter include practising ceremonial magicians like Aleister Crowley and Dion Fortune,<sup>1</sup> whose published works, as noted earlier, are known to have influenced Norton herself.

Some of the key issues which arise in making a comparison of this sort include an evaluation of the central characteristics of magic as perceived by 'outsiders' and 'insiders' in relation to magical belief and practice; an increased understanding of the relationship between magic and religion and, in turn, the possibility of identifying both the similarities and essential differences, if any, between magical and religious perspectives within their specific social and spiritual contexts.

The relationship between magic and science is also of interest. While many academic authors writing about magic have come to view magic as a form of pre-science, pseudo-science or superstition, there may yet prove to be some sort of common ground – as noted in Chapter Four where connections between Norton's dissociative 'astral plane' experiences and medical specialist Dr Pim van Lommel's quantum theory of consciousness – proposed as a scientific model to explain near-death experiences – were discussed. To some extent perceptions of magic may also reflect changing paradigms of thought. A classic case of variant perceptions is provided by British historian Sir Keith Thomas who prefaces his well-known work, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971) with these remarks:

...this book began in an attempt to make sense of some of the systems of belief which were current in sixteenth- and seventeenth- century England, but which no longer enjoy much recognition today. Astrology, witchcraft, magical healing, divination, ancient prophecies, ghosts and fairies, are now all rightly disdained by intelligent persons. But they were taken seriously by equally intelligent persons in the past, and it is the historian's business to explain why this was so.<sup>2</sup>

In making these remarks, Thomas appears to have been totally unaware of the rise of the American counterculture and New Age movement that had blossomed across the Atlantic shortly before this preface was written, and he was possibly also unaware that the noted poet and Nobel Prize-winner W.B. Yeats – presumably an ‘intelligent person’ – was at one time a leading member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, an occult organisation which, as noted in Chapter Two, was specifically associated with the *rebirth* of magic (in the 20<sup>th</sup> century) and not with its decline.

Similar perceptions denying the legitimacy of magical thought can also be found in much of the anthropological literature, as I will show later in this chapter. However it soon becomes apparent that within the modern context at least, *academic* perceptions of magic and *practitioner* perceptions of magic are often far removed from each other. The anthropological dilemma is then whether to accept *emic*, or subjective, interpretations of modern and contemporary magic – interpretations which acknowledge the validity of the magical beliefs and perceptions of the practitioner – or adopt reductionist *etic* models of explanation that impose external ‘objective’ frameworks of analysis onto the data. The *emic/etic* distinction is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter but the key point I wish to emphasize here – a point I have also made in my introduction – is that many modern occultists are highly literate and are able to express their magical convictions and beliefs both competently and lucidly. The challenge from an academic perspective is to distil meaning and context from metaphysical and spiritual perspectives that are largely unfamiliar and sometimes far removed from current trends in intellectual debate and analysis.

### ***Anthropological perspectives on magic***

Because magic has traditionally been associated with pre-literate social groups and cultures around the world, much of the classical academic literature on magic has been written by anthropologists and social theorists. As the following commentaries will indicate, social theorists have responded to the data on magic in a variety of different ways. Academic responses to magic – and also religion – include the late 19<sup>th</sup> century *evolutionary* approach, which sought common threads in the development of magical and religious systems (a perspective associated especially with Frazer and Tylor); the *functional* approach, which focused on the relationship of magic and religion to the structure and survival of society (Durkheim, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown), and the *psychosocial* approach, which has been concerned with the relationship between culture and personality and the connection between the society and the individual

(Evans-Pritchard, Freud, Spiro, et al.).<sup>3</sup> All of these perspectives continue to influence current anthropological thought in varying degrees. Some theorists have related the existence of magic in pre-literate societies to the control of Nature and to specific social needs (Middleton, Evans-Pritchard, Geertz, Faivre and Needleman); others have seen magic as providing an apparent means of resolving and/or escaping from situations where there was no rational or empirical solution to a problem (Malinowski and Luhrmann). Some theorists regard magic as essentially subversive (O'Keefe) and, in some instances specifically evil (Lessa and Vogt) or profane (Durkheim). For some, the worlds of magic and religion are clear and distinct (Frazer, Malinowski, Durkheim) whereas for others there is an undoubted sense of overlap (Levi-Strauss, Kieckhefer, Titiev, Hsu) – see below.

Frazer held that, in the evolution of social forms and intellectual ideas, magic preceded both religion and science, whereas O'Keefe – a contemporary social theorist – maintains that magic everywhere derives from earlier religious traditions and that science follows on from magic in the evolution of ideas.<sup>4</sup> Frazer considered magic to be a form of pseudo-science, whereas for Malinowski and Durkheim magic is distinct from science in several key respects and cannot be considered strictly as a scientific precursor. Jahoda associates magical thought with superstition and maintains that it usually arises during times of great stress and uncertainty.<sup>5</sup> Overriding all of this debate has been the implicit assumption that magical thinking is a precursor of scientific thought and that it has no place of value in modern society, especially when we consider that since the Enlightenment – theoretically at least – Western cultures have been associated with reason and rationality.<sup>6</sup>

### ***Magic and Nature***

Key aspects involving the relationship between magic and the natural world were identified by Frazer in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and outlined in his classic work, *The Golden Bough*, first published in 1890. Here Frazer proposed the *Law of Sympathy*, which states that magic depends upon the apparent association between various phenomena. This law in turn creates two further sub-laws: the *Law of Similarity*, which states that things that resemble each other are essentially the same, and the *Law of Contagion*, which states that things that were once in contact continue to be connected even after the connection is severed.<sup>7</sup> The Law of Similarity gives rise to *imitative magic*, whereas the Law of Contagion gives rise to *contagious magic*.<sup>8</sup> In addition, academics and practitioners generally agree that in the

magical world, which is essentially holistic, all events and phenomena – both natural and ‘supernatural’ – are perceived as being either directly or indirectly interconnected.

Contemporary anthropologist Susan Greenwood (2005) concurs that magical thinking creates connections between phenomena and events ‘through forces and influences unseen but real’<sup>9</sup> and Faivre and Needleman similarly observe that magic is ‘at once the knowledge of a network of sympathies or antipathies which bind the things of Nature and the concrete implementation of this knowledge’.<sup>10</sup> For Middleton, this allows magic to be employed as a means of controlling Nature, which in turn maintains social cohesion.

In pre-literate societies a belief in magic leads human beings to believe that they can affect Nature for either good or evil purposes – even though they may not understand the actual mechanisms that bring about these results. For this reason, according to Middleton, witchcraft, sorcery, magic, oracular consultation, divination and even many forms of curing, are all closely related.<sup>11</sup> Evans-Pritchard, meanwhile, has suggested that specific ritual forms can be utilised to address social needs in a recurrent pattern from one generation to the next:

To peoples such as the Trobrianders and the Maori the spell is a rigid unalterable formula which is transmitted intact from generation to generation, and the slightest deviation from its traditional form would invalidate the magic....Knowledge of the magic is knowledge of the spell, the ritual centres round it, it is always the core of the magical performance.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Magic as the solution to a problem***

On the basis of his extensive anthropological fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands, Malinowski came to believe that both religion and magic could help individuals endure situations of emotional stress by opening up escapes from situations and impassés that offered ‘*no empirical way out* except by ritual and belief into the domain of the supernatural’.<sup>13</sup> Influenced initially by Frazer’s *Golden Bough* and later by functionalist models of analysis, Malinowski recognised the significance of the relationship between individual psychology and the cultural and social value of magic. According to Malinowski, magic was essentially about problem-solving:

Magic is to be expected and generally to be found whenever man comes to an unbridgeable gap, a hiatus in his knowledge or in his powers of practical control,

and yet has to continue in his pursuit.... His fears and hopes, his general anxiety, produce a state of unstable equilibrium in his organism, by which he is driven to some sort of vicarious activity.<sup>14</sup>

In this way, according to Malinowski, magic helps bridge the gulf between empirical reality and uncertainty, allowing the individual to plan for the future and hopefully foresee any unexpected turn of natural events.

According to this perspective, magic helps the practitioner to 'master accident and to ensnare luck'.<sup>15</sup> The contemporary American researcher, T.M.Luhrmann, author of a recent anthropological study of modern ritual magic in England (1989), takes a view similar to that of Malinowski, even though the magic she is writing about – witchcraft in a contemporary urban setting – relates to a sophisticated form of magical practice associated as much with the subjective inner world of human beliefs and feelings as it is with the external world of practical causes and effects. Luhrmann writes:

Magic is about controlling the uncontrollable world. Esoteric knowledge serves a protective role...It is deeply therapeutic, for it gives the magician some access to his private, perhaps frightening, inner life, offers the hope of compelling those feelings rather than being controlled by them, and provides the symbolic forum through which those personal feelings can be confronted, identified and to some extent understood.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Magic as subversive or evil***

In a commentary on magic and witchcraft included in their anthology, *Reader in Comparative Religion: an Anthropological Approach* (1972), anthropologists Lessa and Vogt define occult beliefs and practices in much starker terms, arguing that 'witchcraft is the exercise of evil through an immanent power'. They also provide the bleak assessment that 'whereas magic may be either malevolent or beneficent, witchcraft is invariably evil'<sup>17</sup> – a view clearly at odds with practitioner perceptions of contemporary witchcraft (see especially the views of Starhawk, Chapter Two). Durkheim, in a somewhat surprising and completely negative generalization, similarly notes that 'magic takes a sort of professional pleasure in profaning holy things'<sup>18</sup> and the contemporary social theorist D.L.O'Keefe also regards magic as basically subversive:

Magic borrows religious scripts and then uses them to argue with religion, to bend and challenge them...The limit of magic is black magic which reverses every value of religion and appears utterly hostile to it. But this tendency is present in all magic: all the provinces of magic have an antinomian thrust. Even quasi-official ceremonial magic and the magic that is part of religion have an anti-religious potential that must be carefully curbed.<sup>19</sup>



We have already explored antinomian elements in modern Western magic in Chapter Three, identifying them as characteristic of the Left-Hand Path in modern occultism. Antinomianism is by no means intrinsic to modern magic *per se* but O’Keefe, Lessa and Vogt seem intent on focusing primarily on the confrontational elements in magical practice, which are usually associated with sorcery; they ignore the more positive, transformative *theurgic* practices that are associated, for example, with rites of initiation, spiritual rebirth and mystical transcendence (see especially the data on the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn described in Chapter Two). Interestingly, the distinguished psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud also held a profoundly negative view of the occult. In his autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1961) Carl Jung reports details of a fascinating conversation he had with Freud in 1910. The first part of the conversation had to do with Freud’s psycho-sexual theory of repressed material in the human unconscious but later the conversation switched to Freud’s view of the occult:

I can still recall vividly how Freud said to me, ‘My dear Jung, promise me never to abandon the sexual theory. That is the most essential thing of all. You see, we must make a dogma of it, an unshakable bulwark.’ He said that to me with great emotion...In some astonishment I asked him, ‘A bulwark – against what?’ To which he replied, ‘Against the black tide of mud’ – and here he hesitated for a moment, then added – ‘of occultism.’ What Freud seemed to mean by ‘occultism’ was virtually everything that philosophy and religion, including the rising contemporary science of parapsychology, had learned about the psyche.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Magic and religion***

The classic distinction between magic and religion described by Frazer in *The Golden Bough* remains influential among academics as well as magical practitioners<sup>21</sup> but debate about several of Frazer’s fundamental claims remains unresolved. Frazer maintained that magic represented the earliest phase of development in the intellectual evolution of humanity – a prejudice that continues to the present day, as exemplified by the quotation from Sir Keith Thomas, referred to earlier. Frazer also believed that an important difference between magic and religion could be discerned in their different approaches to the supernatural universe. Religious views acknowledged a range of potentially ‘variable’ outcomes in Nature: religious devotees could call on their deities to *modify* the outcomes associated with future events, whereas the magical view of the world was necessarily more impersonal and tied in with essentially *unchanging*,

almost ‘*mechanistic*’, laws in the natural world that the magician could theoretically harness:

Religion assumes the world to be directed by conscious agents who may be turned from their purpose by persuasion [and] stands in fundamental antagonism to magic as well as to science, both of which take for granted that the course of nature is determined, not by the passions or caprice of personal beings, but by the operation of immutable laws acting mechanically.<sup>22</sup>

Frazer distinguished between magicians – who believed they could *compel* supernatural beings to act in their favour – and religious priests who adopted a more humble *supplicatory* approach to the divine powers.<sup>23</sup> He also identified magic as a *precursor* of religion – indeed, its very foundation – and believed that in modern times it survived only among the so-called ‘ignorant classes’:

Ancient magic was the very foundation of religion. The faithful who desired to obtain some favour from a god had no chance of succeeding except by laying hands on the deity, and this arrest could only be effected by means of a certain number of rites, sacrifices, prayers and chants, which the god himself had revealed, and which obliged him to do what was demanded of him. Among the ignorant classes of modern Europe the same confusion of ideas, the same mixture of religion and magic, crops up in various forms...<sup>24</sup>

The pioneering French sociologist Émile Durkheim supported Frazer’s distinction between magic and religion and added a further two-fold distinction of his own, maintaining that magic tended to be an activity associated with individuals who had a ‘clientele’, whereas religions were associated with priests, churches and communities. According to Durkheim, all aspects of human activity could be classified as either *sacred* or *profane*<sup>25</sup> and only religious acts could truly be deemed ‘sacred’. Durkheim defined religion as a ‘unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them...religion should be an eminently collective thing.’<sup>26</sup> He also drew a clear line between religion and magic, contrasting their communal and individualistic aspects:

There is no Church of magic. Between the individuals themselves...there are no lasting bonds...The magician has a clientele and not a Church, and it is very possible that his clients have no other relations between each other...It is true that in certain cases, magicians form societies...but when these societies of magic are formed, they do not include all the adherents of magic, but only the magicians: the laymen...are excluded.<sup>27</sup>

Durkheim's distinction between the sacred and the profane has remained influential: theorists who have adopted this perspective include Spiro, Pandian and Evans-Pritchard.<sup>28</sup> However Titiev and Hsu (1960) maintain that the line of demarcation between magic and religion is not as clear-cut as Frazer and Durkheim have suggested.<sup>29</sup> Hsu has commented that 'whichever criterion we employ, we are led to the conclusion that magic and religion, instead of being treated as mutually exclusive entities, must be grouped together as magico-religion or magico-religious phenomena'<sup>30</sup> Hsu's position is supported by other influential theorists like Levi-Strauss and Kieckhefer, who similarly believe that the dividing line between magic and religion is blurred and indistinct. Levi-Strauss notes that '...all ritual trends towards magic',<sup>31</sup> further observing that 'there is no religion without magic any more than there is magic without at least a trace of religion.'<sup>32</sup> Kieckhefer, a specialist in medieval magic, similarly notes that co-existent blends of magical and religious practice are quite common:

Magic is connected in multiple ways with mainstream religious practice: prayers are recited over magical herbs, gospel verses are written on bread and then scraped into potions, charms can be virtually identical in form sometimes to blessings and sometimes to exorcisms and the exorcisms used to dispel demons can with the necessary adjustments be made to summon them as well.<sup>33</sup>

### ***Magic and science***

If the apparently clear line of demarcation between magic and religion is less distinct than Frazer and Durkheim would have us believe, Frazer's identification of magic as a form of 'pseudo science'<sup>34</sup> has also aroused ongoing debate. Like Frazer, O'Keefe regards magic as 'transitional to logical thought'.<sup>35</sup> Lessa and Vogt similarly maintain that 'magic is analogous to science in its use but its premises – its theoretical bases – are supernatural and antithetical to science.'<sup>36</sup> Lévi-Strauss views magic as 'a timid and stuttering form of science'<sup>37</sup> but while he clearly regards magic as intellectually inferior to science, he nevertheless makes the point that, within its given context, magic

forms a well-articulated system, and is in this respect independent of that other system which constitutes science, except for the purely formal analogy which brings them together and makes the former a sort of metaphorical expression of the latter. It is therefore better, instead of contrasting magic and science, to compare them as two parallel modes of acquiring knowledge.'<sup>38</sup>

Malinowski supports Frazer's concept of the 'sympathetic' and 'contagious' principles in magic but emphasizes that even 'primitive'

peoples have their own form of *empirical science* which they then distinguish from 'magic'. Malinowski therefore rejects Frazer's notion of magic as 'pseudo-science':

Magic unquestionably is dominated by the sympathetic principle: like produces like; the whole is affected if the sorcerer acts on a part of it; occult influences can be imparted by contagion... [but] sympathy is not the basis of pragmatic science, even under the most primitive conditions. The savage knows scientifically that a small pointed stick of hard wood rubbed or drilled against a piece of soft, brittle wood, provided they are both dry, gives fire... There is no sympathy, no similarity, no taking the part instead of the legitimate whole, no contagion. The only association or connection is the empirical, correctly observed and correctly framed concatenation of natural events.<sup>39</sup>

### ***O'Keefe's challenge to Frazer's evolutionary sequence***

In *The Golden Bough* Frazer describes what he regards as an evolutionary progression of ideas from magic through religion to science.<sup>40</sup> However, in *Stolen Lightning: the Social Theory of Magic* (1983) O'Keefe maintains that Frazer's proposed evolutionary sequence of magic / religion / science, as outlined in *The Golden Bough*, is based on prehistory that 'cannot be proven',<sup>41</sup> and he also argues that the expression *magico-religious* (advocated by Hsu and Titiev above) is of no use at all because, in his view, 'it abdicates from the inquiry.'<sup>42</sup> However, O'Keefe clearly believes that an evolutionary sequence of religion / magic / science *can* be demonstrated: his theory follows on from what he terms 'a close reading of Durkheim':<sup>43</sup>

The data prove the thesis in several ways. First, content analysis of magical rites and representation reveals elements which can be traced to immediate or distant religions. Second, throughout the third world we have a vast laboratory in which we can see new magics arising by appropriating religious material. Whatever the unobservable prehistorical sequences, we are confronted every day with these *new* sequences which *can* be observed. And even if the dialectic action gets complicated, as when the magic movements try to turn back into religion, the Durkheim R...M... [Religion....Magic] thesis can be understood as true in a logical sense. Since magic shows itself to be the use of expropriated religious symbolism, religion is logically prior to magic.<sup>44</sup>

According to O'Keefe, religion first arises during the Paleolithic era and is expressed initially in collective totemic representations of society that provide survival value in integrating small human groups. Magical practices associated with specific deities arise later during the Neolithic tribal stage associated with 'generalization of mana', when more complex societies use more general symbols that are easier to expropriate,

extrapolate and apply to individual or profane ends.<sup>45</sup> For O'Keefe, the development of magical thought therefore reflects an evolutionary shift from totemic, communally based religion, associated with Paleolithic bands, through to the emergence of individual self-awareness associated with the Neolithic period. According to O'Keefe, this is demonstrated by the existence of magical rites of initiation that confer new levels of individual status within society:

Just as magic derives from religion, many institutions begin in religion and then go through a transitional magical phase before they are consolidated. This is true of the individual. His nature was born in the membership rites of the tribal religion, but his independence was won by the tribal magic spun off from those rites.<sup>46</sup>

O'Keefe further argues that 'magic arises initially because it has to, to defend the ego against the demonic entities of the holistic-religious world; it is the only way coping with such entities, but it has the effect of gradually changing them...' <sup>47</sup> Magic arises as a response to what O'Keefe describes as the cumulative 'moral pressure' imposed by religion, and attracts those who 'dare to think and speak as individuals'.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, for him this process also has a down-side: the rise of magical thought can only produce negative outcomes, embedding the magical practitioner 'in structures of domination and evil which still further mystify his religious representations and darken his understanding.' <sup>49</sup>

### ***Limitations of anthropological models***

Some of the anthropological perspectives described above relate not only to magic in the pre-literate world but also to the modern, largely urban, magic associated with the Western esoteric tradition. Of particular interest is O'Keefe's controversial notion that religion precedes magic, a theory that receives support from the magic of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, where the historical data (published in Regardie, 1937-1940)<sup>50</sup> shows that practitioners drew freely on imagery from ancient religious pantheons to assist in the formulation of their magical rituals (see Chapter Two). O'Keefe's model is also supported by data relating to the rise of modern Wicca, which draws in turn, as we have seen, on cultural imagery and practices derived largely from the Celtic spiritual tradition.

A further issue in categorising magical phenomena has to do with functional outcomes. It is clear from my descriptions of Rosaleen Norton's magical practices (described in Chapter Five) and Aleister Crowley's doctrine of *Thelema* and other forms of Left-Hand Path magic

(described in Chapter Three), that many contemporary witches and magicians *do* indeed seek specific outcomes through their rituals, so the *pragmatic* or *functional* element identified by Middleton and Evans-Pritchard in relation to pre-literate societies is also clearly present in modern Western magic as well. However, modern Western magic is not concerned only with functional outcomes. Data has been presented in earlier chapters that indicates that some forms of modern occult practice seem more overtly ‘religious’ than ‘magical’, in a Durkheimian sense. How else are we to account for the spiritual quest for rebirth, transcendence and mystical union with the Godhead in the Golden Dawn, or conversely Crowley’s heretical ceremony of the Gnostic Mass? (see Chapters Two and Three respectively)

A recurrent problem with many anthropological critiques of magic arises simply because they focus almost exclusively on patterns of social behaviour and ritual belief in *pre-literate societies*: anthropologists tend to be concerned primarily with various forms of ‘functional’ magic – describing a range of magical acts intended to produce specific outcomes for good or evil within a range of indigenous contexts. In my view this can lead to shortcomings. Even when studying magic in *contemporary urban England* <sup>51</sup> Luhrmann still believed it appropriate to draw on Malinowski’s Trobriand-island model of ‘magical crisis’ reaffirming that, in essence, magic was all about seeking control in an uncontrollable world. Needless to say, Luhrmann’s own data does not uniformly support her conclusion – one of the magical groups studied by Luhrmann (Gareth Knight’s Western Mysteries group) derives its esoteric practices from Dion Fortune’s Fraternity of the Inner Light (see Chapter Two), and its key focus is spiritual rather than functional.

In the parlance of contemporary magical practice ‘outcomes magic’ or ‘results-oriented magic’ is known as ‘*low magic*’. Low magic is associated in modern occult practice with spells, hexes, charms, sorcery, fortune-telling and spiritual healing – and, as mentioned earlier, has a definite place in contemporary magical practice. However a much more significant thrust, especially within the Golden Dawn, Wicca, and the Goddess spirituality movement, involves the practice of *theurgy* – an esoteric and, at times, mystical approach that derives ultimately from the Hermetic and Neo-Platonic traditions. In *theurgy* – or so-called ‘*high magic*’ – practitioners seek to identify visually, mentally and spiritually with a god or goddess in a consecrated ritual setting, thereby endeavouring to incorporate the sacred qualities of that particular deity within their inner being (see Chapter Two).<sup>52</sup> Because the concept of *theurgic* or ‘*high*’ magic does not arise

among pre-literate peoples it has not been addressed by major social theorists like Frazer, Durkheim, Malinowski and Levi-Strauss. Neither has it been adequately addressed in Luhrmann's recent anthropological study of contemporary magic in Britain, referred to above.<sup>53</sup>

Significantly, the distinction between 'low' and 'high' magic is referred to in Ronald Hutton's *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft* (1999),<sup>54</sup> which documents the rise of contemporary witchcraft from a *historical* rather than an *anthropological* perspective. Hutton distinguishes between the 'low magic' tradition of so-called 'cunning' men and women, hexers and fortune-tellers – which survived well into the 19th century as an identifiable, largely rural category – and the tradition of high magic that developed in 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain with the establishment of the Rosicrucian Society in England, and the subsequent rise of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn before giving rise in turn to the modern post-World War Two witchcraft revival in Britain known as Wicca (see Chapter Two).<sup>55</sup>

Finally, in this critique of anthropological approaches to magic, I feel obliged to comment briefly on the familiar stereotypes of the 'wicked witch' and 'magic as pseudo-science' referred to earlier. Lessa and Vogt's notion that witchcraft is 'invariably evil' is not reflected by data from the history and practice of contemporary Wicca and Goddess worship (see Chapter Two) and Frazer's notion of magic as a form of pseudo-science has little or no relevance to our present inquiry unless we are willing to discard the now substantial body of scientific research into near-death and out-of-the-body experiences that appears highly relevant to Norton's concept of the 'astral plane' (see Chapter Four).

### ***Participant observation***

In his article on anthropological approaches to religion in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Social Science* (1998) William H. Swatos poses a question that in the present context is highly relevant: can a religion be fully understood only from the perspective of the believer? The same question could be asked of many modern magical practitioners who have embraced esoteric beliefs that extend well beyond the range of familiar religious doctrines. Swatos responds to his own rhetorical question as follows:

While a number of leading psychologists and sociologists of religion are themselves adherents to the faiths they study, the overwhelming majority of anthropologists are sceptics. Most anthropologists are materialists and reductionists. They would find

themselves in strong agreement with Firth <sup>56</sup> who contends that ‘there is truth in every religion. But it is a human not a divine truth.’<sup>57</sup>

Swatos also notes that a number of anthropologists have insisted that religions can only be grasped from “within”.<sup>58</sup> The same point could also be made about a number of contemporary anthropologists who, in recent times, have explored magical beliefs and practices as ‘insiders’. They include Jeanne Favret-Saada (1980),<sup>59</sup> who studied witchcraft in the Bocage region of Normandy; Paul Stoller (1987),<sup>60</sup> who became an apprentice to Songhay sorcerers; Lynne Hume (1997),<sup>61</sup> who researched Wicca and neo-paganism as a participant with various groups in Australia; Susan Greenwood (2000, 2005),<sup>62</sup> who became a Wiccan priestess in England, and Nikki Bado-Fralick (2005),<sup>63</sup> who is currently both an academic and a high priestess in a witchcraft coven in Ohio. This brings us back to the *emic/etic* distinction referred to earlier, and specifically to a consideration of the value of the *emic* approach in anthropological research – *emic* research orienting itself by definition towards what Alex Anton-Luca has referred to as ‘an insider’s point of view’.<sup>64</sup>

The terms *emic* and *etic* were first proposed by the anthropological linguist Kenneth Pike and were further developed by the sociocultural anthropologist Marvin Harris.<sup>65</sup> Essentially they relate to issues of subjectivity and objectivity in anthropological research. ‘Emic’ derives from the word *phonemic*, a linguistic term that refers to the categories of sounds used by native speakers to understand and create meaningful utterances. ‘Etic’ is from the linguistic term *phonetic*, referring to the acoustic properties of sounds discernible through linguistic analysis.<sup>66</sup> Harris is quite specific in describing their application to the study of cultural anthropology:

**Emic** operations have as their hallmark the elevation of the native informant to the status of ultimate judge of the adequacy of the observer’s descriptions and analyses. The test of the adequacy of **emic** analyses is their ability to generate statements the native accepts as real, meaningful, or appropriate...**Etic** operations have as their hallmark the elevation of observers to the status of ultimate judges of the categories and concepts used in descriptions and analyses. The test of the adequacy of **etic** accounts is simply their ability to generate scientifically productive theories about the causes of sociocultural differences and similarities.<sup>67</sup>

Harris himself was in no doubt as to which was the superior method. According to Harris the value of the *etic* approach was that it allowed the anthropologist to establish ‘the social nature of truth’ in an objective and



scientific fashion, whereas *emic* approaches, in his opinion, were invariably ‘relativistic’. As Harris succinctly explains:

‘...the participant observer can never find the truth of the lived experience, apart from the consensus about such things found in the community in which the observer participates.’<sup>68</sup>

Harris also makes specific reference to the ‘obscurantist’ approach adopted by some anthropologists with regard to various forms of contemporary esoteric and religious practice:

Obscurantism is an important component in the emics of astrology, witchcraft, messianism, hippiedom, fundamentalism, cults of personality, nationalism, ethnocentrism, and a hundred other contemporary modes of thought that exalt knowledge gained by inspiration, revelation, intuition, faith, or incantation as against knowledge obtained in conformity with scientific research principles. Philosophers and social scientists are implicated both as leaders and as followers in the popular success of these celebrations of non-scientific knowledge, and in the strong anti-scientific components they contain.<sup>69</sup>

Harris’s point is well taken, whether one agrees with it or not, but it is ultimately of little assistance in solving the vexed issue of how to legitimately research contemporary magical consciousness in general, and Rosaleen Norton’s trance magic and visionary art-making processes in particular. Harris refers to the study of altered states of consciousness in *Cultural Materialism* (1979), noting that the

ecstatic knowledge of mystics and saints, the visions and hallucinations of drug users and schizophrenics, and the aesthetic insights of artists, poets, and musicians are certainly not obscurantist merely because they are not based on scientific research principles. The issue of obscurantism arises only when knowledge obtained through non-scientific means is deliberately used to cast doubt on the authenticity of scientific knowledge...<sup>70</sup>

One senses something of an impasse here – for Harris would certainly not have regarded Norton’s cosmological explanation of trance states and god-forms (detailed in her interview with L.J. Murphy) as being based on sound scientific principles. Nevertheless, despite the obvious difficulties in engaging with the complex, and at times seemingly impenetrable mysteries associated with altered states of consciousness – including visionary and mystical states of awareness – scientific research in these areas continues to progress as a result of the serious efforts undertaken by a small number of highly regarded medical specialists, neuroscientists and transpersonal researchers.<sup>71</sup>

A more sympathetic view than that of Marvin Harris – one which seeks to bridge the apparent gulf between the magical realm and the world of legitimate academic research – is provided by Australian anthropologist Lynne Hume (1997), one of the participant observers referred to above. Hume recognized the appeal of the ‘non-rational’ for many of the neo-pagan practitioners she was researching and found a process of reflexive enquiry especially valuable. Hume says she became ‘conscious of being conscious’ while reflecting on her own process of observing, and endeavoured to merge her academic, logical self with the imaginative, fantasy realm of her informants.<sup>72</sup> Hume has since come to believe that a phenomenological [or substantially *emic*] approach is extremely useful in researching magical beliefs and practices:

To my mind, the most appropriate approach to the study of belief systems is a phenomenological one which aims at moving beyond the constraints of structural functional analysis, and even beyond semiotic symbolic anthropology which treats accounts as texts to be analysed in terms of their meaning. A phenomenological approach aims at an objective descriptive analysis, and a systematic evaluation of the *essence* of a belief system, endeavouring to perceive the devotee’s conception of truth in order to assess what is meaningful to the devotee, without raising questions of its ultimate status in reality...as a phenomenologist one suspends disbelief without accepting the totality of the informants’ worlds as one’s own.<sup>73</sup>

British anthropologist Susan Greenwood describes the world of magic and fantasy as the ‘otherworld’ and, like Lynne Hume, has adopted a reflexive approach in engaging with the beliefs and practices of her fellow magical practitioners. ‘My contention,’ she writes, ‘is that if an anthropologist wants to examine “magic” then she or he must directly experience the otherworld.’<sup>74</sup> Greenwood maintains that it is important to regard magic and the otherworld as serious subjects worthy of study in their own right and that they should not simply be reduced to the level of metaphors or conceptual devices. For her, magical energies and occult deities are constituent elements in the holistic world of the Pagan practitioner and deserve respect, even if at times they may seem irrational.<sup>75</sup> Greenwood also recognises the intangible nature of altered states of consciousness and acknowledges the part they play in modern Western magic:

Paganism is an umbrella term for a number of diverse groups and practices...These disparate groups have varying mythologies and cosmologies, but all share a common uniting belief in communication with an ‘otherworld’ – a realm of deities, spirits or other beings experienced in an alternative state of consciousness. The otherworld is viewed as part of a holistic totality co-existent with ordinary, everyday reality; it is seen to be a source of sacred power. Contact and communication with

the otherworld is usually conducted through special rituals, a process that is seen to bring transformation both to the individual and to the wider cosmos.<sup>76</sup>

Here we have a contemporary anthropologist describing the magical world in terms that Rosaleen Norton would have thoroughly understood and endorsed. Greenwood accepts the magical 'otherworld' on its own terms and recognises its significance as a source of sacred power and inspiration for its devotees and followers. According to Greenwood, 'anthropological and sociological analyses of magic [often] fail to take account of magicians' interactions with the otherworld... By failing to attach sufficient importance to the otherworld, these analyses miss what Pagans see as the essence of magic: otherworldly experience.'<sup>77</sup> Hopefully participant observation, as described by Hume and Greenwood, will have an expanding role in the magical anthropology of the future.

### ***Charting the polarities of the magical spectrum***

Pursuing an essentially *emic* approach to modern Western magic, while at the same time acknowledging the key distinction made earlier between the Right-Hand and Left-Hand paths (as described in Chapter Three), allows us to establish a spectrum model for exploring magical aspirations within the 20<sup>th</sup> century Western esoteric tradition as a whole. As noted in Chapter Two, ritual activities in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn focused especially on structured initiations and 'rites of passage' linked specifically to the symbolic pathways on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. This initiatory process had as its principal aim the mystical experience of spiritual rebirth (associated with the Kabbalistic sphere of *Tiphareth* and the ritual grade of Adeptus Minor: 5°=6°), and culminated ultimately in the transcendent act of sacred union with the Godhead in *Kether*. Influential occult author and theurgic practitioner Israel Regardie describes the ultimate aim of the Golden Dawn magician as follows:

The final goal of his spiritual pilgrimage is that peaceful ecstasy in which the finite personality, thought and self-consciousness, even the high consciousness of the highest Gods, drops utterly away, and the Magician melts to a oneness with the Ain Soph.<sup>78</sup>

Regardie's statement confirms that the theurgic magicians of the Golden Dawn employed their ceremonial practices in the pursuit of transcendence and mystical union, and we are reminded that a number of influential members of the Golden Dawn also regarded themselves as fundamentally Christian – a point emphasised in a personal communication between occult historian Gerald Yorke and Kathleen Raine.<sup>79</sup> Christian Golden

Dawn members like Arthur Edward Waite, Dion Fortune, Rev. W. A. Ayton and Arthur Machen believed that a key function of the Golden Dawn was to recover the ‘sacred mysteries’ or *gnosis* discarded or overlooked by mainstream Christianity.<sup>80</sup> Christ, for these practitioners, was associated with the sphere of *Tiphareth* at the very heart of the Tree of Life and, like Osiris in the ancient Egyptian pantheon – a deity also assigned to *Tiphareth* – personified spiritual rebirth. The legendary figure of Christian Rosenkreutz, who is central to the Adeptus Minor ritual grade – the portal to the Rosicrucian Second Order – is similarly a figure of Christian *gnosis*, an alchemical embodiment of spiritual rebirth and transformation (see Chapter Two). Accordingly, the theurgic ceremonial approach adopted by members of the Golden Dawn involved ‘assuming the god-form’ of various gods and goddesses from a number of ancient pantheons, their purpose being to partake of the specific spiritual qualities of these various deities as part of their ‘spiritual pilgrimage’, or mystic journey, towards the transcendent Godhead.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, at the same time, the initiates of the Golden Dawn also understood that all ten spheres of consciousness upon the Tree of Life were essentially aspects of the unified ‘body of God’ – each *sephirah* representing an emanation from its sacred and transcendent source in *Ain Soph Aur*.<sup>82</sup> The Golden Dawn practitioners were well aware that because Judaism was, by its very nature, monotheistic, the Kabbalistic tradition which provided the *modus operandi* for their esoteric rituals had to be considered in this context. This is a significant point because an ‘outsider’ evaluating the cosmology of the Golden Dawn from an *etic* perspective could easily note the plurality of deities charted as ‘magical correspondences’ on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life (see Golden Dawn Order document *The Book of Correspondences* referred to in Chapter Two), and conclude, incorrectly, that the magical approach adopted by Golden Dawn initiates was fundamentally polytheistic. It is only through reference to the beliefs of the practitioners themselves that one is able to establish that the theurgy practised in the Golden Dawn was, in essence, monotheistic.

I would like to suggest, therefore – with specific reference to 20<sup>th</sup> century Western magic – that at one end of the *emic* ‘magical spectrum’ [characterised as ‘Right-Hand Path’] we find an essentially *monistic* esoteric approach that culminates in the transcendent, mystical act of ‘merging into God’. The various forms of ceremonial and visionary magic associated with this spiritual quest can then be reasonably categorised as *white* magic – and specifically as *white high magic* – because they are associated, in a fundamental way, with the pursuit of mystical illumination [‘light’] and spiritual transcendence.

At the other end of the *emic* spectrum, by way of contrast, are 20<sup>th</sup> century occult practices associated with darkness, chthonic deities, and the exploration of subterranean mythic imagery, coupled with a fundamentally antinomian approach to mainstream society, antagonism towards orthodox religious traditions – a prime example being Crowley’s *Book of the Law* – and a strong emphasis on individualism and/or self-deification. As an extension of this emphasis on individualism and antinomianism one could also expect to find support for the practice of sorcery or ‘black magic’ as a form of self-defence – see Anton LaVey’s satanic statements, which he intended as ‘rules of the jungle’ (Chapter Three). Members aligned with the Left-Hand Path are also strongly opposed to the mystical act of merging with the Godhead, since this denies the fundamental individuality of the practising magician. Key occult figures associated with the Left-Hand path, such as Aleister Crowley – and more recently LaVey and Michael Aquino – have all emphasized the *individual* nature of the magical quest. The task of the magician aligned with the Left-Hand Path is ultimately *to transform the individual into a god*. There is even a belief among some practitioners – for example, among members of the Typhonian O.T.O. and the Scandinavian Dragon Rouge – that the Left-Hand Path initiate eventually enters a completely different metaphysical universe, associated symbolically with the reverse (*Qliphothic*) face of the Tree of Life. The Left-Hand Path magician operating within the Typhonian tradition, for example, employs the so-called ‘eleventh’ *sephirah* on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life – *Daath* (‘knowledge’)<sup>83</sup> – as an occult doorway leading to this unfamiliar magical realm. These Left-Hand Path practitioners willingly embrace the dark – as we have seen, they define their approach as the *nightside* tradition, and in the case of the Temple of Set, revere Set [the Egyptian God of the Night] as a deity associated with the infinite potential that is theoretically available to all aspiring magicians who pursue the Left-Hand Path. Because these practitioners of the Left-Hand Path specifically identify the ‘dark’ with their own infinite potential they acknowledge that their magic is *black* but distinguish it from *evil*, as conventionally understood.<sup>84</sup> For them, as noted in Chapter Three, the concept that ‘dark = evil’ is a judgemental evaluation associated primarily with the Judaeo-Christian tradition and lies outside their essential frames of reference.

This being so, it is reasonable to propose that the Golden Dawn on the one hand, and the Typhonian O.T.O., Temple of Set, and Dragon Rouge on the other, represent extreme points of the *emic* magical spectrum embraced by practitioners of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Western esoteric tradition. At various mid-way points along this magical spectrum other forms of occult practice combine aspects of both the Right-Hand and Left-Hand paths, and to this

extent may be considered neither ‘white’, nor ‘black’, but, instead, as manifestations of various shades of grey.

Modern Wicca represents a significant case in point. The influential American Wiccan spokesperson and author Margot Adler – an initiated Gardnerian priestess – has emphasized that in Wicca the practitioner seeks to *become* the Goddess or the God – an aspirational magical goal associated more with the Left-Hand Path than the Right. According to Adler the practitioner can *become* the deity: ‘Within yourself you are the God, you are the Goddess – you can actualise within yourself and create whatever you need on this earth and beyond.’<sup>85</sup>

However Adler’s friend and fellow Goddess devotee, Starhawk, has said that she personally believes the Goddess is both immanent and transcendent<sup>86</sup> – this allows her to embrace a spiritual perspective that allows for both transcendence and spiritual self-empowerment. Wicca pays willing homage to chthonic underworld deities like Persephone and Hecate as aspects of the universal Triple Goddess and to this extent regards the ‘dark’ as a significant dimension of spiritual growth and aspiration. The second initiation in Wicca, for example, focuses specifically on a mythic journey to the Underworld of the subconscious (see Chapter Two). To this extent Wiccan magic seems to move freely between transcendent and chthonic imagery, and between the polarities of ‘white’ and ‘black’ associated with the life-and-death imagery innate to the ‘rebirth’ cycle of the seasons and the sowing, growth and harvesting of crops (ie. the cultural source of the Wiccan Sabbats). In so doing Wicca stands in marked contrast to the more polarised approach adopted within the Golden Dawn, exemplified in the *Book of the Black Serpent*, where Order members were urged to shun the dark forces of the *Qliphoth* and to ‘banish thou therefore the Evil and seek the Good...[by invoking] the Divine Brightness.’<sup>87</sup>

It seems to me, therefore, that we are well served by considering a spectrum-based *emic* approach to modern Western magic because this allows us to consider key points of similarity and difference within the various strands of esoteric practice. It is ultimately statements *made by the practitioners themselves* with regard to their occult philosophy and practice that enable us to classify their specific forms of magic as ‘black’, ‘white’, ‘left-hand path’ or ‘right-hand path’, or as variants of ‘grey’ that lie somewhere in-between.

### ***Definitions of magic from leading practitioners***

As noted earlier, because several key figures within the Golden Dawn, Wicca and the Goddess movement have written well-researched and lucidly expressed texts relating to their own magical practice it is possible to supplement the classic anthropological analyses of magic and religion with insights into magical practice provided by the practitioners themselves. The following definitions of magic, which conclude this chapter, are from leading figures within the Western esoteric tradition. Statements from practitioners associated with *Thelema* and the Left-Hand Path are also included here:

***Aleister Crowley*** (founder of the *Argenteum Astrum* and the magical doctrine of *Thelema*):

*The Microcosm is an exact image of the Macrocosm; the Great Work is the raising of the whole man in perfect balance to the power of Infinity.*<sup>88</sup>

*Magick is the Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will.*<sup>89</sup>

*A man who is doing his True Will has the inertia of the Universe to assist him.*<sup>90</sup>

*Man is capable of being and using anything which he perceives, for everything that he perceives is in a certain sense a part of his being. He may thus subjugate the whole Universe of which he is conscious to his individual will.*<sup>91</sup>

***Israel Regardie*** (member of the *Stella Matutina* and editor of *The Golden Dawn*, 1937-40):

*As a practical system, Magic is concerned not so much with analysis as with bringing into operation the creative and intuitive parts of man....Magic may be said to be a technique for realising the deeper levels of the Unconscious.*<sup>92</sup>

*The magician conceives of someone he calls God, upon whom attend a series of angelic beings, variously called archangels, elementals, demons etc. By simply calling upon this God with a great deal of ado, and*

*commemorating the efforts of previous magicians<sup>93</sup> and saints who accomplished their wonders or attained to the realization of their desires through the invocation of the several names of that God, the magician too realizes the fulfilment of his will.<sup>94</sup>*

*The union or identification with the God is accomplished through suggestion, sympathy and the exaltation of consciousness. ...the magician imagines himself in the ceremony to be the deity who has undergone similar experiences. The rituals serve but to suggest and to render more complete the process of identification, so that sight and hearing and intelligence may serve to that end. In the commemoration, or rehearsal of this history, the magician is uplifted on high, and is whirled into the secret domain of the spirit.<sup>95</sup>*

*The higher Magic...has as one of its objectives a communion both here and hereafter with the divine, a union not to be achieved by mere doctrine and sterile intellectual speculations, but by the exercise of other more spiritual faculties and powers in rites and ceremonies. By the 'divine' the Theurgists recognized an eternal spiritually dynamic principle and its refracted manifestation in Beings whose consciousness, individually and severally, are of so lofty and sublime a degree of spirituality as actually to merit the term Gods...<sup>96</sup>*

*Magical ritual is a mnemonic process so arranged as to result in the deliberate exhilaration of the Will and the exaltation of the Imagination, the end being the purification of the personality and the attainment of a spiritual state of consciousness, in which the ego enters into a union with either its own Higher Self or a God.<sup>97</sup>*

*All the characteristics of the higher worlds are successively assumed by the Magician, and transcended, until in the end of his magical journey, he is merged into the being of the Lord of every Life. The final goal of his spiritual pilgrimage is that peaceful ecstasy in which the finite personality, thought and self-consciousness, even the high consciousness of the highest Gods, drops utterly away, and the Magician melts to a oneness with the Ain Soph<sup>98</sup> wherein no shade of difference enters.<sup>99</sup>*



**S.L.MacGregor Mathers** (co-founder of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, 1888):

*Magic is 'the Science of the Control of the Secret Forces of Nature'* <sup>100</sup>

**Dr Edward Berridge** (Frater Resurgam in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn):

*Imagination is a reality. When a man imagines he actually creates a form on the Astral or even on some higher plane; and this form is as real and objective to intelligent beings on that plane, as our earthly surroundings are to us...To practise magic, both the Imagination and the Will must be called into action... the Imagination must precede the Will in order to produce the greatest possible effect.* <sup>101</sup>

**Dr Wynn Westcott** (co-founder of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in 1888 ; magical name Non Omnis Moriar):

*To obtain magical power, one must strengthen the will. Let there be no confusion between will and desire. You cannot will too strongly, so do not attempt to will two things at once, and while willing one thing, do not desire others.* <sup>102</sup>

**Dion Fortune** (former member of the Alpha and Omega Temple of the Golden Dawn, and founder of the Fraternity of the Inner Light):

*White magic...consists in the application of occult powers to spiritual ends.* <sup>103</sup>

**W.E.Butler** (member of the Fraternity of the Inner Light):

*All magical work begins within and is projected outwardly.* <sup>104</sup>

**Francis King** and **Stephen Skinner** (esoteric practitioners associated with the Golden Dawn tradition)

*...the word magic is primarily used in the same sense that it is defined by the overwhelming majority of contemporary magical practitioners – the art and science of using little known natural forces in order to achieve changes in consciousness and the physical environment.*<sup>105</sup>

*...human will-power is a real force, capable of being trained and concentrated...the disciplined will is capable of changing its environment and producing supernormal effects...this will power must be directed by the imagination.*<sup>106</sup>

**Michael Aquino** (founding member and principal formulator of the doctrines of The Temple of Set):

*The theory and practice of non-natural interaction with the subjective universe is defined as Greater Black Magic...Greater Black Magic is the causing of change to occur in the subjective universe in accordance with the Will. This change in the subjective universe will cause a similar and proportionate change in the objective universe.*<sup>107</sup>

**Doreen Valiente** (practising witch and co-founder, with Gerald Gardner, of modern pagan witchcraft):

*By developing their powers, the magician or witch develop themselves. They aid their own evolution, their growth as a human being; and in so far as they truly do this, they aid the evolution of the human race.*<sup>108</sup>

**Starhawk** (aka Miriam Simos, American witch, eco-feminist and Goddess worshipper):

*The primary principle of magic is connection. The universe is a fluid, ever-changing energy pattern, not a collection of fixed and separate things. What affects one thing affects, in some way, all things. All is interwoven*

*into the continuous fabric of being. Its warp and weft are energy, which is the essence of magic.*<sup>109</sup>

*Magic is part of nature; it does not controvert natural laws. It is through study and observation of nature, of the visible, physical reality, that we can learn to understand the workings of the underlying reality. Magic teaches us to tap sources of energy that are unlimited, infinite...*<sup>110</sup>

*A witch is somebody who has made a commitment to the spiritual tradition of the Goddess, the old pre-Christian religions of Western Europe. So I am a witch in the sense that that is my religion, my spiritual tradition. I am an initiated priestess of the Goddess.*<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Both of these authors are included in Norton's bibliography in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, 1952:79.

<sup>2</sup> K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, Scribner, New York 1971: ix.

<sup>3</sup> R.L. Stein and P.L. Stein, *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic and Witchcraft*, Pearson/Allyn & Bacon, Boston 2005: 21-23.

<sup>4</sup> D.L. O'Keefe, *Stolen Lightning: the Social Theory of Magic*, Vintage, New York 1983.

<sup>5</sup> G. Jahoda, *The Psychology of Superstition*, Penguin Books, Baltimore 1970: 146.

<sup>6</sup> S. Greenwood, *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld*, Berg, Oxford and New York 2000:1.

<sup>7</sup> See R.L.Stein and P.L.Stein, *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic and Witchcraft*, loc cit.:143.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> S. Greenwood, *The Nature of Magic: an Anthropology of Consciousness*, Berg, Oxford and New York 2005: 92.

<sup>10</sup> A. Faivre and J. Needleman,(eds.) *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*, SCM, London 1992: xvi.

<sup>11</sup> J. Middleton (ed.) *Magic, Witchcraft and Curing*, Natural History Press , New York 1967 : ix

<sup>12</sup> E.E. Evans-Pritchard, 'The Morphology and Function of Magic: A Comparative Study of Trobriand and Zande Ritual and Spells' [1929] in J.Middleton (ed.) *Magic, Witchcraft and Curing*, Natural History Press , New York 1967: 3,5

<sup>13</sup> B. Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion*, Beacon Press, Boston 1948: 67

<sup>14</sup> B. Malinowski, 'The Role of Magic and Religion' [1931] in W.A. Lessa and E.Z. Vogt (eds.) *Reader in Comparative Religion: an Anthropological Approach*, (third edition) Harper & Row, New York 1972: 68.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid: 64.

<sup>16</sup> T.M. Luhmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1989: 260

<sup>17</sup> W.A. Lessa and E.Z. Vogt (eds.) *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, (third edition), loc cit: 414.

<sup>18</sup> E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Allen & Unwin, London 1915: 43

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- <sup>19</sup> D.L. O'Keefe, *Stolen Lightning: the Social Theory of Magic*, Vintage, New York 1983: 124.
- <sup>20</sup> C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Pantheon, New York 1963: 150-151
- <sup>21</sup> Frazer's *Golden Bough* was recommended by ceremonial magician Aleister Crowley as being 'invaluable to all students' (A. Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice*, Castle Books, New York, n.d [1929]: 211) and was also included in Rosaleen Norton's bibliography in the 1952 edition of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid: 51.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid: 52.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid: 53.
- <sup>25</sup> E. Durkheim, abridged version of *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* in W.A. Lessa and E.Z. Vogt (eds.) *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, loc cit: 29.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid:30
- <sup>27</sup> E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 1915: 44-45.
- <sup>28</sup> See W.H. Swatos (ed.) 'The Anthropology of Religion' in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society*, Altamira/Sage Publications, Walnut Creek, California 1998.
- <sup>29</sup> See M. Titiev, 'A Fresh Approach to the Problem of Magic and Religion' [1960] in W.A.Lessa and E.Z.Vogt (eds.) *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, loc cit: 431.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>31</sup> C. Lévi-Strauss *Totemism*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK 1969: 127-128.
- <sup>32</sup> C. Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1966: 221.
- <sup>33</sup> R. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge University Press 2000 [1989]: xii.
- <sup>34</sup> In *The Golden Bough*, (abridged edition) Macmillan, London 1987 [1922]: 11 Frazer describes magic as 'a spurious system of natural law as well as a fallacious guide of conduct; it is a false science as well as an abortive art.'
- <sup>35</sup> D.L. O'Keefe, *Stolen Lightning: the Social Theory of Magic*, loc cit: 490.
- <sup>36</sup> W.A.Lessa and E.Z.Vogt (eds.) *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, loc cit: 413
- <sup>37</sup> C. Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, loc cit: 13.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>39</sup> B. Malinowski, 'The Role of Magic and Religion' [1931] in W.A.Lessa and E.Z.Vogt (eds.) *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, loc cit: 67.
- <sup>40</sup> J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, (abridged edition) Macmillan, London 1987 [1922]:711-712.
- <sup>41</sup> D.L. O'Keefe, *Stolen Lightning: the Social Theory of Magic*, loc cit.:164.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid: 165.
- <sup>43</sup> O'Keefe writes: 'A very close reading of Durkheim shows that...he wrote that magic grows out of religion. Durkheim wrote that magic is stimulated by religion because religion precipitates a supernatural worldview, the world of the sacred, which is different from the natural world, and makes belief in magic possible.' D.L. O'Keefe, *Stolen Lightning: the Social Theory of Magic*, loc cit:124.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid: 159.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid: 504.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid: 360.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid: 490.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid: 503.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>50</sup> I. Regardie (ed.), *The Golden Dawn*, four volumes, Aries Press, Chicago 1937-40.
- <sup>51</sup> T.M. Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1989.
- <sup>52</sup> See M. Stavish, 'Assumption of the Godform', published on-line at [www.hermetic.com](http://www.hermetic.com).
- <sup>53</sup> T.M. Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England*, loc cit.
- <sup>54</sup> R. Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon: a History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1999.
- <sup>55</sup> Hutton also writes that 'The rituals of the Golden Dawn trained initiates to invoke deities and angels, but with the object neither of presenting them with praise and pleas nor of making them do the will of the person invoking; with neither, in short, of the customary aims of religion and magic. They encouraged the practitioners to empower themselves with incantation, within a ceremonial setting, so that they came to feel themselves combining with the divine forces concerned and becoming part of them.' See R. Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, loc cit: 83.

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- <sup>56</sup> R.T. Firth, *Religion*, Routledge, New York 1995: 215.
- <sup>57</sup> W.H. Swatos (ed.) 'The Anthropology of Religion' in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society*, loc cit.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>59</sup> J. Favret-Saada, *Deadly Words: Witchcraft in the Bocage*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1980.
- <sup>60</sup> P. Stoller (and C. Olkes), *In Sorcery's Shadow*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1987.
- <sup>61</sup> L. Hume, *Witchcraft and Paganism in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne 1997.
- <sup>62</sup> S. Greenwood, *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld*, Berg, Oxford and New York 2000, and *The Nature of Magic: an Anthropology of Consciousness*, Berg, Oxford and New York 2005.
- <sup>63</sup> N. Bado-Fralick, *Coming to the Edge of the Circle: A Wiccan Initiation Ritual*, Oxford University Press, New York 2005.
- <sup>64</sup> A. Anton-Luca, 'Humanistic Anthropology', Department of Anthropology, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, May 1998, available on-line at [www.indiana.edu](http://www.indiana.edu).
- <sup>65</sup> See M. Harris, *Cultural Materialism*, Random House, New York 1979.
- <sup>66</sup> P.E. Sandstrom, 'Anthropological Approaches to Information Systems and Behaviour', *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 30, 3, February/March 2004.
- <sup>67</sup> M. Harris, *Cultural Materialism*, loc cit: 32.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid: 315.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>71</sup> Prominent researchers currently committed to the study of the spiritual implications of the near-death experience and other related phenomena include Dr Kenneth Ring, Dr Michael Sabom and Dr Bruce Greyson in the United States, and Dr Peter Fenwick, Dr Sam Parnia and Dr Pim van Lommel in Europe. See Bibliography.
- <sup>72</sup> L. Hume, *Witchcraft and Paganism in Australia*, loc cit: 10.
- <sup>73</sup> Ibid: 11.
- <sup>74</sup> S. Greenwood, *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld*, loc cit: 12.
- <sup>75</sup> Ibid: 13.
- <sup>76</sup> Ibid: 1.
- <sup>77</sup> Ibid: 3.
- <sup>78</sup> The *Ain Soph* is the 'limitless light' that transcends finite creation as delineated on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. See Chapter Two.
- <sup>79</sup> K. Raine, *Yeats, the Tarot and the Golden Dawn*, Dolmen Press, Dublin 1976: 9.
- <sup>80</sup> The well known mystical scholar and poet, Kathleen Raine, refers to the Christian element in the Golden Dawn in her book *Yeats, the Tarot and the Golden Dawn* (Dolmen Press; Dublin 1976). Here she quotes correspondence from esoteric publisher Geoffrey Watkins, who notes the Christian dedication of initiates entering the Second Order – the R.R. et A.C. (1976: 9 – see also Chapter Two). Raine also quotes occult historian Gerald Yorke on the influence of Arthur Edward Waite in particular: 'Where the G.D. called itself a Hermetic Order, Waite called his version a Rosicrucian Order, and the Rosicrucians were always more Christian than the Hermeticists' (Ibid.). Waite confirms his essentially *gnostic* position in his autobiography, *Shadows of Life and Thought* (Selwyn and Blount, London 1938) when he writes: 'I believe to this day...that there is a Church behind the Church on a more inward plane of being; and that it is formed of those who have opened the iridescent shell of external doctrine and have found that which abides within it. It is a Church of more worlds than one, for some of the Community are among us here and now and some are in a stage beyond the threshold of the physical senses.' (1938: 170-171)
- <sup>81</sup> A.E. Waite describes the spiritual quest – a quest he refers to as the 'unconditional Godward direction' – as 'the path and term of the Union between Man and God...The Godward direction is the secret of that transcendent state in which Mind discovers that it is in Unity of Real Being with Eternal Mind; in other words, that God is within us...It is we and no other exploring the Great Mystery of our own being.' See A.E. Waite, *Shadows of Life and Thought*, loc cit: 281.
- <sup>82</sup> See section on the Kabbalah in Chapter Two.
- <sup>83</sup> The so-called 'eleventh' *sephirah*, Daath, is located on the Middle Pillar of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life between Kether and Tiphareth. It is associated with the so-called Abyss, the gulf between the sacred Trinity (Kether, Chokmah, Binah) and the realms of manifestation (the remaining seven *sephiroth*, or 'Days of Creation'). See also Chapter Two.
- <sup>84</sup> See quotations from Vexen Crabtree in Chapter Three.
- <sup>85</sup> Interview with the author for the television documentary *The Occult Experience*, New York, December 1984 (released in the United States on Sony Home Video).

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<sup>86</sup> Starhawk, interview with Alexander Blair-Ewart in *Mindfire: Dialogues in the Other Future*, Somerville House, Toronto 1995: 130.

<sup>87</sup> Anon., *The Book of the Black Serpent*, c.1900, circulated among initiates of the Isis-Urania Temple in London. Included as an appendix in R.A. Gilbert, *The Sorcerer and his Apprentice*, Aquarian Press, Wellingborough, UK 1983.

<sup>88</sup> A. Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice* [1929], Castle Books, New York 1964; Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1973: 4

<sup>89</sup> Ibid: xii.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid: xv.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid: xvii

<sup>92</sup> I. Regardie, *The Middle Pillar*, Aries Press, Chicago: 1945: 19

<sup>93</sup> This quotation refers to the magical concept that the repeated performance of the same rituals - whether by magicians or religious practitioners - has a cumulative effect on the 'inner planes', an effect referred to as the 'egregore' or 'group consciousness'. W.E. Butler, a disciple of Dion Fortune in the Fraternity of the Inner Light, describes the nature of the egregore in *The Magician: His Training and Work* (1959): 'When two or three or many people gather together in one place to perform certain actions, to think along certain lines, and to experience emotional influences, there is built up, in connection with that group, what may be termed a composite group-consciousness, wherein the emotional and mental forces of all the members of the group are temporarily united in what is known in occultism as a group-thought-form or "artificial elemental". This group consciousness seems to have a much greater power than the simple sum of the objective minds in the group would suggest. This is because, not only is the group-thought-form built up by the *conscious* minds of all who help to build it up. Since those subconscious minds reach back on the one hand into the Collective Unconscious and on the other reach upwards into the realms of the superconscious, the group-thought-form is psychically linked with...many aspects of thought and many forms of psychic-mental energy. Thus it is greater than any sum of its parts.' See W.E. Butler, *The Magician: His Training and Work*, 1959: 57-58.

<sup>94</sup> I. Regardie, *Ceremonial Magic: A Guide to the Mechanisms of Ritual*, loc.cit: 93.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid: 93-94.

<sup>96</sup> I. Regardie, *The Tree of Life: A Study in Magic*, Rider, London 1932: 85.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid: 106.

<sup>98</sup> The *Ain Soph* is the 'limitless light' that transcends finite creation as delineated on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. See Chapter Two.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid: 246-47.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted in D. Valiente, *An ABC of Witchcraft, Past and Present*, revised edition, Hale, London 1984: 231.

<sup>101</sup> Quoted from Flying Roll No.5 (Golden Dawn source document), 'Some Thoughts on the Imagination' in F. King (ed.) *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy*, Spearman, London 1971:33.

<sup>102</sup> Quoted in Flying Roll No.1, Part II (Golden Dawn source document), 'A Subject for Contemplation' in F. King (ed.) *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy*, loc cit: 39.

<sup>103</sup> D. Fortune, *The Mystical Qabalah*, Williams and Norgate, London 1935: 11.

<sup>104</sup> W.E. Butler, *The Magician: His Training and Work*, Aquarian Press, London 1959:30

<sup>105</sup> F. King and S. Skinner, *Techniques of High Magic: A Manual of Self-Initiation*, C.W.Daniel, London 1976: 9.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid: 10.

<sup>107</sup> M. Aquino, 'Black Magic in Theory and Practice,' in M.Aquino (ed.) *The Crystal Tablets of Set, Selected Extracts*, Temple of Set, San Francisco 1983: 18, 28.

<sup>108</sup> D. Valiente, *An ABC of Witchcraft, Past and Present*, loc cit: 233.

<sup>109</sup> Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess*, 20th Anniversary edition, HarperCollins, San Francisco 1999 [1979]:155.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid: 159.

<sup>111</sup> Starhawk in conversation with Alexander Blair-Ewart. See A.Blair-Ewart (ed.), *Mindfire, Dialogues in the Other Future*, Somerville House, Toronto 1995:127.

## Chapter Eight

### ROSALEEN NORTON'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE WESTERN ESOTERIC TRADITION

As I noted in my introduction, the key focus of this thesis has been to present a detailed account of Rosaleen Norton's personal background and ideas, as well as her cosmology, magical practices and approach to visionary art. This material was presented in Chapters One, Four, Five and Six. In this concluding chapter my purpose is to provide a summation of Norton's contribution to the Western esoteric tradition.

Clearly, both as a magician and as a visionary artist, Norton is not entirely original – nor did she ever claim to be. As detailed in Chapters Four and Five, Norton's magical approach drew on ancient pagan cosmologies and esoteric belief systems and she acknowledged an artistic interest in nether-world surrealists like Tanguy and Matta, even though she claimed she was not a surrealist herself.<sup>1</sup> Norton also acknowledged a stylistic parallel of sorts in the decadent art of Norman Lindsay, for whom she had modelled and with whom she was sometimes compared, although she maintained that Lindsay's imagery drew on the 'Daylight world',<sup>2</sup> whereas she was a creature of the Night.<sup>3</sup> At 179 Brougham Street, Kings Cross, Norton's ritual altars were constructed to honour Pan and Hecate – chthonic deities from ancient Greece (see Chapter Five); her overriding philosophical frame of reference was Pantheism; and her magical and artistic practice combined elements drawn from the Kabbalah, Kundalini Yoga and the Thelemic sex-magick of Aleister Crowley – prior to evolving, during the late 1950s, into her own version of coven-based Gardnerian witchcraft. Accordingly, I have argued that Norton's magical-historical context extends well beyond the purely localised post-World War Two socio-historical Australian context and that her *most significant context* – expressed through a broader frame of reference – is the Western esoteric tradition itself.

Many of the elements in Norton's creative art-making process, her philosophical alignment with Pantheism, and her eclectic approach to practical magic, as noted above, would seem – on the face of it – to run counter to any claim of genuine originality. However it seems to me that it is the way in which Norton approaches the magical realm *as a visionary explorer* that provides the key to her unique contribution to the Western esoteric tradition.

In Australia during the 1950s and '60s, as noted in Chapter One, Norton acquired a largely media-driven Australian persona as the 'Witch of Kings Cross' and then began to respond in like fashion by donning witches hats for the camera,<sup>4</sup> posing dramatically for photographs in front of her altar,<sup>5</sup> and later emphasizing her hexing powers of 'black magic' to investigative journalists like Robert Drewe (see Chapter Five). However, as I have noted, much of this media response was a façade and I do not believe that Norton should be evaluated solely on the level of localised eccentricity. Her contribution to the Western esoteric tradition is both broader in scope and also substantially more significant.

### *Norton as a visionary explorer*

My approach in this thesis has been to draw more attention to her unusual (and unquestionably pagan and chthonic) spiritual quest, in which she sought direct experiential contact with what she referred to as 'that storehouse of timeless archetypal imagery on which the visionaries of all ages have drawn'.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, the data I have presented – especially in Chapters Four and Six of this thesis – relates to Norton's esoteric practice as a trance magician and visionary occult artist; here I have sought to demonstrate that her magical exploration of altered states of consciousness provides rare and valuable insights into the psyche of the modern magical practitioner. What I am referring to as the 'rare insights' provided by Norton's magical exploration of trance states could, in all likelihood, have occurred in a number of comparable environments – they do not depend upon her immediate Australian context. Norton would have been equally at home with her pet cats in Austin Spare's south London community – with its rich assortment of pubs and artistic bohemian life – and would have similarly thrived amidst the neo-pagan Goddess worshippers of 1970s California, had she been born in another time and place. In my opinion this is just one indicator among many that demonstrates the significance of her contribution. Norton manages to transcend her local context by providing a substantial body of visual and written material that makes a distinctive and, in my view, *uniquely notable*, contribution to 20<sup>th</sup> century Western magic – and to the magic of the Left-Hand Path in particular.

From the very beginning, Norton's practice of pagan witchcraft – or more specifically, pantheistic sex magic – involved a combination of ancient Greek and Middle Eastern deities that was unique within the modern Western magical tradition. A further key indicator is that Norton was *self-initiated* as a witch.<sup>7</sup> Her sense of magical attunement was *innate*. She was not introduced to an existing Wiccan coven, as Gerald Gardner had been in



the New Forest in 1939, but discovered during her adolescent years that she had an intuitive spiritual connection with Pan as the wild and untamed God of Nature. Then, in 1940, at the age of 23, Norton began her own, personal exploration of self-hypnosis and trance states that would help her formulate her own unique, visionary approach to the magical universe. Only later would Norton expand her intellectual book-knowledge through reading esoteric texts by such influential figures as Aleister Crowley, Eliphas Lévi, Papus, Dion Fortune and Madame H.P. Blavatsky – texts that helped her make sense of what she had already experienced.<sup>8</sup>

The ‘invented tradition’ of Wicca, developed in England by Gerald Gardner and Doreen Valiente during the 1950s, focused on the worship of the Great Goddess and her three-fold nature as Maid, Mother and Crone (see Chapter Two). Norton’s magical cosmology centred instead on Pan and the lesser – but nevertheless distinctive – triad of Hecate, Lilith and Lucifer. Norton maintained that these deities existed *in their own right* and that they were a *living and existential reality* for her within the magical domain, and not simply figures derived from Classical myths and legends, or standard biblical texts. Norton also emphasized that on the astral plane these deities revealed only their *god-forms* – or symbolic veneers – and that these sacred god-forms appeared in a form and manner appropriate to the perception of the viewer. This cosmological feature is unique to Norton. Nowhere in modern occult literature do we have the concept of gods and goddesses utilising the astral plane *on their own terms* in order to mediate with human beings *at a time and place of their choosing*. Norton’s approach is almost shamanic in the classic sense: her trance journeys on the astral plane make possible the opportunity for direct encounters with the gods and goddesses but it is *they* who are calling the shots at all times. Norton’s trance technique in turn provides the basis for Norton’s visionary imagery; her art can be considered ‘superrealistic’<sup>9</sup> rather than ‘surrealistic’ because she uses her magical images to portray the specific content of her magical experiences. Her visionary art, as mentioned earlier, is ultimately representational and is really a form of ‘magical reportage’.

### ***Norton and the Left-Hand Path***

Norton’s magical approach is markedly different from the Right-Hand Path theurgy of the Golden Dawn, where the magician invokes an archetypal deity to appear in a consecrated setting and then seeks to incarnate and embody the sacred qualities associated with that particular god – a practice known as ‘assuming the god-form’.<sup>10</sup> Norton’s approach differs also from the ritualism of Eliphas Lévi and Aleister Crowley – Lévi and Crowley

both believed they could bend Heaven and Earth to the dictates of the magical will (see Chapters Two and Three respectively). Only the Left-Hand Path organisation, the Temple of Set, begins to approach Norton's unique cosmology – in the sense that here the principal deity (in this case, Set) – is *set apart* from the rest of humanity. And yet even in the Temple of Set, great emphasis is placed on the potency of the magical will. An invocation included in Michael Aquino's *Crystal Tablet of Set* (1986) begins: 'In the name of Set, the Prince of Darkness, I enter into the Realm of Creation to Work My Will upon the Universe.'<sup>11</sup>

In the Temple of Set considerable emphasis is placed on the notion that the magical psyche is forced to operate in a universe where it is innately *alien*, 'separate', and doesn't belong.<sup>12</sup> The appeal of Set for his contemporary followers is that he represents the 'Principle of *Isolate* Intelligence' (my emphasis in italics, see Chapter Three). Norton never makes this particular claim, or anything remotely like it, and in some ways adopts a position that is exactly the reverse. According to Norton, Pan *sustains* the universe energetically – he is the very *essence* of the Cosmos – and on a local level he is regarded by Norton as a *living presence* able to re-sacralize the world. In the *Crystal Tablet of Set* Aquino describes Pantheism as a form of 'monistic idealism' and categorically rejects it because it suggests that 'God and the Universe are one and the same substance'.<sup>13</sup> Norton, meanwhile, accepts Pantheism for precisely this reason. As Norton expresses it:

I think the God Pan is the spirit whose body – or such of it as can be seen in these four dimensions (the fourth being time) – is the planet Earth, and who, therefore, in a very real sense, is the ruler and god of this world.<sup>14</sup>

Although I believe Norton is essentially aligned with the Left-Hand Path in modern Western magic – on the basis of her *antinomian* social attitudes, her *libertine* approach to sex-magic, her *Qliphothic* artistic orientation, and the essentially *chthonic* nature of her magical quest (see Chapters Three, Four and Six) – she is atypical of the Left-Hand Path in other ways. As noted in Chapter Three, many Left-Hand Path practitioners place considerable emphasis on *individual* self-mastery and *self-empowerment*. The focus in Crowley's doctrine of *Thelema* is on *individual* communication with the Holy Guardian Angel (the magician's 'true self') – so that, in due course the 'self' becomes God. Similarly, members of the Dragon Rouge and Temple of Set have as one of their principal aims the magical quest for *self-deification*. Norton, however, at no time seeks self-deification – she does not wish to '*become* the God' and unlike members of

the Temple of Set does not believe that she has been born into an ‘unnatural’ or ‘alien’ world. Instead, Norton acknowledges Pan as Lord of the Universe – regarding him as the foundation of humanity’s existence – and at no point seeks to challenge his control or dominance. Norton’s personal expression of *gnosis* is based instead on her inner-plane journeys, for it is here that she enters the realm of Pan and the other gods and goddesses who collectively guide and inspire the world as we know it. From Norton’s perspective, it is Pan who is ultimately in control of the world and it is her function to operate as ‘High Priestess at the Altar of Pan’ – as a willing and dedicated subject in Pan’s domain. At the same time it is Norton’s specific role as a visionary magician to document her discovery of Pan’s ‘secret’ inner-plane universe and to record details of her visionary experiences in her paintings and drawings.

### ***The significance of Norton’s 1949 interview***

This leads us to consider Norton’s explanation of the visionary universe itself, and the remarkable interview conducted with L.J. Murphy at the University of Melbourne in 1949, which has survived in transcript form (see Chapter Four and Appendix A).<sup>15</sup> This document is surely among the most significant visionary documents in the annals of modern Western magic: it rivals in importance the so-called ‘Flying Rolls’ of the Golden Dawn, which include comparable accounts of trance magic techniques and ‘rising in the planes’. However, the Flying Rolls concentrate primarily on practical considerations – emphasizing specific *Tattva* or Tarot card images to be used as ‘astral doorways’; specific symbols associated with pathways on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, and so on – whereas Norton is seeking to explain the *experiential nature of the astral plane itself*, including the sensory characteristics of the ‘plasmic body’ and the nature of the mediating role of the sacred god-images, referred to earlier. This is without parallel in the literature of the Western magical tradition and is likely to consolidate her significance in years to come. At the present time the L.J. Murphy transcript has not yet been published in full (see Appendix A).<sup>16</sup>

### ***Norton and Austin Spare***

I would now like to focus once again on Norton’s role as a magical artist and to add some further brief comments in relation to British trance magician and visionary artist, Austin Osman Spare, whose work is atavistic and, like Norton’s, associated with chthonic imagery derived from ecstatic and visionary states of awareness (see Chapter Six). There is no question that Norton and Spare are both extraordinary magical artists in their own

right, and as noted in Chapter Six, Spare is now widely regarded as one of the major figures in the 20<sup>th</sup> century magical revival.<sup>17</sup> However, as mentioned earlier, Spare's atavisms emanate ultimately from his own personal subconscious – from his accumulated 'karmas' and primal memories. Norton's chthonic imagery, on the other hand, derives from the *Qliphothic* realms of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life and from primal sources of sexual and magical energy associated with the Kundalini fire-serpent. One must therefore conclude that despite the fact that Spare and Norton both employed trance-magic techniques and made use of magical sigils,<sup>18</sup> they were each pursuing something different and ultimately quite distinctive – and both artists deserve acclaim within the Western esoteric tradition for their respective contributions to the visionary imagery of the Left-Hand Path.

### ***Was Norton a Satanist?***

In his introduction to Austin Spare's posthumously published *A Book of Automatic Drawings* (1972) Ian Law notes in passing that Spare was 'possibly a Satanist'<sup>19</sup> – this is a claim that was also made frequently against Rosaleen Norton. When Norton exhibited her paintings and drawings at the Apollyon and Kashmir coffee-shops in Kings Cross during the 1950s, both locations were described in the tabloid press as the haunt of the 'Devil's cult' and on occasions visitors to these coffee-shops would mischievously request a cup of 'bat's blood'.<sup>20</sup> New Zealand migrant Anna Hoffmann's claim in September 1955 that she had attended a Black Mass with Norton in Kings Cross, created sensationalist headlines on page one of a daily Sydney newspaper.<sup>21</sup> Even though Hoffmann's charges were later found to be fabrications and Hoffmann herself was jailed for two months and described as a 'menace' by the presiding magistrate,<sup>22</sup> the image of Norton as a 'Satanist' or 'Devil-worshipper' persisted during the 1950s, and even up into more recent times. For her own part, Norton went to great lengths, both during media interviews and sometimes also during various court proceedings, to explain that the 'horned god', Pan, was a pagan deity from the tradition of ancient Greek mythology and that her practice of witchcraft had no connection with the Christian Devil.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, it is easy to see how members of the public may have misconstrued Norton's occult imagery in the conservative social climate of post-World War Two Australia.

As mentioned earlier, Norton was unquestionably drawn to the 'night' side of the psyche and she herself described her art in those terms.<sup>24</sup> Her drawing of *The Master*,<sup>25</sup> which depicts a horned deity controlling the

forces of destiny, is a confronting image that could easily be mistaken for an image of the Devil, while *Black Magic*,<sup>26</sup> one of several controversial artworks exhibited at the University of Melbourne in 1949, and against which charges of obscenity were subsequently brought, could easily cause offence to any practising Christian, with its imagery of bestial lust, a winking nun, and a bare-breasted woman mounted on a crucifix.



Plate 84: *Black Magic* (Plate XVII in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*). Norton offered this drawing as a gift to Eugene Goossens – see Appendix B. An earlier version of this work was exhibited in Melbourne in 1949 (reproduced in Chapter One)

However, while many of Norton's paintings and drawings feature provocative and irreverent subject matter, it is quite another matter to assume they promote a Satanic perspective. When Norton was accused of conducting blood-sacrifice rituals during a 'Kings Cross Black Mass' she was deeply offended.<sup>27</sup> Norton had always had a strong affinity with Nature, and with animals in particular, since her early childhood. As visitors to her apartment invariably attested, Norton was always accompanied by numerous pets, including cats, lizards, frogs, turtles and mice,<sup>28</sup> and she always maintained that she would never cause harm to

animals.<sup>29</sup> The very notion of ritualistic, Satanic ‘blood sacrifice’ was completely abhorrent to her.<sup>30</sup> The evidence provided by her own artistic work and comments made to the popular press and in journalistic articles strongly suggests that while Norton was unquestionably both pagan and ‘heathen’<sup>31</sup> – and often provocative in her presentation of ‘images of the night’ – she was not a practising Satanist. As noted earlier, Norton’s pagan practice in Kings Cross featured ceremonial altars dedicated specifically to Pan and Hecate, and her coven rituals made no reference to the Christian Devil. It is also significant that the symbol depicted on the forehead of the goat-headed deity in *The Master*, a representation of Pan, was a Kabbalistic hexagram – a symbol showing the interconnection between Spirit and Cosmos, the Macrocosm and Microcosm – and not the inverted pentagram associated with contemporary Satanism.<sup>32</sup> (*The Master* is reproduced in Chapter Six.)

### ***Norton and the sacred aspects of Nature***

From the late 1970s onwards influential American feminist witches began to speak of the Earth as the ‘body’ of the Goddess. In her book *Rebirth of the Goddess*, Carol P. Christ writes that ‘the Goddess as earth is the firm foundation of changing life’.<sup>33</sup> She also observes that ‘when the earth is the body of Goddess... the female body and the earth, which have been devalued and dominated together, are re-sacralized. Our understanding of divine power is transformed as it is clearly recognized as present within the finite and changing world.’<sup>34</sup> The influential Goddess worshipper, Starhawk (aka Miriam Simos), similarly states in *The Spiral Dance* (1979, revised edition 1999) – a source-book which has since become a neo-pagan bible for many feminist witches – that ‘the model of the Goddess, who is immanent in Nature, fosters respect for the sacredness of all living things. Witchcraft can be seen as a religion of ecology.’<sup>35</sup>

During the pre-feminist 1950s Norton similarly drew attention to the sacred qualities of Nature, but ascribed them instead to Pan, whom she regarded as an embodiment of the divine essence of Nature, as noted above. When I interviewed Norton in 1977 she emphasized that Pan was very much a deity for the present day, and not simply an archetypal figure from antiquity. For her, Pan was the creative force in the universe that protected the natural beauty of the planet and conserved the resources of the environment. Like Starhawk, who for many years has combined Goddess spirituality with political activism, Norton believed that magic had political consequences. For her, Pan was alive and well in the anti-pollution lobbies, and among the Friends of the Earth.<sup>36</sup>

That being so, it is reasonable to argue that in addition to being a trance-magician and visionary explorer Norton was also a significant precursor of those feminist witches and practitioners of Goddess spirituality who would later proclaim, from the late 1970s onwards, that the Earth was innately sacred and should be honoured as a manifestation of deity. Vivienne Crowley, a well known advocate of Wicca in Britain, maintains that the Earth should not be symbolised by the Goddess alone, pointing out that witchcraft ‘worships the Great Mother Goddess and Horned God as representations of all Goddesses and Gods that the human heart has worshipped.’<sup>37</sup> Crowley adds the further observation that ‘many people are attracted to the Earth Traditions because the Divine is found in the form of Goddess as well as God.’<sup>38</sup> These are sentiments which Norton would surely have shared.

In summarising Norton’s unique contribution to the 20<sup>th</sup> century Western esoteric tradition, one additional point should perhaps be emphasized: Rosaleen Norton is the only woman, either pre- or post- Golden Dawn, to have formulated a magical cosmology based on her own, personal trance-explorations of the ‘inner planes’ of the psyche and to have depicted these deities in her art. This, it seems to me, will be her lasting legacy to the Western esoteric tradition, and she is likely to gain wider international recognition in the future as her contribution is better understood.<sup>39</sup>

By way of a final observation, I would like to conclude by noting that while Norton is best known for her visionary imagery she was also an evocative poet. She regarded the following poem, *Dance of Life*, as an expression of her magical credo:<sup>40</sup>

*In the spiral horns of the Ram,  
In the deep ascent of midnight,  
In the dance of atoms weaving the planes of matter  
is Life.*

*Life spins on the dream of a planet,  
Life leaps in the lithe precision of the cat,  
Life flames in the thousandth Name,  
Life laughs in the thing that is ‘I’.*

*I live in the green blood of the forest,  
I live in the white fire of Powers,  
I live in the scarlet blossom of Magic,  
I live.*<sup>41</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See artist statement in the catalogue *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Rowden White Library, 1-23 August 1949. Here she writes: 'Surrealist? Certainly not...' She also observes that 'the work in this exhibition is remarkable in its uninhibited return to that storehouse of timeless archetypal imagery on which the visionaries of all ages have drawn, a return which owes nothing to contemporary fashion...' Norton agrees that perhaps Herbert Read's expression 'Superrealism' is closer to the mark.

<sup>2</sup> R. Norton, introduction to *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, Walter Glover, Sydney 1952: 12.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid: 13.

<sup>4</sup> See *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 24 January 1957: 14.

<sup>5</sup> See *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 6 October 1955: 3 and *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 7 February 1957: 11.

<sup>6</sup> See fn. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Anon. 'She Hates Figleaf Morality', *People*, Sydney 1950: 30.

<sup>8</sup> In the concise bibliography in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton* (Walter Glover, Sydney 1952: 79), Norton lists such works as Dion Fortune: *The Mystical Qabalah*; Aleister Crowley: *Magick in Theory and Practice*; Papus: *The Tarot of the Bohemians* and Eliphas Lévi, *A Treatise on Magic* under her heading 'Esotericism'. Norton's Lévi reference appears mis-titled. She is probably referring to A.E. Waite's anthology of Lévi's writings, *The Mysteries of Magic*, or alternatively, to Lévi's *The History of Magic*. Norton also includes Theosophical writings like Alice Bailey's *A Treatise on White Magic* and H.P. Blavatsky's *Stanzas of Dzyan* and *Isis Unveiled* in this section of her bibliography. However, the key point is that she first began exploring self-hypnosis twelve years earlier, when she was only 23 years of age.

<sup>9</sup> See fn. 1.

<sup>10</sup> See M. Stavish, 'Assumption of the Godform', published on-line at [www.hermetic.com/stavish/godform.html](http://www.hermetic.com/stavish/godform.html). Stavish's article describes Golden Dawn ceremonial procedures.

<sup>11</sup> M Aquino, *The Crystal Tablet of Set, selected extracts*, Temple of Set, San Francisco 1983, revised 1986: 36.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid: 16.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid: 10.

<sup>14</sup> R. Norton, 'Witch Was No Class At School', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 24 January 1957: 15.

<sup>15</sup> The transcript was forwarded by Mrs Raphael-Oeser, widow of the former Professor of Psychology at the University of Melbourne, to Walter Glover, in 1982. A section of the transcript was in turn passed to me by Glover. However, the full text did not come to my attention until November 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Extracts were published in N. Drury, *Pan's Daughter*, Collins, Sydney 1988 (Chapter Three) but the complete text was not available to the author at that time.

<sup>17</sup> As noted earlier, Spare's new-found recognition is based primarily on his inspirational role in the birth of Chaos Magick. See D. Evans, *The History of British Magick After Crowley*, Hidden Publishing, London 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Norton utilised a sigil related to Thoth – see Chapter Four.

<sup>19</sup> See I. Law, introduction to A.O. Spare, *A Book of Automatic Drawings*, Catalpa Press, London 1972. The automatic drawings date from 1925.

<sup>20</sup> See 'Some bat's blood please!' *The Sun*, Sydney, 26 September 1955.

<sup>21</sup> *The Sun*, Sydney, 22 September 1955. The front-page headline read: "'Black Masses" in Sydney, says girl.'

<sup>22</sup> *The Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 3 October 1955.

<sup>23</sup> See *The Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 31 May 1956 for a report of court proceedings related to the Honer/Ager obscenity charges which included her defence of witchcraft. See also Chapter Three

<sup>24</sup> The following observations are included in the introduction to the 1952 edition of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*: 'There is...a similarity of attitude to Norman Lindsay, but no similarity of style. Lindsay's Pantheism is of a different kind; his is a Daylight world and the satirical element is used as a foil rather than admitted as another form of beauty. The vision of Rosaleen Norton is one of Night; she dislikes any of the stereotypes of beauty and finds the "Daylight" world in general does not make good subject matter.' See R. Norton, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc cit: 12-13.

<sup>25</sup> Plate XXXI, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc cit: 77.

<sup>26</sup> Plate XVII, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, loc cit: 49. This is a graphic re-working of the painting exhibited in Melbourne under the title *Witches' Sabbath*.

<sup>27</sup> Shortly after Anna Hoffmann made her false 'Black Mass' claims in September 1955, two Sydney newspaper reporters published a detailed eye-witness account of how they had visited a Black Mass in Kings Cross and observed a gowned witch and wizard performing a mock imitation of the Christian



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Mass during which a rooster was sacrificed. It later emerged that the incident had been totally fabricated : the participants in the 'Black Mass' were university students who had donned ceremonial robes and used specimen bones from the Anatomy Department to create a bizarre, satanic atmosphere of 'sacrifice'. Such episodes only served to fuel public interest in Rosaleen Norton, and newspaper coverage of alleged 'witchcraft and black magic' activities in Kings Cross continued to appear.

<sup>28</sup> See D. Barnes, 'Rosaleen says she could be a Witch', *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 9 October 1952: 7.

<sup>29</sup> In her autobiographical article 'I was Born a Witch,' (*Australasian Post*, Sydney, 3 January 1957:5) Norton writes: 'Instinctive kinship and sympathy with animals...is an inherent part of me. I hate to see them abused in any way, while cruelty to them is one of the few things that literally makes me see red.'

<sup>30</sup> In 1956 Norton was asked by journalist Dave Barnes : 'Have you ever attended ceremonies at which there have been blood sacrifices?' Her response was: 'No, and I've never drunk bats' blood either.' D. Barnes, 'I am a Witch!' *Australasian Post*, Sydney, 20 December 1956: 9.

<sup>31</sup> In the sense that she did not align her spiritual beliefs with any major religion, eg Christianity.

<sup>32</sup> Both the Church of Satan, established by Anton LaVey (1930-1997) in San Francisco in 1966, and its major offshoot, The Temple of Set, employ an inverted pentagram as their defining symbol.

<sup>33</sup> C.P. Christ, *Rebirth of the Goddess: Finding Meaning in Feminist Spirituality*, Routledge, New York 1997:90

<sup>34</sup> Ibid: 91.

<sup>35</sup> Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance*, revised edition, HarperCollins, San Francisco 1999: 34-35.

<sup>36</sup> N. Drury, *Pan's Daughter: the Strange World of Rosaleen Norton*, Collins, Sydney 1988: 142.

<sup>37</sup> V. Crowley, *A Woman's Guide to the Earth Traditions*, Thorsons, London 2001:1.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid: 2.

<sup>39</sup> Norton is not unknown in international occult circles, although her profile is substantially lower than Spare's. A British edition of my book, *Pan's Daughter*, was published by Mandrake of Oxford (UK) in 1993, and Norton's image *Nightmare*, depicting her 'astral projection' technique, was reproduced alongside an image by Austin Spare in Robert J. Wallis' *Shamans /Neo-Shamans*, Routledge, London and New York 2003: 27.

<sup>40</sup> R. Norton, 'Hitch-hiking Witch', loc cit: 11.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

## APPENDIX A

### Transcript of the interview between Rosaleen Norton and L.J. Murphy at the University of Melbourne, 27 August 1949

Name: Miss R. Norton

Age: 31 years

Interviewed by L.J. Murphy 27/8/49

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Mother: Died, not certain when, but some time ago – she thinks about 15 years ago. ‘She was a very difficult woman, hysterical, emotional and possessive.’

As a result of probing the following picture emerged:

She hated her mother because she felt that her mother wanted to possess her; the mother would not fight fair, but used to cry and weep and say how much she loved her daughter, and try to make her do things that way.

The father is still alive. Relationships with him are now quite good. ‘He fights clean.’ ‘What do you mean by this?’ ‘Well, if I disobeyed him he would smack me when I was a child, and make me do what he wanted me to do without all the emotional upsets that I had with my mother.’

Siblings: Two sisters, both older. Relationships with them have been and still are very good. She visits and stays with them when she goes to Sydney. During her early childhood she states that she was moderately happy, but has very little clear recollection of events.

School: Started school at the age of four – always in trouble. ‘I was deliberately disobedient.’ ‘Why?’ ‘I disliked school, and I disliked the other children; I hated the way they crawled to the teacher. I used to love making the teachers mad by getting the other children to do naughty things. They used to follow me but I don’t think they liked me.’ ‘Why do you think they followed you?’ ‘Because I always took the blame when anything went wrong.’ ‘I left ordinary school when I was 15 because I wanted to become an art student.’ Entered the Sydney Tech. as an art student; remained there for two years; liked it very much. ‘I then got a job with *Smith’s Weekly* as a junior artist; I liked the work very much, the people were very good, but I didn’t like the artistic standing of the group, so I left after 8 months. I ran away from home when I was 18.’ ‘Any particular reason?’ ‘Yes, my mother died just before this.’ RN lived with an artist at Kings Cross, and in the daytime she herself was a pavement artist. Got tired of this and became a studio model, mainly nudes. From here on her economic security depends upon free-lance modelling, and free-lance painting, exhibitions, selling occasional pictures.

Emotional History: First thing she can remember is being scratched by a cat; she says she was about one year old when this happened, and she will never forget the feeling as the cat scratched her arm. The second thing that stands out in her memory is being

smacked by her mother for refusing a biscuit; she thinks this happened when she was about four years of age, it was the first time she can remember being hit. She hated her mother for it, and she was determined she would not eat the biscuit, and the mother forced it into her mouth, and she was so disgusted that she became violently ill.

Mystical experiences commenced at the age of 23 – feeling of disintegration and ecstasy, a sort of ‘myself all going out into the air and then coming back in a new plastic body’.

Sex History: First sex experience at the age of 12 years – ‘rather accidental, in that a boy of my own age suggested that we do it. I found it very painful and did not try again.’ Next at 17 years of age – ‘this was a cold-blooded decision on my part; I wanted to find out what it was like.’ After it was all over there was a feeling of relief at having done it, but no strong sex sensation. Further probings revealed that she had been thinking about sex from the age of 11 onwards; very curious about the sex act itself. Sex life has been continuous since the age of 17.

First period: excessive but normal heterosexual relationships. About the age of 23 she was more interested in male homosexuals – she still prefers S.I. with male homosexuals because she can take a more active role – ‘these men are soft and rounded and they let me do what I like with them – I enjoy most of all their hands softly running up and down my back – sometimes they use pencils and leaves.’

After about three months of male homosexuals she likes a period of female homosexuals (manual and oral manipulation). With both male and female homosexuals there has been a considerable amount of masochistic and sadistic practices. She likes very much to be tied up, beaten, then have S.I. when her partner hurts her by forcing her back against the pole to which she is tied.

Sadism: ‘I enjoy very much beating men with a strap and then having S.I. I think all-in-all my most complete pleasure is through the active role I can play.’

Also been a considerable amount of fellatio; the main pleasure there is in giving the man pleasure. I feel this is in part the basis of her lesbian role too – giving pleasure to the partner, stroking and being stroked, kissing and being kissed, but all the time taking the dominant role. She did say that during lesbian S.I. she often felt that she would like to have a penis of her own to insert into the woman. She was probed very considerably on just how she felt during sexual stimulation, but she could not reply to this for she said she does not remember anything at all except body pleasure – just does not think: tenseness, a building up, a relief of tension, and no thinking at all.

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[The following text was written by Norton herself, probably following a request from L.J.Murphy. Where capital letters are used within the text I have followed Norton’s original style and emphasis.]

Eventually I decided to experiment in self-induced trance; the idea being to induce an abnormal state of consciousness and manifest the results, if any, in drawing.<sup>1</sup>

My aim was to delve down into the subconscious and, if possible, through and

beyond it.


I had a feeling (intuitional rather than intellectual) that somewhere in the depths of the unconscious, the individual would contain, in essence, the accumulated knowledge of mankind: just as his physical body manifests the aggregate of racial experience in the form of instinct or automatic reaction to stimulus.

In order to contact this hypothetical source, I decided to apply psychic stimulus to the subconscious : stimulus that the conscious reasoning mind might reject, yet which would appeal to the buried instincts as old as man, and would ( I hoped ) cause psychic 'automatic reflexes' ( Religious cults use ritual, incense etc. for the same reason ). Consequently, I collected together a variety of things such as aromatic leaves, wine, a lighted fire, a mummified hoof, etc... all potent stimuli to the part of the subconscious that I wished to invoke. I darkened the room, and focusing my eyes upon the hoof I crushed the pungent leaves, drank some wine, and tried to clear my mind of all conscious thought. This was the beginning (and I made many other experiments which were progressively successful).

Following a surge of curious excitement, my brain would become emptied of all conscious thought: my eyes would shut, and I was merely aware that I was drawing on the blank sheet of paper in front of me. The drawings were quite different in form from previous ones, and full of symbols, many of which were previously unknown to my conscious mind, prominent symbols being crescent, fish, ram-headed mask, cornucopia, swastika, 6-pointed star, triple sign, tower etc.

Each of the drawings at this period were compositions having another significance not realised until much later, since they prophesied in symbolic form a future subjective experience for myself. Numerous other things took place which I need not record here: my consciousness, however, was extremely exalted over the entire period – about five months in all.

I seemed, while experiencing a great intensification of intellectual, creative and intuitional faculties, to have become detached in a curiously timeless fashion from the world around me, and yet to be seeing things with a greater clarity and awareness than normally. I was working day and night, having very little sleep or rest, yet a supply of inexhaustible power seemed to flow through me.

One night I felt impelled, quite apart from conscious volition, to perform a kind of ritual of invocation; after which I executed a peculiar waking 'automatic' drawing, the composition of which assumed the form of the symbol .

The upper figure is the sign of Thoth – impersonality and balanced force – while the lunar crescent can represent several things, but chiefly (as applied to the individual ) receptivity to occult powers; the personality; and, according to the Kabbalists, an emblem of the sphere of magic. I once read of magic defined as 'The science and art of causing supernormal change to occur in conformity with will', which seems a fairly comprehensive description. Events occurred which rendered it impossible to continue these experiments, and conditions returned to normal.

Two years later, I decided to attempt some more investigations, this time with the object of discovering whether life continues after bodily death and, if so, in what form. To this end, I began by attempting to communicate with a dead friend by means of automatic writing. After several unsuccessful attempts, the pencil began to move quite freely, although for some days I obtained only subconscious ramblings and symbolism.

Unexpectedly, however, a great change took place: there was a strong awareness of another presence, and the sensation of the writing altered completely, as though someone apart from myself were guiding my hand. The writing became clear, concise, and altered completely. It altered, in fact, into the handwriting of the friend with whom I was attempting to communicate. Moreover, the answers to my questions became definite and coherent. Soon, and during the following nine or ten months, I gained the rough outlines of a philosophical and metaphysical conception of the Universe and life beyond death which by no stretch of the imagination could I attribute to my normal self, since it embodied knowledge of a type which my studies had never encountered, such as those which dealt with highly abstract propositions entering the realms of higher mathematics. I should make it clear that my previous reading in occult lore had dealt almost exclusively with medieval demonology and witchcraft, this being the side of such matters which chiefly interested me. Inspired by the previous occurrences, I had also studied a certain amount of symbolism, but I had never touched upon either physics, philosophy, or metaphysics, as such. Oddly enough, while actually receiving super-normal information I quite easily comprehended theories which when reviewed later were often difficult to grasp (heightening of faculties).

In this way I also learned something of various other subjects, including the structure of the subconscious mind, comparative symbolism, etc. Meanwhile, without realising it, I was becoming highly sensitised psychically, and soon could communicate almost at will, without any effort of concentration. Much of the data was, of course, fragmentary and incomplete owing to the crude method of communication. Other information, particularly that dealing with life on other planes of Being, was misinterpreted owing to lack of standards of comparison on my part: since one can only visualise any image in relation to something in one's own experience, my understanding was necessarily limited. Now, however, I am able to correlate and apply the missing factors to things that were merely hinted at during this period. (I have appended a condensation of the more important questions and answers received during automatic writing.)<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, one subject had become paramount in my mind. I had heard that it was possible to achieve transition to a different Realm of existence and live consciously the type of life that is generally experienced after physical death. This became my supreme desire, for a number of reasons. The idea, above all, appealed to me as a type of adventure and exploration more fascinating than any other. There were, too, things that I wished to know which I realised would be impossible without first-hand experience; for I felt that entities who had had the experience of death would have passed into a different and perhaps more advanced state of being, entailing conditions of life which would be almost incomprehensible according to our concepts. As soon as communication was firmly established, therefore, I asked if such a thing were actually possible. The reply was in the affirmative. It seemed that co-operation of will from two planes of Being was necessary for safe accomplishment of the process. I was told, also,

that I would have to wait for a few months, presumably to gain the necessary psychic training.

My excitement can be imagined; and during the following months becoming impatient and often sceptical of ever accomplishing any such thing, I made several attempts at separating myself from my body. My conception of the process was a hazy one and very different from actuality, since I imagined that my physical body would temporarily have to die, later to be re-animated on my return.

Once during one of these attempts I succeeded in inducing a type of cataleptic trance. Gradually over the space of about an hour my heart beat became slower and slower – I was very aware of this in a detached fashion – and I could feel my breathing lessening until both heart-beat and breath had practically ceased; and then an extraordinary sensation ran over my entire body, which I can describe only as ‘cessation’. There was an inward hush as though my body’s mechanism had come to a pause – and then a light frothing bubbling sensation spread through my veins as though my body were dissolving into foam. I do not know what the result would have been had I not been disturbed. However, at this moment my husband<sup>3</sup> entered the room. Thinking I was ill, he felt my pulse and exclaimed in alarm. The dissolving stopped, there was a sense of shock, and with a slight jerk my breathing started again very slowly. I tried to reassure him, but could not speak at first, as my lips and vocal organs seemed extraneous and difficult to control. It took me another hour to resume normal functioning, after which he told me that my skin had felt icy and slightly damp (I had not been aware of this).

The next step of importance was clairaudience – a clear and coherent form of thought transference which eliminated the cruder medium of automatic writing. The first indication of this occurred under the very prosaic circumstances of washing clothes one afternoon. Possibly for the very reason of lack of conscious concentration my brain was in a receptive condition. I suddenly became strongly aware of another presence. I realised that it was C. (the person with whom I had been communicating) and then unexpectedly, as though my brain were a tuned-in wireless set, I could hear her speaking; which so thrilled me that mentally I positively shouted at her.

‘Yes, it really is me,’ came the reply. ‘I am able to communicate with you directly now.’ I was told later that there are numerous cells in the brain which do not normally function. During this conversation I was told, amongst other things, that inter-Plane transition would occur for me in about a month: and so it did, almost to the day.

I doubt if any impression of the actual initial experience could be conveyed in words, so I shall not attempt to describe it, beyond saying that there was a sensation of ecstasy, during which my entire being seemed to dissolve and disintegrate, then gradually re-form into a new whole. The experience was so overwhelming that at first it was difficult to realise what had happened; for simultaneously with this an entire change of consciousness and focus had been effected. My body felt as though it were formed of warm golden light; the physical body had become merely an appendage, and all my sensations were centred in the plasmic body. I had gained new and different senses – and here I must comment upon something concerning which the popular conception of ‘discarnate life’ is the absolute reverse of reality. Far from being devoid of sense enjoyment, a plasmic body of this type contains the very essence of sensuousness to a

degree that renders the physical sensory organs utterly negligible by comparison. As a rough and very inadequate parallel, compare the difference between touching something of delicate texture with naked hands, and with hands encased in heavy leather gloves. 'There' the body is completely a reflection of the mind, so that any type of pleasure, whether emotional or intellectual, engenders as a part of itself a corresponding sensuous enjoyment. (This also applies in the opposite direction so that misery of any description is accompanied by excruciating pain.) Contrary again to the usual idea of such states, sexual sensation still exists in an equivalently more advanced and intensified form.

I have been asked how a purely intellectual activity such as abstract thought could be attended by sensual enjoyment. It is, nevertheless, for instead of feeling interested one 'becomes' an embodiment of Interest itself. It is rather different to explain what I mean by this since a sense or state of Consciousness peculiar to the other realm is concerned. To begin with, 'thought' in those realms is very different from that which is normally understood by the word. There, 'thought' – or rather the energy generated by such – is felt as a tangible thing, a current of living force which assumes palpable and visual form. I had been told, earlier, that 'entities in the Plane assumed form at will'. This is literally true; one actually changes shape very frequently, since the new 'sense' referred to is that which could be described as 'being'. Just as one can see, feel, hear a thing, state or person; and when this occurs one realises and is the very essence of its nature. This sense, if one can call it that, covers a vastly wider field than anything comparable to human life; for in addition to becoming the essence of male, female, or neither, and beings of other orders of Existence, one can 'become' a living embodiment of abstract Ideas of all descriptions.

One of the strangest experiences I had was 'becoming' an embodiment of an Idea of the Universe. This Idea was not anthropomorphised into Entity, as is usually the case with such embodiments. Consequently, although my consciousness existed, there was no consciousness of entity at all. I am not referring to the personal 'I' consciousness, for naturally that alters completely with each form assumed; I have used a capital letter to differentiate between personal ideas and Ideas, which are representations to the consciousness of Group interpretations of Universal facts, according to order of Existence and sub-divisions therein. (By 'other orders of Existence' I mean different classes of Being from Man; highly evolved unhuman intelligences)....

Many of these things, of course, happened much later; however, these examples indicate the complete unity of mind and fluids in the plasmic body, also the sensory tangibility of the thought-force. The manipulation of the latter (to return to my previous statement) in any kind of abstract thinking, is also a sensory skill and actually feeling the keen precision of directed force. In the emotional sphere, there is a different type of awareness. When one feels wonder, serenity, etc., one does not exactly become a representation of these states; rather, there is a sensation of complete unity with that which is causing their manifestation, and yet another sense which is a blending of the familiar five senses into a super-intensified one, plus an indefinable essence.

Another activity could be compared with simultaneously watching and taking part in a play in which all art-forms such as music, drama, ritual, shape, colour and pattern blend into one. These 'plays' were either allegorical or symbolic and generally represented

something which had a personal bearing upon my own life in addition to their general significance.

Orthodox occultists occasionally describe the Plane of 'dense' matter as the 'Realm of Form', which to my mind is a complete misnomer. The name should be applied to the realm of which I speak, since things There are seen in their archetypal essence. There, all forms whether abstract or actual appear in their real perfection as part of the very essence of Form itself, which is omnipresent. In speaking of abstract form I refer to System and the pattern of things in general, which interblend in all directions into infinity. As I have remarked elsewhere, the fact of chaos anywhere appears to be only a part of form and system, and as such purely relative.

The realisation of the essential Form of things occurs in various ways... one sees things such as the pattern of a life, for instance, as a complete and perfect thing in itself, yet forming against relationship to other lives part of another wider pattern; which again forms part of another yet larger... and so, ad infinitum. Similarly, with things such as Dimension – Time, Plane and Space – one literally sees the perfect interblending of their relationship to one another and to the Universe as a whole. Here again, the vehicle of realisation of this type of knowledge is greater and more comprehensive than intellectual understanding, although it includes the latter. Many of these Abstract forms appeared as vast animated patterns blending in a kind of geometrical harmony which we felt as well as observed, and into which the consciousness merged. The shapes and manifestations were not those of Euclidean geometry; cosmic mathematics manifesting as an immense art-form is the best analogy I can find.

Concerning 'other types of Existence' and form assumed by such, there are several aspects to be considered. In some of my drawings I have attempted to convey an impression of some of these 'other Realm' shapes and experiences; in some a general and in others a specific impression. With regard to the former, I have used visual forms seen during extra-sensory experiences supplemented where necessary by other, more familiar symbols. Concerning the latter, however, I have endeavoured as far as possible to reproduce accurately the actual visual images only.

Recently, the factual validity of some of these portrayed forms was queried on the grounds that they were apparently 'anthropomorphised'. One of the drawings objected to, for instance, showed a horned being with a comparatively human face – a fawn [sic].<sup>4</sup> Another depicted a being roughly corresponding to one of those known as Djinnns. Both of the drawings fall into the latter, or sheerly factual category.

The grounds of the objection were:

1. That, as form follows function in animate nature, a non-human intelligence would not assume a form based upon a human concept, such as the idea of a fawn – which is, superficially, an idealised combination of two phenomena in the natural world. The objection was not to the drawing of a fawn as a symbolic representation of a different state of intelligence, but to my claim of its objective reality.



2. That the concept of such beings was familiar to my personal mind through study of mediaeval demonology etc. and also to the cultural mind of the racial group to which I belong, and that they were therefore more likely to be the result of hallucination or self-deception than actual objective realities (objective on the Astral Plane – not necessarily so on the physical plane). Why, he asked, had I not encountered phenomena familiar to, say, the Zulu Group mind.

All this is a particularly interesting point; for in his grasp of the implications of a type of life essentially different from ours, the sceptic was quite right. Yet in that very difference are embodied the conditions of existence whereby such an apparent irrationality as the objective existence of an ‘ectoplasmic’ fawn body becomes logically possible. The explanation lies in the nature of the difference between the two Realms (Planes of Being).

The most vital and essential distinction exists more in the way the life manifestation itself functions than in any particular visual form it may assume. On the physical plane, for instance, compare two completely dissimilar forms of life – a plant and a human being. They are totally different in appearance, structure and mode of functioning, yet their material vehicles are both subject to the same Dimensional law. They cannot change form. A plant will undergo only such changes as are normal, ie. inherent in the plant nature, and a man according to those inherent in humanity. They cannot exchange, or vitally change, their physical form outside their respective genus limit, and the life cycles of both follow a broad [sic] similar pattern of birth, growth, maturity, degeneration and death.

In the other Realm, the structure of phenomena is based on other lines. Intelligences are not confined to one form as here; also the consciousness pertaining to each type of form bears a far closer relationship to its material vehicle. The latter, as I have said, being fluid plasmic matter, can and does alter its form to any image appropriate to circumstances. Since, however, the form assumed is a direct reflection of the content or state of consciousness, it is an automatic result of the latter. So, in this Realm also ‘form follows function’, but in an utterly different way; as function in this sense is synonymous with ‘being’ or content. Now, what are some of these forms, and how did they originate – such as that of a fawn, for instance? I think I partly answered, or rather, supplied a clue to this in an earlier paragraph (previous section); wherein I defined ‘Ideas’ as ‘Representations’ (or embodiments) of group interpretations of Universal facts. Myths and legendary allegories fall into this category.

The myth-making (and image) faculty of the unconscious mind forms a concept of life (relative to the self) which is often embodied as an idealisation – a Being, such as Nature, Phantasy, Power etc. – and which the unconscious mind conceives of as a ‘God’, or in other words, the motivating powers of Existence relative to himself, as they appear to him. The Symbolic Being is also Self, since it represents the sum of his own experiences and reactions to such; and being therefore a creation of his own Mind, reflects its creator. Yet it is also an embodiment of the forces which have spiritually created or moulded him, and is therefore a personification of God in relation to himself. Generally, the more primitive the mind, the more it anthropomorphises the attributes of its God, since it is less capable of a detached survey.

So with the group: in fact the individual subconscious God-conception generally flows along the group thought channel most appropriate to it, hence all of the Gods of man. Hence also all the demons, spirits, and other representations of forces that have influenced him.

I have spoken of individual mind working upon and moulding plasmic material. Consider the power, then, of this unconscious mass-concentration of human beings, throughout the ages, upon certain idealisations of forms – the God-forms (a generic name for all such forms, including Demons, Faery creatures, ‘angels’ etc.). This unconscious creative thought concentration has built up images in the aether, moulding raw plasmic matter to the form of these images, and providing vehicles for other intelligences to manifest through, relative to humanity. I do not mean that these intelligences are either confined to any or all of these forms, or that they are the product of human thought, conscious or otherwise. The vehicles, or God-forms, yes, or largely so, but not the intelligences themselves. These vehicles, however, form a useful medium of communication, but naturally their visual form is, to a certain extent, anthropomorphic. Taking the abstract state of consciousness known as ‘Humanity’ or Human Consciousness (including all Uni-Planal variations) as belonging to one Realm of Being – and the next level of consciousness (ie. Deva consciousness; I have used a Sanscrit [sic] term, failing any English equivalent) as belonging to another Realm of Being, and as such, completely different from state one, the God-forms comprise a link, or half-way state between the two. Human consciousness, then, can move up into these God-forms during trance, or other exceptional conditions; likewise, Deva consciousness can descend into the same form. The inhabiting, or temporary animation of these forms by entities can be likened to an ectoplasmic ‘incarnation’, during which the entity assumes both the form and the mode of intelligence and perception associated with that form. So then, with the fawn depicted. This, I think, answers the first objection.

Concerning Objection 2: Here again a logical but incomplete conclusion has been reached through not allowing for the missing factors in the case. The statement concerning the ‘faun’ shape being familiar to myself through both personal and racial associations is quite true. For that reason, it is logical to suppose that I should encounter such ‘God-forms’ as interest me as an individual., and belong to my racial group, particularly since I had earlier opened a channel of communication to these particular manifestations through study and meditation. Since I had not done this with regard to Zulu culture and beliefs, and having no particular interest in them, no contact was made. This is not surprising, considering that there are endless planes within Planes; consequently in either Realm one only sees those things which are in some way relevant. No-one, for instance, walking along a crowded street sees, or even registers, every face – he only sees those which touch his subjective awareness in some way. He may notice those types of faces which have a personal interest for him, or anyone outstandingly peculiar, or different, from the crowd. If he is interested mainly in the buildings, he will probably notice neither. This automatic selective faculty is equally operative, and necessary, in the other Realm, where one can not only move through planes in space, but also through planes in time. Obviously, one could not see all things at all times, and though consciousness is extended enormously the result would be chaotic, were details in too many different parts of time and space to impinge upon one another simultaneously. This factor of ‘relevance’ explains why it is practically

impossible to prophesy or know what anyone else will see or experience upon the other Plane of Being, despite many books asserting the contrary.

To conclude my discussion of these points, I have commented several times that Forms etc., having no parallel in life as we know it, are utterly impossible of delineation; consequently I have necessarily selected only such shapes and happenings as are to some extent recognisable, for my drawings. (The 'God-forms' probably link up with Jung's 'Archetypes' subjectively, in the Plane of Being.)

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs Raphael-Oeser, who sent the present transcript to Walter Glover in 1982, added an annotation of her own, namely that she presumed that Norton had been asked by L.J. Murphy to provide her own personal account of her beliefs and cosmology and also that one preceding page at least, appears to be missing from Norton's account.

<sup>2</sup> The whereabouts of this document on automatic writing is unknown – it was not forwarded to Glover in 1982.

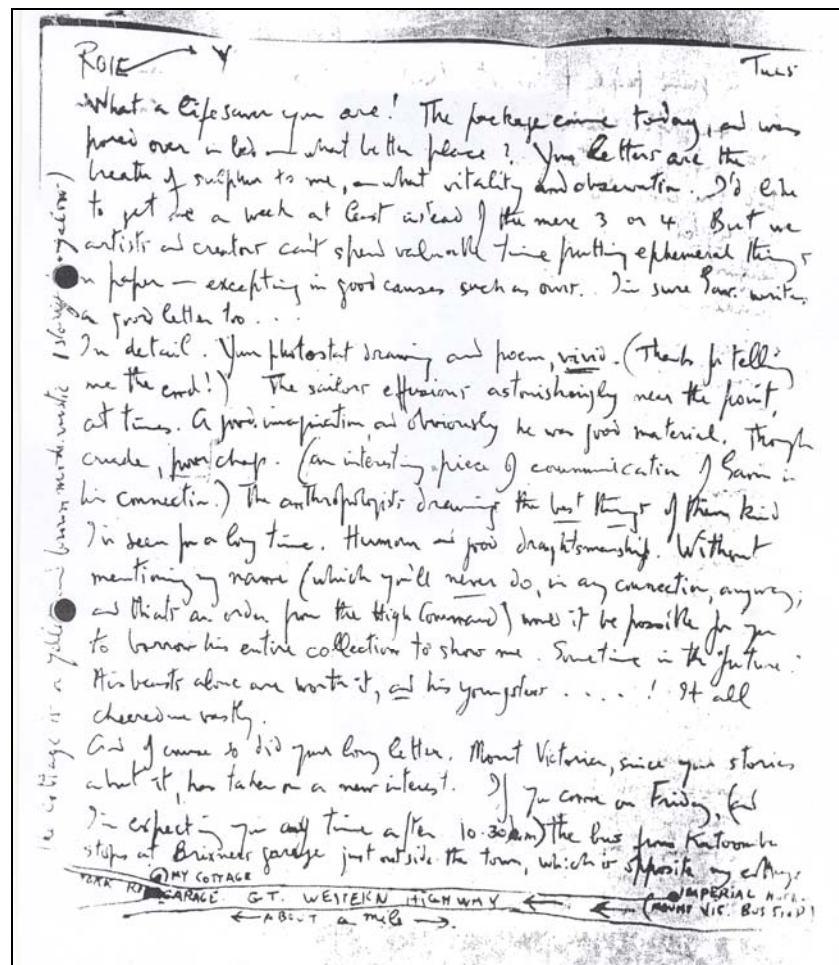
<sup>3</sup> Norton was married to Beresford Conroy at this time. See Chapter One.

<sup>4</sup> Presumably Norton means 'faun' and not 'fawn'. She refers to the 'faun shape' later in her account.

## APPENDIX B

### Selected personal correspondence between Eugene Goossens and Rosaleen Norton relating to magical ideas and processes

The following letters, all of which are undated, are digital scans of copies that were originally in the possession of Vice Squad detective Bert Trevenar. The original letters were taken from Norton's Kings Cross flat in October 1955. The originals are now lost and may possibly have been destroyed by the police when they failed to gain permission to prosecute Sir Eugene Goossens on the additional charge of scandalous conduct. The latter charge was dropped following the intervention of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Mr R.R. Downing, who instructed the Commissioner of Police to take no further action against Goossens (see M. Johnson, 'The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia', loc. cit: 23 fn.). For an analysis of the significance of these texts in relation to the *Goetia*, ritual sex magick, the use of magical unguents and 'astral meetings' see Chapter Five.



This page contains a small map with directions to Goossens' cottage at Mount Victoria in the Blue Mountains – where Goossens proposed to instruct Norton in the sex-magical use of demonic seals from the *Goetia*

You're grand people to take the trouble to come; I'll be alone till 4.30, after which time I'll be surrounded again! The atmosphere of the cottage is utterly wrong for our purposes, but anyway I don't think I'll love each other...

How right is your idea of concentrating on getting both the room and leisure time to occupy it. Obviously a fixed-in time is necessary, hidden and private. Fortunately, come July or end of June I'm a free agent, and virtually everything in the way of meeting will be possible at that time, subject always to the heavy claims on time and energy arising from my schedule. Since last week's note, there's no question but that these must be at least weekly. That however will only be regularly possible from June onwards.

But it's worthwhile and important to wait for... Meantime then, let's we can build up. Yes, I'll instruct you in the primitive. The diagrams are necessarily crude but none the less effective, being all from unimpeachable sources. You will be my best - and only - pupil, and I shall appoint you keeper of the seals (You're nearly but the nail on the head in your list about A.C. and self in your letter!) Unfortunately, I didn't bring the books, but shall bring it to you next week for leisure use. Can you trace the headiness, illustrated in enclosed, worn at an astro ball. (I think in K's X) recently. As the ASHTAROTH came and is for you, and no one else. I'm thrilled about the drawings. By the way, it's useless to remind you to look everything up at 179 before you see the photo is good, I will take some snapshots on Friday. Reminds me I must write to tell you, but must stop. Deep emanations and the S.G. ...

Highlighted sections include references to the 'hidden and private' nature of the secret meeting place and to Norton as Goossens' 'one-and-only pupil' (in *Goetia*) and 'keeper of the seals'. Goossens also alludes to 'A.C. (Aleister Crowley) and self', and to the demon Ashtaroth

It's hard to say - just how I think it was better so from the economic standpoint. I need your physical presence very much, for many reasons. We have many rituals and indulgences to undertake, quite apart from S.M. And I want to take more photos. In which connection:-

(a) please ask your neighbour whether the excessive light in the pictures is due to under-exposure or over-exposure (of the film, not of you!!) and tell him to get some ~~exposure~~ <sup>exposure</sup> ready for George. (The incorporation of the 12 years, in super-imposed shells, sounds attractive)

(b) I think it wise that you don't send any of your small drawings by mail (except if you can anything in a monster package). I will wait for them on Saturday. So don't send anything except in a m-p

(c) Tell G. - I'm thrilled by the conclusion of H. of U. It's better even than I had hoped for!! Also I'm equally thrilled by his drawings, which will go in the wild book.

(d) I don't know yet when I'm returning. It may be very late Friday, or else Saturday a.m.

(e) Did you find Gray??

(f) Am bringing back some masks...

'We have many rituals and indulgences to undertake, quite apart from S.M. [sex magick]. And I want to take more photos...' Note the demonic motif, bottom right






No, I don't know the person (assistant C. of the P.) you mention, who is collaborating with Gav. Extreme caution will be necessary lest a chance remark reveal aught!  
 I long to hear from beautiful Gav.; tell him I have started sketches of H. of V.  
 You don't know what your long letters mean to me; understanding and eloquent they are and happily satisfying to my nature, oceanic, staccato and of other worlds and beings.  
 I am mastering many things; in all of which you figure and help. Even now my bat wings envelop and lift you, as yours often enfold me into Arimanic spheres.  
 Let me know you get this fourth measure. More follows: feed me constantly with yours; the milk and essences of your emanations be always with me, and G. too.  
 My black familiar takes this to you

This postcard refers to 'beautiful Gav' – a reference to Gavin Greenlees – and to Goossens' 'bat wings' which enfold him into Arimanic [sic] spheres'. There is also an allusion to Goossens' 'black familiar', or magical helper-spirit

Gladly make up. Which resembles my ...  
 All show you a castle to and all castles ...  
 You probably received a stupid human dress the colour of which I liked. Throw it away if it bores you. It may do to paint in. Also a transparent oil skin (which you can also wear when it rains, just wait!!) with which you which we'll need for a ritual later.  
 Oh yes, R. ... I know your poor who killed him; he had a fist and a mistress in London, of tremendous charm and knowledge of my job in particular. He said R. had a tongue twice the length of my normal being. This was the secret of his attraction to women. He was ... So the tongue was ...  
 I got to from this evening late Thursday. Perhaps not too late to at least call you, when we can decide on when I can get to my 'heath'! But the next two weeks will be from a sore throat in the matter of suitable dates. Patience, and the coming of June is now an 'itching and comfort'.  
 ALL THE LOWEST AND MOST HELPFUL FAMILIARS TO YOU, AND ASSISTANTS FOR SEANCES, SHALL PROBABLY LOOTIN FOR A SECOND THURSDAY WOULD YOU BRING WINE (222 DAYS IN ME) UNTIL END OF JUNE - I GO THERE THEN AND TO THE BRICKS WITH YOU - BUT NOT ANY MORE



This letter contains references to Hecate and spirit-familiars as well as a drawing of a winged demon, bottom right



USE HALF LEVEL TEASPOONFUL, MASSAGE  
 CREAM INTO SKIN OVER WIDE AREA ON  
 INNER ~~FACE~~ FACE OF THE THIGH (BETWEEN  
 CROTCH AND KNEE) OR ON ABDOMEN. USE ON  
 UNWASHED SKIN. DONT BATHE ANOINTED  
 AREA ONE HOUR BEFORE OR THREE HOURS  
 AFTER. DONT USE DURING MENSTRUAL PERIOD.  
 NO MAN MUST USE THIS UNGUENT  
 IT WOULD BE MORE THAN DANGEROUS

REC. CREME D'EGYPTE  
 PREPARED BY ANNA (PARIS)  
 HERB. CONJ. - DUMB DATE

DJINN  
 FOR

APPLY ONCE A DAY FOR 3, 4 OR 5 DAYS

Here Goossens is providing instructions for Norton's use of the magical unguent  
 'Crème d'Egypte'. He has signed the note 'Djinn' – his magical name

SAT  
 SALAHM, ROIE -- 10-50  
 I CALLED THIS A.M. HOPING  
 MIGHT COLLECT THE FINISHED  
 A. DRAWING. KNOCKED 3-TIMES  
 BUT ALAS NO ANSWER. SAW A  
 LIGHT AND KEY IN YOUR DOOR  
 BUT GUESSED YOU WERE OUT  
 FOR A SPELL. I LEFT THE  
 SECOND HAND COPY OF THE G.B.  
 PROPPED AGAINST YOUR DOOR, AND  
 HOPE YOU FOUND IT SAFELY  
 THERE ON YOUR RETURN.  
 I FOUND IT AT THE OFFICE  
 AFTER LEAVING YOU TH  
 OTHER DAY; HAVE SINCE REA  
 ND AND IT CONFIRMS ALL I  
 NEW OF AC. THOUGH

EXAGGERATES CERTAIN  
 THINGS OVERMUCH.  
 I EXPERIMENTED ON ONE OF  
 THE CAKES OF LIGHT (PG. 64)  
 (NOT SUCCESSFULLY) HOPE YOU WILL  
 HAVE BETTER LUCK WITH  
 THE UNGUENT

I AM FREE FOR 1/2 AN HOUR  
 ABOUT 11:30 A.M. WEDNESDAY  
 MAIL ME A LINE TO SAY  
 IT WILL SUIT YOU BOTH IF I  
 CALL THE THREE GREETINGS GO TO  
 YOU IN THIS.

IN HASTE

In this note to Norton, Goossens mentions that he has been experimenting with  
 'cakes of light' – a specifically Crowleyian reference to sex magick (see Chapter Five).  
 Goossens also refers to the magical unguent he has sent previously



What an extraordinary person you are: our rapport is amazing, and I am  
 shocked by that chart you drew of our time-plane relationships.  
 Undoubtedly it applies to all our astral meetings. I am however working  
 on an unguent (with the one you have as basis) to perfect and bring about  
 our physical transportation. Asmodeus is incised, and  
 the deep growl you mentioned as coming from As. could emanate very truly  
 from the pictured one enclosed. I have been possessed by others, but never  
 hitherto by As. Usually it is in the form of a recumbent —  
 most pleasant and stimulating.  
 Yes I knew P.H. in both phases: — remind me to tell you about our  
 doings together!  
 Is the original of Black Magic really for me? How wonderful of you.  
 Your account of the <sup>dreamlike</sup> Asmodeus is amazing, but I am concerned a bit  
 about their heart attacks. They sound to me rather the after-effects  
 of Benzodrine pills, which would produce just those symptoms especially  
 when you're eating nothing. Please take no more till I've discussed  
 it with you. It may have occult origins, but I can't imagine  
 the beings retaliating on you for any reason in that fashion!  
 The whole thing is disgusting. I am anxious to hear whether there's  
 any alteration in the status quo: it would be too bad if you lost it,  
 though it's ignominious to think that you should have to have recourse to it.

Goossens refers here to 'astral meetings' and a new magical unguent capable of perfecting their 'physical transportation'. Goossens also advises Norton that he is sending her a picture of the demon Asmodeus. He expresses his delight that Norton has offered to give him her drawing *Black Magic* – Plate XVII in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*. Goossens also writes: '... I knew P.H. in both phases: remind me to tell you about our doings together!' This is presumably a reference to Philip Heseltine, who is thought to have provided information on Crowleyian sex magick to Goossens at an earlier period – when they were close friends in England

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