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BABA-LOCA-LIPS:

A PRIESTESS, A PROSTITUTE,
AND A PERSISTENT PRIAPISM



To the Goose, and the outcast dead of Cross Bones Graveyard,
and to John Crow, the caretaker.⁹³¹

To all the girls I ever loved before, and to Chris de Burgh.

To the Lady in Red, and to the Lady in Scarlet.

We both read the Bible day and night,
But thou readest black and I read white

William Blake

It is I who am the wife; it is I who am the virgin.
It is I who am pregnant; it is I who am the midwife.
It is I who am the one that comforts pains of travail.
It is my husband who bore me;
and it is I who am his mother.
And it is he who is my father and my lord.
It is he who is my force;
What he desires, he says with reason.
I am in the process of becoming;
yet I have borne a man as lord.⁹³²

On the Origin of the World (late third century)

On Halloween 2006, I forwent my usual ritual of dressing up in rubber shorts and a gasmask codpiece and attended a belated wake for the medieval dead of Cross Bones. It was a fluffy affair, full of dyed-in-the-woolly armpit pagans, but it was certainly necromantic enough for an old romantic like me, and the dead were as lively as ever.

But this story begins with a comic book two weeks before. Alan Moore's stunning *Promethea* series was blowing my mind with every instalment, and then I came to *The Wine of Her Fornications*. The issue in this issue, and the paradox central to Uncle Al's cosmology, is that the Virgin Mary and the Whore of Babylon are one and the same. Whilst this had always appealed to my sense of aesthetics, I couldn't get my head around the concept, but neither was it something I could forget, because in Thelema this secret is tightly bound up with the apocalypse.

Who can say when a story begins? This one winds back at least two more years, to a night promoting streetwear at a Japanese nightclub. I was inspired that night, ranting tirelessly about hemp and graffiti and London, and the B-boys were interested, but I was more interested in women. I was very horny indeed, but there were very few ladies out. This was the curse of working for an uber-trendy drum n' bass brand in a country without much of a scene; it was so cutting-edge that the clubbers were nearly all boys in puffer jackets with vinyl fixations.

So the horn rose, ascended into my throat, and splashed out all over the club in ecstatic praise of the goddess hemp, the fabric, the fuel, the ecologicistics, the medicine, the buzz, and a whole lot more. I left in the morning, alone of course, and boarded a train bound for Kyoto and my deeply lonely abode, a large, dilapidated, two-storey house. It had no furniture, three naked light bulbs, and no decoration at all. The rent was very cheap, however, because the house was awaiting renovation, as were my housemate and I, both of us getting over our respective wives. He took me in when she threw me out for the sixth time, and we spent the time drinking heavily, making misogynistic jokes, and playing computer games in the room with the communal light bulb. Those were the days! A cold winter of discontent with a poisonous caterpillar plague in the garden, the slow throb of loneliness disturbed only by drunken bicycle injuries and suicide notes from the ex.

Figuring that I was unlikely to attract any women in this pitiful state, I had started practising Taoist seed retention, and three weeks in, my nuts were about to explode. The train was not leaving for another half an hour, and I was literally squirming in my seat. Something had to give, and that something was my attitude towards prostitution. This was one of the few sexual taboos I had left intact, and I would sit quietly contemptuous when my expat friends reminisced about their sordid trips to Bangkok. No one was going to bust me at six in the morning, so I jumped off the train and hit the smutty streets of Minami-Hankyu.

Getting laid in the red light district is not as easy as one might imagine. Although prostitution is perfectly legal in Japan, most establishments are closed to foreigners, and it took me half an hour of polite Japanese refusals from scantily clad women before I found a welcome with Ai-chan, who was friendly and had nice teeth. Unfortunately another ugly foreigner found her shortly after I did, and was not cultured enough to wait quietly in the waiting room. He poked his bald head into our tacky love-nest and asked if he could watch in appalling Japanese. Ai-chan shouted “NO!” in English, and pulled the covers over us, an harlot genuinely abashed. She asked me if he was a friend of mine. I shouted “NO!” in English, and sank into the bed in horror, painfully aware of why most knocking shops don’t welcome foreign barbarians like us.

Ai-chan quickly regained her composure, asked him to wait, and fleeced me blind. She also left me hooked on hookers, and there begins a whorey story, because the brothel door is difficult to shut once opened. It lasted about six months, until I witnessed the deeply unreverend Nemu running at full speed through the streets of Kuala Lumpur in a frenzied and ultimately futile search for an open brothel. I was unsatisfied by two other prostitutes that night, but the ladies of the night melted away as the sun came up, and the Reverend Neverend give up his quest frustrated.

Back in England a winter later, I had regained my composure, though not, of course, the mojo of a Western man in Japan. The whore was on my mind again, and this time I decided to approach her with a little more ceremony. A friend and I were conducting a healing ayahuasca session with a third, who had just had an operation for cervical cancer, and it seemed appropriate to invite BABALON, the Thelemic Queen of the cosmic uterus. Her tarot card Lust went on the altar, a naked temptress straddling the beast with seven heads, reins held tightly in her hand and a look of exquisite abandon on her face. In the ceremony I was too busy concentrating on playing the music to think about her, or even look at the card. The beast was reined for the session, we held it together, and two years on, news from her cervix is good.

The following day I awoke with a burning desire to know a particular whore in a Biblical sense. I began chasing women through the pages of *The New Testament*, *The Golden Bough* and *The Greek Myths* with the one-track mind of a depraved divorcee chasing hookers through the streets of Southeast Asia. It soon became clear that there was something about Mary, the name shared by all the significant women in *The New Testament*, but five days later I had a party to get to, so I towelled off my sweaty palms and went to the Cross Bones bash.

The party was held in the SE One club, on the site of a Roman temple to Isis, and featured bawdy medieval drinking songs and sordid verse from the lips of London sex-workers. I had to bully Seth into coming; though he is usually up for a spot of necromancy, his plan was to curl up at home

under a duvet, listening to Goth music and weeping over his ex-girlfriend. My girlfriend refused to come, asking why I was so into dead people. (I told her they usually had fewer hang-ups than the living.) Seth had a great time despite himself. I regretted his company only once, during the group tantric exercise, squeezing our neighbour's hands in time with our perineal muscles and pelvic floors. He was my first tarot teacher and a dedicated Thelemite, so we had occasion to nod knowingly at each other whenever the poetry wound round to the Whore of Babylon, or when the divine harlots sung choruses of the "a-poca-poca-poca-lypse". Widdershins around the altar, where I had left my Lust card, and incantations to the goddess and to he of hoof and horn. A masked priestess gave each of us a word on a leaf-shaped card. Mine was 'Strength', the name for Lust in traditional tarot decks. This was the card that had set the ball rolling in the first place, the energy of the lion that sets all balls rolling.

John was curb-crawling the shadier streets of the astral in his acid-fuelled pimpmobile when he first met his muse, the Goose, a seventeenth century prostitute with an ear for verse. *The Revelation of my mate John* (otherwise known as *The Book of the Goose*) begins as she sets the scene:

For tonight in Hell they are tolling the bell
 For the Whore that lay at the Tabard.
 And well we know how the carrion crow
 Doth feast in our Cross Bones graveyard.⁹³³

"Cross Bones" struck him as a fitting poetic name for an outcast's graveyard, but later John discovered that it really was the name of an unconsecrated burial ground, where bodies unwelcome in Southwark Cathedral cemetery were interred. Outcasts included the Winchester Geese, prostitutes licensed by the Bishop of Winchester since 1161. They rested in peace until the mid 1990s, when London Underground began developing the derelict site, and digging up skeletons. John received his first message in November 1996, since which time he and his chaotic confederates have made a Discordian shrine of this urban wasteland, where they conduct monthly rituals to honour the dead.

The hookers and their John led a procession of pagans, ayahuasqueros and other Halloween fiends from the club to Cross Bones, singing songs of gin and syphilis. We remembered the dead by reading their names, which had been given out on ribbons. I had one for a baby girl, and another for a man from the workhouse who shared a name with the founder of my school. I met some lovely randoms, and ended up fried at a dirty tekno party in Stoke Newington, in my reverend's robe, and my gasmask at last. A nearly divine London harlot gave me a kiss, then turned and left me pining, remembering the SM temptress I once married, whose face glowed scarlet with anger, the lion's mistress who had turned me out and inside-out, who fleeced me of everything worth anything, and left me empty.

On the bus home I did some automatic writing, producing a page of filth (see Appendix Automatic 1). It was the wrong bus so I had to walk for miles. I ended up in A & E, on E, pondering the A (it is indeed an A, not a Y, but best not ask too many whys of hoes; it always adds up the way the lady says). I wasn't sick, just a little dizzy from the MDMAganism, but it was freezing outside and I needed somewhere to catch the flood of words. BABALON's limitless love-juice was drowning me in pungent poetry (see Appendix Automatic 2).

As Noah's flood subsided, the dry island of consciousness rose out of the waters of chaos, and everything that had been remembered stepped off the Ark. Noah's family multiplied, and "the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech".⁹³⁴ They voiced the same idea with the same tongue, to build a tower to the heavens:

And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven⁹³⁵

The first project of the first New World Order was a noble goal, but soon the structure was more beloved than the builders. *The Talmud* relates how even pregnant women were forced to build, and the sick were cursed for their uselessness.⁹³⁶ As the Tower of Babel grew, it took ever more effort to raise masonry to the top. Builders wept for a falling brick, but not for a falling man.

What was the Tower of Babel? There was a seventy-meter ziggurat in Babylon called Etemanaki, the End Platform of Heaven and Earth, but bricks were not all that were baked in Babylon. Babylonians also baked clay tablets pressed with one of the earliest alphabetic scripts, noting treaties and tax agreements beyond argument, fixing regulations and codifying correct conduct. The ziggurat is dust today, but Hammurabi's law code survives, four millennia after it was made, carved into an ancient obelisk in the Louvre.⁹³⁷ Its shadow falls over the entire planet.

Marked tablets formed the foundation of our law codes, built up ever since by kings and presidents. When one truth is inflicted on all, the structure become more important than the builders; Milgram's nightmare begins, and people start dropping from the scaffolding. 'The Truth' is lethal. But whilst the letter of the law is fixed, interpretation is a different matter. Tongues become confuzed, and the project is derailed. Man is saved from his fixations, as 'Truth' is fractured into a multitude of languages.

The Bible relates the word Babel to the Hebrew *balal* (to confuse). It is derived from the Akkadian *bab ili* (the gate of god),⁹³⁸ and this ba-ba-baby talk is also the root of the English 'babble'. In a world of confuzed babblers at the gates of infinity, names are changed to protect the intransient, and meaning streams into seventy currents of consciousness. *Matthew* turns on a new tap with a redefinition in the first chapter of *The New Testament*:

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.⁹³⁹

The prophet referred to is *Isaiah*, translated in the *KJV* as follows:

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin [*sic*] shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.⁹⁴⁰

But what about this virgin? *Mark* and *John* never mention a virgin. The Greek word in *Matthew* is *parthenos*, which does indeed mean virgin, but the Hebrew in *Isaiah* is *almah*, which simply means young woman. This is not an ambiguous Hebrew word; it is a mistranslation. Wherever *almah* is found in *The Old Testament*, the *KJV* renders it ‘virgin’ (or ‘maid’, meaning virgin), but it makes for some silly scripture. In *Proverbs*, for example, the Hebrew clearly refers to a little bump and grind, but in the *KJV*:

There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not: The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid [*sic*].⁹⁴¹

There is nothing wonderful about the way of a man with a virgin; it makes no sense. Another time it makes a nonsense of *The Song of Solomon*:

There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins [*sic*] without number. My dove, my undefiled is but one⁹⁴²

What are all these virgins doing in a harem? If they are virgins, how can there only be one who is not defiled? This wouldn’t fool a rabbi. In translated Jewish Bibles, these virgins are all young women, because to a Jew, altering the word of God is high blasphemy. To anyone with a sense of aesthetics, it is a crime against poetry, surely.

Whilst virginity is exalted in Christianity, there is none of this in *The Old Testament*. When Jephthah, a hero born of a whore, has to sacrifice his only child to fulfil a promise to the Lord, his dutiful daughter insists that he honour his word, and she does not complain about her death. She asks only “let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity”.⁹⁴³ Presumably there were plenty of shepherd boys willing to take the sting out of her sentence. Virginity is a curse in Judaism, not a virtue. Sex is a duty, every day for men of independent means, once a week for scholars and ass-drivers.⁹⁴⁴ Two weeks without nookie was already reasonable grounds for divorce,⁹⁴⁵ and you can leave the hole in the sheet for the Puritans. In Jewish law, lovers must be completely naked, so nothing can come between them.⁹⁴⁶

The Israelites were neither prudish nor moralistic about sex. Judah went a-whoring, and he fathered a great tribe.⁹⁴⁷ In *The Talmud*, Eleazar ben

Dordia “did not leave out any harlot in the world without coming to her”.⁹⁴⁸ At the end of his life, after a revelation which began when the classiest whore in the world farted during coitus, God calls him “Rabbi”, and tells him he is “destined for the life of the world to come!”

So why the mistranslation? Did an honest mistake change the nature of the religion? What about later clerics, who reconstructed the hymens of various *Old Testament* young women to fit in with the evangelist’s fetish? Once is a mistake, as my dad likes to say, twice is stupid, but three times is on purpose. True for a night’s whoring, certainly, and for translating scripture as well. This virgin is here to stay. Did Matthew have a thing for virgins, or was there a particular virgin on his mind?

Virgin mothers were worshipped all over the pagan world, from the Amazon to Babylon. Was it Isis, or Ishtar, or Astarte remembered in *Matthew*, or was this *almah* Al-Mah, the Persian virgin goddess of the moon? One of the earliest virgin mothers was from Sumer, one of the oldest settled civilisations, where some of the oldest surviving text was laid down. Her name was Inanna, and her habits are not what one might expect from a maid. Ancient poems relate how she went scantily clad into town wearing “the pearls of a prostitute”, to play drinking games and “snatch a man from the tavern”.⁹⁴⁹ “She praised herself, full of delight at her... remarkable genitals”,⁹⁵⁰ but she was always a virgin, regardless of what she got up to. Like the moon, and like a woman, she always returns to her pristine state, ready to bear again.

Inanna was goddess of many things, including shepherds,⁹⁵¹ carpenters,⁹⁵² love, sex, and temple lovers.⁹⁵³ Her priestesses kept a sacred institution, a ritual dramatisation of the value of sexual love, and even respectable married laywomen would make love to strangers who approached in the darkness and left a coin. This is called “sacred prostitution” in modern terminology, but the term is deceptive, because of what prostitution means to us. Back in the day, these women were devout temple attendants performing a vital service for the community, a role that is still necessary today, but performed with less ceremony in scummy hotels and backstreets. The sacred harlot, the Har of Babylon, is remembered as the Whore of Babylon. She was one of many virgin mothers who bore solar heroes on the winter solstice, as Virgo popped over the horizon, saviours destined to be murdered. Whilst the mythology survives in part, his mother’s nature has been forgotten. But is *The New Testament* betrayed by a smudge of scarlet lipstick?

In *The Second Book of Kings*, Ashtoreth is the abomination of the Zidonians, This is Astarte, who was called Asat in Egypt (whom we know as Isis), mother of the saviour Horus. Early Christian images of the virgin and child depicted Jesus suckling at his



Inanna



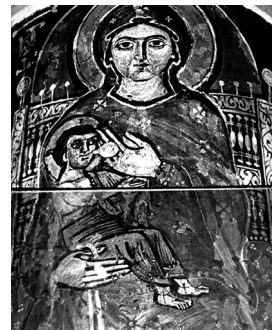
Isis and Horus

mother's breast, as did ancient Egyptian representations of Horus and Asat, though Mary's breast was covered up as Christianity became increasingly prudish. Asat was protectress of the dying god Azar (Osiris), and she was addressed as *Meri* in Egyptian, meaning beloved.⁹⁵⁴ In *The New Testament*, all the Marys with the exception of the virgin are helpers or protectresses. Mary Magdalene accompanies Jesus to his death and to his tomb,⁹⁵⁵ where she watches over him, and is the first to meet him after his resurrection.⁹⁵⁶ The Mary in *Romans* "bestowed much labour on us",⁹⁵⁷ and another from *Acts* hides St. Peter when he is on the run.⁹⁵⁸

Another Mary is a helpful soul who spends much of her time weeping over her brother Lazarus, who had been dead for four days. Lazarus is the only character besides Christ resurrected in *The Bible*. In Egyptian mythology, Asat wept over her brother Azar until he was resurrected. Azar's name, Latinised, becomes Azarus, and with an honorary "El" (like *El Shaddai*), the name becomes a familiar El Azarus, or Lazarus. Mary sister of Lazarus spends a year's wages on ointment to anoint Jesus' feet,⁹⁵⁹ an extremely significant act which makes Jesus the Messiah (literally, 'anointed one'). Two verses later, the Messiah is betrayed as Azar was betrayed, setting the scene for his execution and resurrection.⁹⁶⁰ Asat's sister Nephytys also took part in Azar's resurrection. She was also titled *Meri*, and hence both sisters together were called by the plural *Merti*.⁹⁶¹ This is very close to Marta (Martha in English), the name of Lazarus' other sister.⁹⁶²

There is something else about Mary, something both exalted and shameful. The anointer is named in *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*, but in *Luke* she is unnamed, and she is not connected with Lazarus. It is also in *Luke* that she does more than just anoint his feet. She showers him with kisses, and gives his feet some serious attention.⁹⁶³ We learn "what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner",⁹⁶⁴ and the people pass judgement upon her, but "her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much."⁹⁶⁵

Luke brings the holy harlot back into the story in this pivotal role as Messiah maker, at a time when she was falling out of favour in the Roman world. The geographer Strabo wrote in 23AD that sacred prostitution continued at the Temple of Aphrodite in Corinth, but he called it "wholly shameful".⁹⁶⁶ Whether he actually visited is unknown, but it shows that the idea was still in currency, and frowned upon in his time. Perhaps this is why the other canonical Gospels, which give the anointer the honourable name Mary, do not allude to her harlotry. Mary Magdalene is one of those who "ministered unto him of their substance".⁹⁶⁷ She had her demons, but she was no slapper. All



Mary and Jesus

the other Marys are spotless, but the unnamed Messiah-maker in *Luke* was “a sinner”.

It was no simple task merging the exalted feminine of the old pagan world with the paternalistic mores of the Hebrews and the Roman Empire, and the explosive success of early Christianity is a testament to the ingenuity of its authors.⁹⁶⁸ Inevitably, however, and tragically, Christianity was institutionalised and sanitised as it grew. Any ambiguity about the anointer was ironed out by Pope Gregory in 591, who ruled that the sinner’s sin was sexual, and that Mary Magdalene, Mary sister of Lazarus, and the unnamed sinner, were one and the same hussy.⁹⁶⁹ The beloved nurturer was dragged from the foot of the Cross of the King to the grimy streets of King’s Cross. The work of her priestesses became the shame of prostitution, and there begins a tale of misogyny and the repression of female sexuality, which continues to impoverish both women and men of Christendom today. Mary Magdalene was Jesus’ lover in *The Gospel of Philip*, but such scandalous stories were purged from the Biblical canon. The only woman worthy of devotion was the Virgin, who most certainly does not put out, not for love nor money. Within a few centuries, aging celibate church fathers were decrying the perils of sex. St. Ambrose exalted virginity in lengthy prose, and St. Jerome went as far as to say that even martyrdom could barely cleanse a woman of the stain of the evil institution of marriage. St. Augustine argued how both impotency and unwanted erections reveal how sex turned the body against the will. (St. Augustine, who was a genuinely compassionate and forward thinking man, lamented that we have more control over our farts than our willies, evidenced by the fact that many can produce melodies at will from their bottoms.⁹⁷⁰) Christianity had become a dreadfully frigid faith most unlike its Jewish and pagan roots.

Goddesses worth their salt, however, are not in the habit of being dominated by stuffy old clerics, at least not for long; the holy whore went underground. Asat’s sacred geese were sacrificed well into the Common Era, all the way from North Africa to South Londinium. Goosey-goosey gander waddled across the continents and the millennia, upstairs, downstairs and in the master’s chamber, and all the way to Medieval England, where the Old English term for prostitute was ‘goose’.⁹⁷¹ The Winchester Geese lived in the Liberty of the Clink, and were buried in Cross Bones graveyard, where they rested in disgrace, until London Underground diggers disturbed their sleep.

Asat may have been forgotten, but her rites continue to this day at Easter. The name ‘Easter’ derives from Astarte, and the festival was a heathen fertility rite. It is mentioned only once in *The Bible*; the evil King Herod attends Easter as Peter languishes in his dungeon awaiting execution.⁹⁷² Hot cross buns were offered to pagan gods 1500 years before Christ. The Easter pig is eaten for the boar that killed Ishtar’s lover Tammuz, whose rites are called “abominations” in *Ezekiel*,⁹⁷³ and he is still mourned today

with forty days of lent. There are no bunnies in *The Bible*. The Easter bunny hopping about delighting Christian children is a celebration of the defining characteristic of a rabbit, which is sex, and the eggs he distributes are, of course, fertility symbols.

It is obvious when you think about it, but thinking is exactly what church fathers sought to prevent, with threats of excommunication, such as the papal decree of 431:

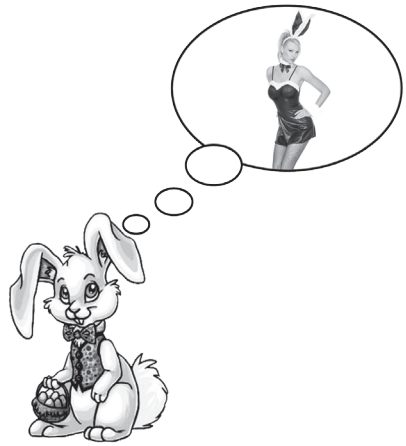
If any one refuses to confess that the Emmanuel is in truth God, and therefore that the holy Virgin is Mother of God, for she gave birth after a fleshly manner to the Word of God made flesh; let him be anathema.⁹⁷⁴

Like Inanna, Mary is always a virgin, and is remembered as such in the Greek Orthodox liturgy, where every mention of her name is prefixed with the words “always virgin”. Unlike Inanna, however, her virginity was protected by a new magick, which suppressed thought with fear. Mary’s virginity was far too questionable to be questioned. Catholic dogmas concerning Mary multiplied, and soon Catholics were also terrified into accepting that the immaculate conception was a unique event, and that Mary was a virgin until death, at which point her entire body, including her immaculate hymen, ascended into heaven.⁹⁷⁵ The Pope was still issuing threats in 1950:

If anyone, which God forbid, should dare wilfully to deny or to call into doubt that which we have defined, let him know that he has fallen away completely from the divine and Catholic Faith.⁹⁷⁶

The pagan origins of Christianity have always upset purists. Jehovah’s Witnesses valiantly attempted to chase the heathen from their midst, ditching crosses, candles, Easter and Christmas, retaining little more than a God-fearing frown. For the Witnesses, the party comes at the end of time. They give eschatology a bad name, as far as I am concerned; I like to think that my group is the complete opposite of theirs. Wherever Christians gather there is the danger of Christian fascism, and sadly Daime is no exception, but for the most part we love pagan wisdom, and we shout “Viva!” for **all** the beings of the Celestial Court to close our ceremonies. Whereas the Witnesses dream of a past age of purity, our party is a post-modern mash-up in a free house, where all are welcome, and we sing so loud that the gods start to boogie.

The virgin mother has been with us for at least 6,000 years; by now we should be grown up enough to learn the truth about where her baby comes from. The Virgin Mary is the goddess of the new moon, but the cycle continues. The goddess of the full moon is the divine temptress, the nurturer for whom all nature swells into readiness, whether lemons or lingams. Mary Magdalene carries a clue in her name, the root of which is *gadol*, meaning



both 'large' and 'grow' in Hebrew. She accepts all comers into her double-D cup of compassion. The goddess of the full moon accepts us because she knows us and the depravity of our desires. She knows we are all the same with our trousers down. She has seen it all before, she forgives and keeps giving. It is time for us to reciprocate, to love her as she was loved in ancient times.

Greeks and Indians sculpted sexy women for their temples. Inca effigies have enormous knockers. Women are sexy! They are nurturing, and comforting, and divine, but Christendom got stuck with a virgin fixation. The sacred harlot became a demon, like all deities under the force of repression. Her fleshy desires became a disgrace, but her rites continue in alleyways, valued in rocks of crack. The goddess has been defiled and her divine name made vulgar. In India she was Kunti, who summoned gods with a secret mantra and bore their children. In Rome she was Cunina, protectress of babies. Derivatives of the sacred C-word were titles for goddesses, priestesses and wise-women, including, perhaps, our own 'Queen', but the word is our dirtiest, so offensive that well-raised American girls cry if you say it with enough malice. Our hang-ups about the word, the organ, and the woman surrounding it are abstractions built upon a confused mess of neuroses. Why does a healthy appetite make a slut of a woman and a stud of a man? Dogs aren't offended by cunts, nor by the word 'cunt'. What exactly are we scared of?

The feminine shifts between absolutes, indistinct in the moonlight, moving in and out of balance, swelling up and shrinking down, and always returning to the source. The mother is confuzing and contradictory, one thing and then the other, and this constant wave is the wellspring of life. The Law of the Lord is laid down with a word, and the wave collapses into one particle, going one way. Its potential is fixed, later to be falsified. The masculine limits, but the cosmic cervix is limitless. Code gestates quietly until it tumbles fully formed and perfect into the world as a symphony, a cosmology, or a baby. But with the mystery of infinity comes the terror of the black hole. She drives men to poetry and to murder, and all for nothing. The feminine is a great gaping 0, pungent, potent, and dripping with blood.

The Hebrews never discovered zero, and neither did the Greeks. It was imported from India in the thirteenth century, but even then few understood it. It is more irrational than the irrational numbers the Greeks discovered, more invisible than negative numbers. It is an affront to Aristotle, neither one thing nor the other, neither negative nor positive, so how can it be anything? And yet it is not the same as nothing. 'Zero children' is not the same as

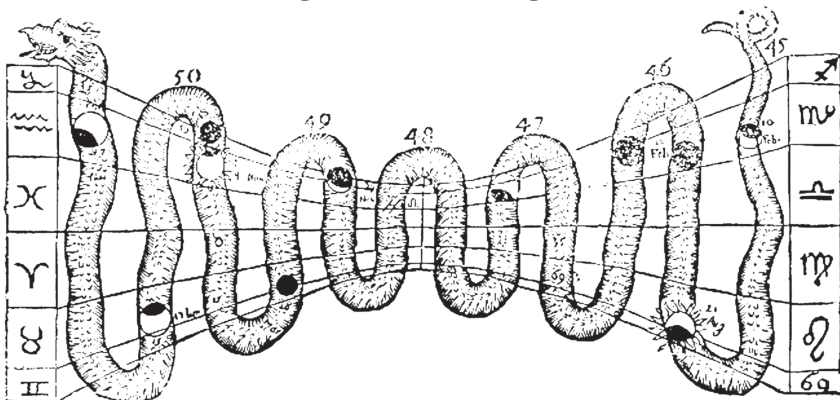


'an empty playground'. Zero is the assertion of nilness. It is empty potential, and that is something quite different.

Our master is a sun god, an 'I' drawn across the sky, following his will(y) on his missions, penetrating territories, parching seas, illuminating and casting into darkness as he dies at the end of the day. The world fractures along the edge of sense defined. Stuck here in the rational mind, it is only the constant confus(z?)ion of words and definitions that allows for reinterpretation and regeneration. Creative writing redefines the boundaries. *Matthew's* ingenious slight of hand brought the virgin mother into the narrative, and some influential patriarchs thought it best to keep mum. *YHVH*, for all his dynamism, is not an easy father to get along with, *Elohim* is too dimensionless to deal with, and Jesus on the cross has his own concerns to worry about. The goddess, however, is ready to receive you without judgement.

Pagans exalted all three phases of the moon and of womanhood. Persephone, Diana and Brigit of the new moon are perfectly pure and full of potential, virgins associated with birth and the birthing room. Selene, Luna and Ceres are full moon goddesses, nurturers, protectors, and lovers, with soft curves to cradle our confuzed heads. Her rite is marriage and her sacred place the nuptial bed. After a period of plump fecundity the moon shrinks into the crone, whose names are Kali, Hecate and Nephytys, a wise old woman with a pickled face and a head full of craft. She sees through your charm, and has a herb for every illness, if you have the humility to ask. The crone presides over death and the deathbed; she guides the dead to the underworld, and converses with the spirits of their world.

The waning moon suffered a similar fate to the full moon. Her titles 'crone', 'hag' and 'witch' became insults. Her craft was pushed underground. She was denied in the ninth century, and drowned and hanged from the fourteenth century. The fire of persecution began to roar in the sixteenth century, with the Spanish Inquisition adding fuel on one side and Luther fanning the flames on the other.⁹⁷⁷ It burned well into the eighteenth century, as the Age of Reason was constructed, and even today the hag continues to suffer. Old women crumbling alone in nursing homes are no less victims of



this ugly prejudice than was Helen Duncan, the medium described in ‘São Miguel in Stockwell’.

The Biblical Marys appear in order of the phases of the moon. The Virgin Mary is at the beginning and leaves after a few chapters. Mary the nurturer appears in various guises, pushing the story in the middle, and the crone arrives at the end as Mary mother of James, attending Jesus’ death, following the body to the grave,^{978 979} sitting over the sepulchre,⁹⁸⁰ and bringing spices to anoint the corpse.⁹⁸¹ Along with Mary Magdalene, she is the first to learn of the resurrection.⁹⁸²

Matthew was not the first Gospel written, but it is the first read. It appears to be a close copy of *Mark* with added pagan ideas, such as the star of Bethlehem and the virgin birth. It is the most mystical of the canonical Gospels, the only one that mentions dreams, but there were Christian scriptures far more mysterious. All sorts were mixing in the Hellenistic crucible, including Egyptians, Jews, Romans, Arabs, Africans, and Oriental kings wandering through, following stars, carrying strange spices. Different traditions explored the story in various directions for 200 years, leaving as many as fifty contradictory Gospels reflecting a broad spectrum of belief. *The Gospel of Thomas* appears to be older than the canonical Gospels, and it is laden with mystical code and paradox, where the end is the beginning, where giving money to the poor harms the spirit (which make sense in the welfare state). In *The Gospel of Judas*, written within a few decades of the canonical gospels, Jesus tells his most beloved disciple “you will exceed all of them. For you will sacrifice the man that clothed me.”⁹⁸³

For many Gnostics, the Virgin Birth was the mystery of the feminine Holy Spirit giving birth to the cosmos, without anything fertilising it. *The Gospel of Philip* lampoons the orthodox position:

Some said, “Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit.” They are in error. They do not know what they are saying. When did a woman ever conceive by a woman?⁹⁸⁴

As Christianity became more mainstream, the lunatic fringe became a sensible side parting. The messy mop of Christianity was trimmed to make it as sensible as possible, and as easy to control. Gnostic sects were stamped out, texts were declared heretical, and those that were not hidden were torched. Irineus of Lyons, a converted pagan with a political agenda, and the man who developed the idea of original sin, selected which Gospels ended up in *The Bible*; he censored most stories alluding to a nonmaterial level of reality. He cut *The Acts of John*, where Jesus’ steps leave no footprints,⁹⁸⁵ and *The Apocalypse of Peter*, where Peter goes into a trance and sees “a new light greater than the light of day”.⁹⁸⁶ In the official canon, doubting Thomas touches the resurrected Jesus, keeping the story in the material world, whereas in most Gnostic stories his hand passes through. The least

mystical of all Gospels is *Luke*, which takes place entirely in the physical world, and it is here that the anointing woman is unnamed and sinful.

For most Gnostics, the resurrection was not fleshy but spiritual; the spirit of Jesus returns in dreams, trance, and intuition. The creed, however, made resurrection “in the flesh” a dogma to be affirmed weekly, questioned on pain of eternal damnation. This nasty piece of Roman politics was incorporated into the church liturgy, despite having no basis whatsoever in *The Bible*, nor in paganism. *The Gospel of Philip* encourages Christians to follow the Holy Spirit rather than such articles of faith. The mistrust of words in this banned gospel make it sound almost Taoist, as does the monistic philosophy expounded.

As with censorship in the Church of Scyense, the censorship of Gnosticism was a political exercise, and many of the same issues arose, including the existence of invisible powers and questions of authority. It is almost impossible to control a group of enthusiasts who take instructions not from appointed authorities, but directly from invisible entities in dreams or visions. In *The Gospel of Mary*, Jesus appears to his favourite disciple in a vision and tells her to “not lay down any rules beyond what I appointed you, and do not give a law like the lawgiver lest you be constrained by it.”⁹⁸⁷ This is not conducive to the ambitions of an empire. Tertullian insisted that a Church meeting was only valid with a bishop (*poimen* in Greek, meaning shepherd), and the bishop of Antioch explained how separation from one’s bishop meant separation “not only from the church, but from God himself.”⁹⁸⁸

For Gnostics, it was not the “dry canal”⁹⁸⁹ of a bishop that validated a church but the Holy Spirit, which was invisible but instantly recognisable. Adam was the *psyche*, or thinker, and Eve was the *pneuma*, or spirit, the connection to the invisible world. Some churches left the ceremony in the hands of the Holy Spirit, choosing the prayer leader by lot,⁹⁹⁰ or waiting in silence until someone was moved to speak, as do modern Quakers. The Holy Spirit, personified as the lovely Sophia, makes Adam’s snake rise and opens his eyes. Her ecstasies bring intimate knowledge, or *gnosis*, to the Gnostic, and she gave out far too much authority. Trance, miraculous healing and communication with spirits were everyday events in the Hellenistic world, and in one church, the initiation ceremony concluded with the words “Behold, Grace has come upon you; open your mouth, and prophesy.”⁹⁹¹

In the early years of Christianity, the feminine was in the ascendant. Many churches ditched the Jewish custom of segregating the sexes during prayer, and in some churches women were uttering prophecies and even leading ceremonies. Church fathers, however, banned the worship of Mary,⁹⁹² and Tertullian preferred “the devil’s gateway” in her traditional role:

* Despite the prohibition, Mary appears more important than her son in many churches. In Brazil, even Catholics identify her with the African

Do you not know that you are each an Eve? The sentence of God on your sex lives on in this age; the guilt, necessarily, lives on too.⁹⁹³

Tertullian filled his free moments fantasising about and gloating over the eternal torment awaiting scholars, poets, playwrights, philosophers and dancers among others,⁹⁹⁴ but whilst his spiteful imagination was rich, his theology was poor. He knew he was on shaky ground when he wrote that the resurrection of the flesh “must be believed, because it is absurd”.⁹⁹⁵ By the end of his life he had disavowed most of his early anti-Gnostic polemic, but his immature convictions became a central part of Church doctrine. The Holy Spirit was bound and gagged, the passage of the moon was arrested at the first stage, leaving us with a third of a goddess and an irrational fear of the irrational, a culture where feminine wisdom was removed from the discussion. Christians, with nothing better to believe in, fell into line behind their shepherds as a flock of docile sheep, and occasionally a gang of battering rams. But the lusty lion eats sheep for breakfast.

Gnostics questioned authority all the way from bishops up to *YHVH* Himself. He was Yao, the demiurge, a limited and ignorant being, master of a world where a perfectly innocent man is tortured and executed.⁹⁹⁶ He punishes Adam in envy⁹⁹⁷ and floods the world out of spite.⁹⁹⁸ He demands you “serve him in fear and slavery all the days of your life”. These ideas were quite common once; they are heretical today because of the political acumen of early church fathers.

There is a middle way between angry rejection of *YHVH* and capitulation to Him. This Lord is a part of us, and a condition of our world, to be accepted and observed. Whilst conditions **can** be overcome, He and His bishops have dominated us for millennia, and recently His Gospel of one true truth has been taken over by scientists and lawmakers who, like He, are convinced they know it all. *YHVH* censors BABALON's narrative, and filters out rays of infinity, but time is on her side. She flows on, a babbling brook, whilst he scribbles along, a bloody long book. *YHVH* thrust his way from A to Y, rubbing his way around the world, but all this friction is coming to a sticky end. BABALON keeps coming, a multiple, perpetual orgasm, pagan love juice streaming sweet scents of infinity, whereas His sense is finite. She swells, bears, shrivels, and reverts to her immaculate state. BABALON is mother of all and mistress of forms. Poetry tumbles from her void, lubricated with the intoxicating potion of liquid intelligence. She is the ever-changing moon, and He is an oldskool hardcore tune, remixed until the end of time.

The world begins with Mama. First comes Ma, Mama, Mum, Ima (Hebrew), Mae (Portuguese), and Mary, Mama's mammaries, massive and milky and mine, for meeeeeee! Baby-talk begins as cries and voiced exhalations, usually *maa's*, *uum's*, *aaam's*, *maam's* and *mum's*. *Nana*

Iemanja, Queen of the Stars and the Sea, and the mother of fishes. She often seems more beloved than the fisherman.

and *Inanna* are mindlessly uttered. These are the Yoruba and Sumerian mother goddesses. *Maa* can mean 'measure' in Sanskrit, marking out the **matrix** and making the world. *Mmmm* describes pleasure. It is the sweet sound of sex, as the cosmic cervix draws us in, and makes everyone moan. "Tell me about your mother", says the shrink, but he already knows. *Mmmm* may also be all the noise a dying man can make. Mother Mary is with us at the birth, the nuptial bed, and the deathbed, with a different face at each.

Outside of these sacred places, however, some sense is required of us. *Ma* is where a baby finds her voice, but *ba* is the first word, an easy plosive phoneme somewhere between the immensity of *ma* and the point of *pah*, between utterance and eloquence. *Ma-ma-ma* comes endlessly and mindlessly from a baby's mouth. Once we get to *pah* and *fah*, *father*, *papa*, *pater* (Latin) and *pitara* (Sanskrit), we know who we're talking about, but thoughts begin with a *bah*. *The Bible* begins "in the beginning" with "**B**ereshit", not the first but the second Hebrew letter, and it is forbidden to inquire into the breath of *aleph* before the *beth*.⁹⁹⁹ Now we're talkin', but listen to the sense we're making. We're babies talking boobies and *baba*. *Baba* is slang for 'poo' in Japanese, but *ba* is also the root of aunty, and *Baa-san* means granny. In Gujarati mother is *ba*, and in Greek it is *buhā*; it is feminine, but over in Yoruba lands, *baba* is father, and in Hebrew father is *abba*. *Ab-* is a masculine root in Hebrew, and macho man **A**braham was the root of the tribe, beginning with the breath of *aleph* followed by *beth*. *Ba* crosses the border, as yet undecided what it wants to mean. This is where BABALON babbles and bubbles, forming sense and nonsense at the edge of the cosmic cervix, before 'who's yer *dada*?' becomes a question. Phonemes frame coded chaos, and the world is cut into shape. Mama / Papa is the first division, and some of the first words learned, soon followed by other dualities: on / off, hot / cold, up / down and so on. Now spend the rest of your life trying to get over that one...

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God",¹⁰⁰⁰ but when the divine word is uttered, the aeon crumbles. It is the beginning and the end, the Alpha, the Omega, and the mega-Om, the opening of the cosmic joke and its rib-splitting punch line. The word which contains all words is the set that contains all sets.* All other words are limited, bound at both ends. BABALON will be bound, and you can bend her any way you wish, but whatever kinky position you have in mind, she ends up on top. Entering her mysteries at the point of ecstasy, sense fails as blinding blackness descends. The magician penetrates the unconscious void, his wand firm amidst the undulations. From here he can direct his will where he will, and shape magick worlds with magick words.

* Georg Cantor, a pioneer of number theory, began the first of many extended stays in the nuthouse after postulating and trying to get his head around the infinite set.

The goddess' cycle generates a stable world, but this world doesn't go anywhere. *YHVH* breaks through the wave, His devastating intervention causing permanent transformation. His name changed over the rises and falls of empires, but His story has been roughly the same, ever since stories have been pressed into clay, ever since Gilgamesh spurned the goddess of love to trek to the end of the earth in a futile quest for immortality. *YHVH*'s earthly representatives wrote the law on a monolith raised over Babylon. His lawyers started the oldest argument, and are still holding freedom hostage. He is *Yaldabaoth*, 'child of chaos', order arising from the noise of the void. He is the phallus, erect with desire, and He makes the goddess writhe when He respects her infinity over His limits. But when He offers her the rank shabbiness of Mr. Loverman, He degrades her, and sickness follows.

In the beginning was the Word, which split into a confuzion of tongues and perspectives to interpret our beautiful universe. Under the homogenising force of Christianity, most of the world was united, but for this to happen the moon had to be fixed and the tides held back. The Western psyche has finally grown up enough to enjoy Sophia's many tongues in his ear, and just in the nick of time. Nukes, gung-ho bioengineering, rampant materialism and fundamentalist fuckwits threaten our survival, but meanwhile new technologies force us into a global system, a net that can stretch rather than a tower that can fall. It grows by forming links rather than by pressing down on old foundations. It brings us together whilst maintaining our space. We are a few clicks, not bricks, away from New Jerusalem, and a few ticks away from complete annihilation. Sit back and enjoy the grand-finale. The goddess is returning, and she's still a virgin, but this time she's in fishnets.

It is time to remember her, succulent and delicious, and to give her the love she deserves. The virgin planet is long since fucked, rubbed raw by the jealous god manhandling her and intellectual rapists forcing themselves upon her, siring bastards. She can't help us anymore; she is not present at the resurrection. It is time to get a curvier goddess with "remarkable genitals" back on top where she belongs. She is eying you across the cosmic dance-floor, waiting for you to come over to her side. Her pheromones permeate the air with significance, and the magick of the everyday. Feel her rhythms, and your step gets funkier. Caress her curves and your clumsy desires are transformed. Her dark eyes bewitch, and she invites your embrace. Kiss her and the void is at the tip of your tongue, for she is aching with fertility. She lives for loving touches in the right places, but only a serious pervert goes looking for the G-spot with an endoscope.

The divine harlot teases us to give up our currency of exchange, the meaning we make of the world. She lures us across the abyss into wordless silence. She strips us of our material attachments and draws us up into the universal current, one small step for a man, one giant leap for a tin-canned mind. The beast that sends a respectable reverend running wild through the

streets of Kuala Lumpur can be yoked and redirected towards the infinite. Hold tight the reins, for the clear light outshines the red. The whore and the virgin are one, a mirror reflecting what you offer, an empty page dreaming of stories, a quiet space aching for song. Touched by the wand, she erupts in a fountain of words, ever-changing, redefining and recreating. Approach as you will, and receive what you deserve. Let her fleece you of everything you own, let her take you into her chamber on her terms, and she will open your eyes to the universe: Yin-yang, thank-you Ma'am! Offer her arguments and rationalisations, however, and she might tear out your balls. However illogical and wrong it is, for her it is right, even if the neighbours are complaining, even if the last bus is leaving, even if the world is ending.

The goddess is a mega-babe, but occasionally something dreadful comes tearing out of the void. We are due for a tremendous whack of PMT. There will be rivers of blood, hot flushes, violent mood-swings and broken crockery as the womb is cleared to make way for the birth of the New Aeon. A small-minded man deserts his beloved at a time like this, but a wise man keeps his head down, sweeping up what she smashes up, strong but silent at the eye of the storm, bringing her cups of tea as they pass through this difficult period together.

'Strength' was not the only card Uncle Al renamed. He also changed the final card from 'The World' to 'The Universe', expanding horizons for the New Aeon. As the sun prepares to change its ways to save our souls and cool off Mother Earth, the awakened are breaking through the scales of this dimension into the astral, and into galactic consciousness. Kepler's intuition about the harmonies in the solar system has been proved true with modern measurements.¹⁰⁰¹ The sizes, speeds and positions of the planets are governed by mathematical constants and laws, and related to our musical scale. The maths is too complex to go into here, but the reason that the moon is exactly the right size to obscure the sun during an eclipse is because of the exquisite order governing the sizes and positions of the heavenly bodies.

The solar system is swimming in harmonic relationships, but macro-organisation stretches even beyond it into the apparent chaos of the galaxy. Magnetic fields have recently been discovered acting across galaxies, coherent domains over distances hitherto unimagined by physicists.¹⁰⁰² Sirius, the star of BABALON, is the brightest star in the sky, and almost the same size as our sun, but not quite. The ratio is an intriguing 1:1.053, a harmonic constant precise to three decimal places, putting the stars into resonance. The same ratio is said to be coded into the sizes of the pyramids, and other astronomical harmonics are coded into Stone Henge and Mayan monuments.¹⁰⁰³

Oh my goodness gracious goddess, things are getting Sirius! Here at the end, the reverend reveals himself, with whores and heresies from East Asia to Outer Space, my goodness graceless godless me! Listen carefully, you sons

of virgins and sons of whores, you daughters of purity and sin, listen to the ba-ba-bits and bobs broadcast on Radio BABALON. There is sense amongst the nonsense, order amidst the chaos, and meaning in the madness. All this crazy maths is a bit far-fetched for my pulpit, to be honest, but call it what you like, Starseed transmissions or amphibious extraterrestrials, there is something about Sirius that attracts the attention of the skyward bound. I could go on about Sirius at length, others have, at great length, but *Nemu's End* has an impending and very final deadline, and I don't have time to sift the chod from the chaff. I prefer to dream. And you are invited.

Perhaps Uncle Al's greatest service to humanity was to get together with Auntie Frieda and redesign the tarot deck. Tarot is all about revelation. A deck of cards is a random number generator par excellence. The cut pulls code from the chaos of the shuffle, throwing out a story of numbers and elements, princes and players to reveal the themes beneath the surface. Each of the twenty-two tarot trumps represents one of the twenty-two chapters of *Revelation*, and trumps are named after the trumpets the angels blow in this intriguing book. There is one final trump Uncle Al renamed, the second last, the penultimate step on the Fool's journey towards 'The Universe' and understanding of the whole. It was called 'The Final Judgment' in traditional decks, but he called it 'The Aeon', because...

...shhhhhhhhhh...

Perhaps we should keep quiet about that.

