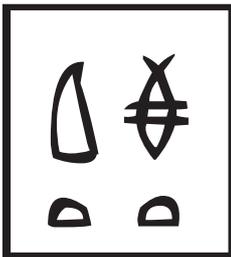
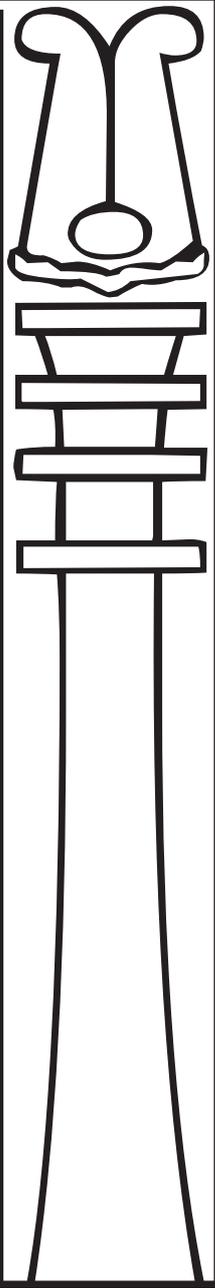



**THE
BLACK
ARTS**
BY
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THE BLACK ARTS

Man is human and a mystery; herein is to be sought all our sorrows, all our joys, all our desires, all our activities. Man is a troublesome creature, inwardly troubled by his consciousness, outwardly troubled by the unconscious, the things which surround him, the "why" and "wherefore" of which fascinate his mind and perplex his heart. We cannot fathom the origin of life nor can we state its purpose; we can but judge of it by inference, and inferences, if we probe them deeply, dissolve into an unknowable ether, an all-pervading miracle. Yet, such as these shadows are, we follow them, and as day creeps out of night so does the conscious emanate from out of the vast and formless body of that unconsciousness which softly enfolds us in its gloom.

Some lie still in the coffin of existence; these are the human sheep who, where the grass of life is green, browse peacefully, and, where it is dust, die or bleat helplessly to others. These others are those who tear their shrouds and hammer at the lid, and with bleeding brow loosen the nails of oblivion, and, through the chinks between mind and soul, peer into the beyond.

"Follow me," cries the priest, the king, the lawyer and the physician, and the human flock follows. Herein is to be revealed a mystery; not of the seeing leading the blind, for all are ultimately sightless, but of a spirit intangible, mysterious, which impels gross human flesh to flow onwards in streamlets and rivers to some unknown and seemingly unknowable sea. This impulse towards movement, whether it be between star and scar, atom and atom, or brain and brain, is the ultimate source of that ancient and yet ever youthful magic which, like a dark and wanton *courtesan*, decked in immortality, dances down the centuries, luring man through cloud and sunshine, Letheanwards, a shadow cast on a shadow.

He who can impel any creature or thing, living or dead, to move, is a magician; whether it be a speck of dust brushed from the table, or the mind of another deranged by his will; for he has made use of an incomprehensible power-gravity or thought. When this power is named, and when this name can be pronounced by all, and all have accepted the shadow for the substance, the image for the reality, hallucinated by the commonplace, man ceasing to think ceases to live intellectually. If a human being should arise, one who can tear away illusion, who can breathe a new life into the corpse, who can grope into the darkness, then his art is called *black*. Dark to him, it is still darker to others, and, disturbed from their

slumbers, they pronounce him to be a harbinger of evil, a black magician, shrouded as he stands before them in the mystery of a little light.

What is the source of this impulse which, while millions slumber fitfully, awakens the few? This is indeed a difficult question. Yet, from a search through history, it would appear to be sometimes love, sometimes fear, sometimes ambition and more than sometimes despair. Nevertheless, whatever its source may be, the valleys through which the river of magic flows are built of the slothfulness of others, those who like sheep browse, but who possess not the understanding to plough, sow and reap, to rend conventions, to awaken the imagination and to compel it to take form, tangible or intangible, real or ideal, it matters not which, for each is but a different aspect of the same shadow.

Thus history will tell us that the black arts are in reality but a revolt against convention, an insurrection against the satiety of images -a war against accepted words. They are black because they are unknown, evil because they unfrock the commonplace and take the bread from the mouths of mumbling priests. Sometimes these arts are terrible and infernal, sometimes they are sublime and celestial, but always they are powerful, compelling hostility or allegiance. Separating the goats from the sheep, they sound a "Deus Vult" and emblazon a new crusade: a crusade against ignorance and oppression, which like a living wind raises the dust of the unconscious and casts it mote by mote into that beam of light which we call the intelligence of man.

An animal is born into this world, it lives and it dies, and its life is its eternity. Man also is an animal, but he differs from the brute in that he knows that there was a time when he was not and that there will be a time when he, as he is, will be no more. The secret of good and evil is the secret of time. I was not, I am, I shall not be, and he who first discovered the truth of time was the first of all the magicians.

Naked and bestial, crouching in the shadows of the twilight, we watch this ancient seer rise in terror as in his mind this truth is born. Now, like a god, he realizes, dimly though it may be, that there are a beginning and an end-two voids spanned by a human arch without abutments. Yet, unlike a god, he cannot fathom what they hold, these twin abysses of eternity. Henceforth man measures himself against God, not for love but for envy; hence do we too measure ourselves against God, not for love but for understanding. Then, as God would not appear, did man invoke him, call upon him, and demons were born, the powers which vibrate from the *Pleroma* of unconsciousness. Some are pleasant to look upon, and others

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fill our nostrils with their stench. Thus are angels and devils created from the inert as it ferments into the active. They are the reflections of a consciousness which to some is without and material, and to others deep within and secret; but, whether they be tangible beings or ideas, it matters not, for in either form they are equally potent.

Then, as the demoniacal hierarchy takes shape, are all things endowed with a semblance of immortality, that is a power over time and consequently over space, and all that space includes, for these are the visible attributes of God, the Timeless One. There are the gods of the rivers and the woods, the mists and the mountains, there are sun gods and moon gods, and star gods and gods of music, of dance, of death and of marriage, of love and of hate. All things become demoniacal, they possess the power to change, that is to quaff from the cup of time. Like unto men are they, eat, drink and wive do they, yet they are not men but the powers of men which, through things material, entice men onwards to states immortal, ultimately, that is, towards the timeless, the conquest of time and the accomplishment of godhood.

As demons walk the earth, so do those who follow nearest become priests, and those who follow at a distance, the congregations of the creeds. Propitiations grow into rituals, for there is an art in giving food and in offering prayer. Canons are evolved and inexorable laws are written. Thus are the Great God and all his servitors, his forces in time, planted in Vedas, Bibles, Zend-Avestas and Korans, and the followers are spoon fed on the narcotics of faith, and time and the knowledge of what time holds secret is wrenched from their minds by obedience to the word of the priest, the terrestrial peddler of celestial chattels.

But thought is a combustible: leave it to man's will and like scattered gunpowder it burns with a little flame; but tamp it by oppression and it explodes, and sometimes will blast an epoch.

As the priest kneaded man's mind into his bread and trod out man's heart into his wine and on human woe and terror fed, some there were, men and also women, old and young, who fled his grasp, and, in the solitude of desert and mountain and forest, offered their souls as a eucharist to the demoniacal rulers of these places. They called upon them, and called not in vain, for in their calling they awake within themselves the very powers which could set them free.

Wherever we look, from time to time do we hear the bugle note of the magical revolt against priestcraft and the enslavement of thought

summoning the devils to form phalanx against the priestconscripted angelic hosts. Thus were the wizard and the witch born, searchers after evil powers, for the good had deserted them, and evil enslaved them and made them what they were. Whither else could they run? Living in dark places they turned to the spirits of night, for the spirits of goodness lay enchained in temples and in mosques, in the churches. and in the cathedrals of the priests.

In Assyria, the cradle of sorcery, we hear the cry mount upwards:

*Urudu-Gar-Lig-Ga Ur-Sag An-Na-Ge
Za-Pa-Ram Me-Ne-A-Ni Hu-Luh-Ha
Gar-Hul Ba-Ab-Sir-Ra Su-U-Me-Ti
Ki Za.-Pa-Ram Sum-Mu U-Me-Ni-De-A*

*Deth-Zu-Hi-A
Tu-Dug-Ga I Dingir-En-Ki-Ga, Ge
Urudu-Gar-Lig-Ga Ur-Sag An-Na-Ge Za, Pa
Ram Me-Ne-A-Ni Hu-Mu-Ra-Ab-Dah-E
Utug-Hul A-La-Hul Ha-Ba-Ra-E.*

"Take thou the potent meteorite of heaven, which by the roar of its awful might removeth all evil. Place him where the thunder roar is uttered, that it may help thee, by the magic of the word *Ea* may the potent meteorite of heaven with its awful roar help thee."

And help them it did, for it awoke within their hearts a faith in their destiny. Now they were no longer alone in their struggle against the throttling rituals of convention. The words leaped from their throats, begotten of their hearts: no longer need they listen to the mumbling of the priest and fearfully tremble, for now they could tremble with joy.

Seven are they! Seven are they!
In the Ocean Deep-seven are they!
Battening in Heaven-seven are they,
Bred in the depths of Ocean.
Not male nor female are they,
But as the roaming wild wind blast.
No wife have they, no son can they beget;
Knowing neither mercy nor pity,
They hearken not to prayer or supplication,
They are as horses reared among the hills....

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Evil was at least their leaguer, and evil though these forces were, they were something, something to rely on and something better than the pauperizing of thought, and, through thought, of action: they breathed freedom like a devastating storm.

In the Middle Ages of Christian rule did once again the spirit of man break the shackles which bound him, and it broke them by an alliance with Satan. Mad, if not insane, would the sorcerer creep forth to some heath or grove, far away from monastery or church, and, bereft of his senses through the gloom of those desolate places, would he shriek to the stars:

Eko! eko! Azarak. Eko! eko! Zomelak!
Zod.-ru-kod e Zod-ru-koo
Zod-ru-koz e Goo-ru.-rrioo!
Eo! Eo! Oo . . . Oo . . . Oo!

Though the words be different, it is the same chant of the Assyrian seer, for it is the conjuration of freedom, freedom which was to beget the arts and sciences of today, that consciousness which, though latent, was unconsciousness when these words were uttered. They were the love murmurings of a new betrothal.

Yet there was method in this madness: it was not all froth and frenzy, it was at times methodical, as methodical as the ritual of the priest, so methodical that the mind became entranced in the operation, carried out of itself and concentrated on the spell, until what was desired was born and to the adept became tangible and alive. Here then is a picture of the witch at her work, and, from it, it will be realized that hers was no light task.

Thrice the brindled cat hath mew'd
Thrice and once the hedge-pig whin'd,
Pour in saw's blood, that hath eaten
Her nine farrow: grease that's sweaten
From the murderer's gibbet throw
Into the flame..,

And yet, these "secret, black and midnight hags," according to the story, were not impotent, for the third apparition which they evoked spake out saying:

Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
- Shall come against him.

- and we all know how the story ended.

Witchcraft of the above type was, in its day, a reality, a power which, through horror, accomplished what the priest should have accomplished through charity. Witchcraft was the grating of the file of truth against the ecclesiastical chains which shackled the reason, it was also a hissing acid which ate into and rotted convention.

From the crude cauldron with its bubbling offal, collected in secrecy and danger and hence potentized by faith and fear, even if but faith in *Sabazios-Adonai*, or fear of *Zabrodax*, we rise one rung on the ladder of the black arts and find oursel ves partaking in the Witches' Sabbath and the Black Mass. He who has read Michelet's *La Sorciere* needs no introduction to this subject, yet he must understand that the true sorceress, with all that she symbolizes, is not the simple witch -she is not so much a seeker after evil as a seeker after truth. In the hut of the sorceress are the arts and sciences re-discovered.

Listen to these murmurings of the past:

There under the stars, while the bats circle the moon, and the toad hops through the thicket, and the frogs splash in the mere, the shepherd whispers to her: how green were the eyes of the wild wolf, how sharp were his claws, how white his teeth, ... how the entrails wriggled on the ground, and the pink brains bubbled out their blood. Then both are silent, for awe fills them as they crouch trembling amongst the hemlock and the foxgloves before the mystery of death.

A little while and she rises and, pulling her hood over her head, sets out alone though the trackless forest, here and there lit by the moon, and, guided by the stars, she reaches the city.

At a small pastern by the tower of the castle, known as the "lover's gate," she halts and whistles thrice, and then, in shrill clear notes, as of some awakened night-bird, calls: "Brother, brother, brother mine!" Soon a chain clanks against the oaken door, and a bolt rumbles back from its staple, and before her, in his red shirt, and his leathern apron, stands her brother, the hangman.

There under the stars she whispers to him, and for a moment he trembles, looking deep into her eyes; then he turns and leaves her.

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Presently, there is a creaking of chains overhead... An owl, awakened - from the gibbet above, where it had been blinking, perched on the shoulder of a corpse, flies shrieking into the night.

Soon he returns; his footsteps resounding heavily along the stone passage, and in his arms he is carrying the dead body of a young man. "He, my little sister," he pants, and for a moment he props his heavy load up against the door of the postern. Then these two, the sorceress and the hangman, silently creep out into the night, back into the gloom of the forest, carrying between them the slumbering spirit of science and art sleeping in the corpse of a young man, whose golden hair streams gleaming in the moonlight, and around whose white throat glistens a snake-like bruise of red, of purple find of black.

There, under the oaks by an age-worn dolmen, did they celebrate their midnight mass.... "Look you! I must needs tell you, I love you well, as you are tonight; you are more desirable than ever you have been before... you are built as a youth should be.... Ah! how long, how long have I loved you!... But, today, I am hungry, hungry for you! ..."

Thus under the *Golden Bough* in the moonlight was the host uplifted, and the shepherd and the hangman and the sorceress broke the bread of necromancy and drank deep of the wine of witchcraft, and swore secrecy over the eucharist of art.

Others swore secrecy too, Friar Bacon in his laboratory, who hid the secret of the discovery of gunpowder in a cryptogram; and others more fervently still as they watched Giordano Bruno blazing at the stake.

Between *auto da fe* and *in pace* the black arts thrive in desolate huts and in out-of-the-way caverns, and thriving they grew grey, not with age but with a light which one day would glow into the brilliance of an increased consciousness. It was in this dull chill twilight of the great awakening that the Middle Ages passed into the licence of the Renaissance, and into the sobriety of the Reformation.

What do we see in these spiritually troublesome times? The sorcerer and sorceress still practise their arts and indulge in their incantations, but we see others working near them, not on heath and in desolate cavern, but in the great cities and at the courts of kings. Paracelsus is half medicine-roan, half scientist. Agrippa travels from university to university seeking weird *things*, but *things* with a meaning: he has a rational objective, the witch had none. Dr. Dee develops clairvoyance, he moulds panticles in

wax, he calls upon a whole hierarchy of angels and angelic forces. Now the magical ceremony, the forging of swords in the moonlight, the compounding of incense, the fashioning of wands *and* sigils, are all endowed with a meaning, and they concentrate the thoughts of the adept on the work at hand: the elixir of life, the philosopher's stone, the transmutation of the metals, of evil into good. And as thought conglobes around desire, so does desire take *form*, warmed as *is* an egg by the body of a brooding hen.

The power of talismans and paticles is a reality when believed in, and little can *be* accomplished without belief. They stimulate the faith of man in the powers which are ever latent in his great unconscious mind, and "atom" by "atom" they endow this unconsciousness with a conscious existence.

These arc the spells by which to re-assume
An empire o'er the disentangled doom;
and again:
To suffer woes which hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy power which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates.

While these strange spells were being cast, and while hope in the spiritual world was dominating power, also was hope dominating power in the material. Here strange men arise, manipulating the elements of earth and water as if they also were paticles of wax and wood. Columbus, Cabot, Vasco da Gama brave the terrors of the ocean-"fighting immensity with a needle." Giovanni della Porta re-discovers the power of steam, Copernicus a new solar system, Newton the force we call gravity. In their day, all these men were still more or less black magicians.

With the unleashing of steam, the world is re-cast; that is, humanity attains a higher consciousness, the latent powers of the mind move. A new priesthood arises-the mechanical engineer and the world is enslaved by the oppression of a stinking smoke. It is no longer so much the soul of man which is harrowed as his body, the interdict is replaced by the furnace, and excommunication by the jig and tool. The transmutation of metals changes, but only in detail, for greed is ever with us. No longer is it sought to transmute lead into silver, but instead blood, the blood and sweat of man, into gold.

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During the Black Age of the steam epoch, we see the old world pageant re-enacted, the oppression of the soul of man, not by fear of heaven but by terror of earth, and, as hope dies, despair is born, a dank wet mist under the cloak of which the sorcerer creeps forth in the form of the anarchist. He is persecuted, and he thrives on persecution; he is a black magician whose heart has swallowed his reason; he is truly mad, but a power to be reckoned with, for, however horribly bubbles his cauldron, it is destined to fertilize another epoch.

From science based on reason arises the rationalist. The black magician of the sixteenth century is now a white-robed priest in the Secular Hall, for his mind has swallowed his heart. Thus it is that we watch, materializing from the backwash of his cold calculations, strange forms--spiritualism, psychical research, theosophy and all the clatter and baby prattle of "higher thought." To the rationalist these are little rumbling urchins, who may be laughed aside; but like children they grow into strapping boys and girls, and some into black magicians. Lake Harris and Daniel Douglas Home are undoubtedly of this type, and, morally, they are burnt at the stake. Then, as years speed by, some enter the "Royal Societies" of the world; they are no longer morally burned for being charlatans, but instead are proclaimed mad, a word which may be intoned in many ways.

What is Madness, what are Nerves? [bellows forth Carlyle]. Ever as before, does Madness remain a mysterious--terrific, altogether infernal boiling up of the Nether Chaotic Deep, through this fair painted Vision of Creation, which swim therein, which we name the Real, was Luther's picture of the Devil less a reality, whether it were formed within the bodily eye or without it? In every all of the wisest soul lies a whole world of internal Madness, an authentic Demon-Empire; out of which, indeed, his world of wisdom has been creatively built together, and now rests there, as in its dark foundations does a habitable flowery Earth-rind.

What indeed is madness but the orgasm between consciousness and unconsciousness; yet today psychology has passed this chaotic union between mind and soul: it is taking form, and one day it will be brought to the bed of a new priesthood. Already have the heralds of the last illusion blazoned forth the coming of the magicians. Freud and Jung and a host of followers have invented psycho-analysis, which today is still pure black magic, the anatomization of the mind by thought potentized by theories in place of pantics, mantras and spells.

In the black cabinet, in place of the cave, the modern witch squats. The cauldron has gone, and in its place Dr. Schrenck-Notzing crouches behind

his camera, while Gustave Geley scribbles in his notebook -Dynamo-Psychism, which is but *Urudu-Gar-Lig-Ga* over' again, or *Zod-ru-koz e Goo-rwmoo* -words, letters arranged according to the grammatical conventions of the days in which they are uttered.

Words, words, yet they are the philters of the emanations of reality, those beams which smite through the shadowy land of unconsciousness and lend to it a little borrowed light. Humanity, in part or whole, loves an ideal, as a man loves a woman. There is the chase and the capture and the kill, and from the spell of kisses, in agony, is born the child which in its day will do as its parents did. Thus it seems that, in the great heart of hearts of things unknowable, the black arts are in reality white, lucid and limpid, capricious willo'-the-wisps which beckon us on over heath and through hut, through cathedral, city and study.

O dim, far-lifted, and mighty dome, Mecca of many minds, mausoleum of many hopes, sad house where all desires fail! For there men enter in with hearts uplifted, and dreaming minds, seeing in those exalted stairs a ladder to fame, in that pompous portico the gate of knowledge, and going in, find but vain vanity, and all but in vain. There, when the long streets are ringing, is silence, there eternal twilight, and the odor of heaviness. But there the blood flows thin and cold and the brain burns adust; there is the hunt of shadows, and the chase of embattled phantoms; a striving against ghosts, and a war that has no victory. Oh dome, tomb of the quick! Surely in thy galleries, where no reverberant voice can call, sighs whisper ever, and mutterings of dead hopes, and there men's souls mount like moths towards the flame, and fall scorched and blackened beneath thee, O dim, far-lifted, and mighty dome!

Thus writes Arthur Machen of the reading-room of the British Museum, that circle of the modern sorcerer who searches for the "why" and the "wherefore," not beneath the stars but under the buckram and leather of printed books. Thus in the laboratory of hallucinations has the black magician toiled, while down the centuries dances Illusion-a dusky *courtesan*, enticing, entrancing, beckoning we know not whither.