L’Espace Temporel
Passage between Analog and Digital

Sound is a process carried out over time; music is the design of this process (through sound). Music nominates periods of time particularly through historically specified aesthetic strategies and principles that are likewise reflected in the respective tonal images and structures. Moreover, sound also communicates perceptual patterns of spatial orientation. Psycho-acoustic associations of space, for example, are simulated in dependence upon frequency level—high for close proximity, low for distance. Physically speaking, space in the context of sound is linked with its own echo. According to the principle of the echo sounder (sonic depth finder/altimeter), the time between the occurrence of a sound and its echo gives rise to the imagination of a distance. Under the motto L’Espace Temporel, spaces and time-windows are also imagined in a way that reflects back sound graphic images.

The concert evening constitutes a further development of the synesthetic procedure that was produced in 2003 in the form of visualized concerts entitled Principles of Indeterminism with reference to codes as “notation systems” realized acoustically and graphically in equal measure. The possibility of taking this initial experiment to a more profound level was fostered by the constellation of Ars Electronica, the Bruckner Orchestra, and their shared interest in unconventional, trans-disciplinary performative practices. The project confronts listeners with tonal spaces and time windows at the nexus of instrumental music, digital sound synthesis, live electronics and remix. In and around the Brucknerhaus, it will open passages ranging across the entire spectrum of contemporary music and soundart, and establish a linkage with the visual worlds of digital, real-time graphics.

Passage between Improvisation and Interpretation

-10 Live Electronics in a Semi-Public Space
Written and performed by Rupert Huber

As a direct reaction to the setting of the presentation of his work, Austrian composer / musician Rupert Huber interprets the situational entrée of L’Espace Temporel as a state of uncertainty between the time before the beginning and the actual commencement of the evening’s program. His material consists of concrete sounds and
samples whose overwhelmingly melodious nature enters into a multi-voice, realtime-processed transitional situation. At the beginning at around 7:30 PM, what has so fluidly formed into a piece already half over, and the second half resounds when the program has already begun. Huber, who operates with a variety of artistic genres and disciplines, has coined the term “dimensional music” for the integration of real, medial and acoustic spaces into the performative process of the composition. –10 is an example of this.

Les Enfants Terribles
Phillip Glass

Les Enfants Terribles followed Orphée and La Belle et la Bête as the third part of a trilogy dedicated to the work of Jean Cocteau that Phillip Glass created between 1993 and 1996. In correspondence to the central theme of Les Enfants Terribles—the power of the imagination and creativity—the evocative power of music is endowed with exemplary significance within the framework of L’Espace Temporel. Originally written for three pianos and solo vocalists (soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor and baritone), parts of the work are being interpreted as piano duos featuring Maki Namekawa and Dennis Russell Davies.

The visualisation Rhythm Lens by Martin Wattenberg is a performance piece that explores the relation between spatial and temporal repetition. Symmetry is an essential element of all music, but in minimalist works it plays an especially critical role. The Rhythm Lens transmutes aural symmetry into visual symmetry.

The base materials for the Rhythm Lens are images, ranging from video to scanned texts to abstract textures. The Rhythm Lens then uses mathematical transformations to “symmetrize” these images of kaleidoscope that would be impossible with physical materials. As the music creates and breaks symmetries, so too will symmetries be created and broken graphically. Like all of Wattenberg’s video accompaniments, the Rhythm Lens is a performance instrument, guided by the human hand and never the same twice.

Different Trains
Steve Reich

Steve Reich’s 1988 work Different Trains for string quartet and tape recorder is the realization of an idea to generate material for musical instruments from recordings of human voices. In this piece, Reich draws upon recollections from a period (1939–42) during his childhood when, due to his divorced parents’ joint child custody agreement, he frequently had to ride the train between their respective residences in New York and Los Angeles. Recollecting these trips that he perceived as “exciting and romantic” at the time, the memories of are overlain with thoughts about those trains he, as a Jew, would have had to board in Europe at the time. Different Trains is based on recordings of the governess who accompanied Reich on his trips between New York and Los Angeles, a conductor who worked these trains, three survivors of the Holocaust and the sounds of
American and European trains of the ‘30s and 40s. The intonations of the individuals’ voices were assigned to certain pitches and translated into notes that can be played by members of the string quartet. The music made by these stringed instruments were, in turn, mixed with the sounds of the trains and sequences.

What Reich created with this approach was also described by the composer himself in a text about Different Trains: “A direction that I expect will lead in the not-too-distant future to a new kind of documentary music/video theater.”

Temps du Miroir
Ludger Brümmer

In Temps du Miroir the piano sounds are mirrored through live electronic granulation. The granulation samples the piano giving this timbre a new expressive nature, another gestural connotation, a different time structure. While the piano is audible from the front, the granulated sounds separate from the piano into a 2D space in which they are constantly moving creating their own sphere.

Despite the fact that this work is created from different descriptions of sound, all of them are of an algorithmic nature. The sounds from the speaker are created with physical models using strings. But not only the timbre was generated with the physical model. Each musical gesture, rhythm and dynamic is generated as a result of a mechanical description. A simple repetition for example can be created with a kind of pendulum, the piano either to trigger sounds or to be processed in real time using a granulation technique. The sounds are generated through code algorithms describing all of the parameters used. The composition is created out of 4 sections without a separation. Each of these sections performs the dominance of a specific musical aspect. One is more melodic, another more rhythmic. Despite this static identity, processes are performed to move away from a definite layout of the structure.

It was the idea of this piece to create a rich dense musical structure out of a pre-produced layer, a layer with pre-produced as well as live processed sounds and the performance of the piano player. Because all of the pre-produced structures are not fixed together they can be treated dynamically, responding to the interpretation of the performer.

On top of all these layers of sound a video is placed. This video is part of the gestural structure of the work and it is split into various parts. It is not a default, it appears like certain sound and harmonics appear and disappear. The movement of the dancer creates a supernotation of the musical structure, another mirroring of the abstract content into a physical environment. The physical Model software “Genesis” was provided by ACROE, Grenoble. The work was created at the studios of the Centre for Art and Media in Karlsruhe.

Triangel—Actions for a Creative Drummer and 27 Musicians
Péter Eötvös
In a conversation with Zoltán Rácz (booklet accompanying Péter Eötvös’ CD Psalm 151, Psy, Tria-AB BIS CD 948, 1993), Péter Eötvös explained his intentions in Triangel in the following terms: “‘Triangel’ is not the sort of concert in which the soloist is accompanied by an orchestra. Here, the soloist is the leader, a ‘master drummer’ of an African type, and the other instruments—nine strings, eight woodwinds, seven brasses, two percussions and a keyboard—are the ‘chorus’ that reacts and responds. (…) ‘Triangel’ was written for a creative drummer, which leads to the conclusion that the soloist can select those instruments that are most appropriate to his tonal world. (…) What I refer to as the soloist’s ‘composition’ is actually an exercise in hearing. This is highly unusual in that the musician has to not only dictate but also react and decide to accept or demand a different type of sound once he has heard the answer. (…) The group is assigned tasks to perform, and the responses provided determine the soloist’s next step.”

Passage between Time and Space

In Stanley Kubrick’s 1968 film 2001: A Space Odyssey based on a story by Arthur C. Clarke and in Andrei Tarkovsky’s 1972 film version of Stanislaw Lem’s novel Solaris, many aspects of the two works may well be interpreted as nascent precursors of issues that were later made theoretically explicit by authors like Marvin Minsky and, more recently, Ray Kurzweil in circles associated with AI research as well as in cyborg and VR discussions. They also crystallized in works of art. What the two cinematic narratives have in common is, above all, a metaphor of transition, the confrontation of a technical culture that is still, in many respects, based upon transport and movement with an “informational”—in the broadest possible sense—culture in which the familiar, mechanistically determined fabric of meaning begins to unravel. What Kubrik did at the end of his work by dissolving the linear narrative into a psychedelic puzzle is the way Tarkovsky proceeds at the beginning of Solaris, in which he visualizes the transfer from Earth into a foreign world. Music—György Ligeti’s Athmosphères for 2001 and Edward Artemiev’s evocative sound tracks for Solaris—is an important medium for the representation of this Other, a phenomenon coarsely associated with the future and in the face of which the familiar fails because the music underscores narratives played out in the future, but because it transcends an idea of the future indicated by a breach with the conventions of the senses by means of that individualized form that is itself derived from the breach with the conventions of notation and tonal realization.

The musical language of this time—strongly characterized by electronic sound production—is ut were, tonally evoke the future in the present. What the films themselves accomplish only in rudimentary fashion—namely, to derive forms of narration from their themes (and to set them in a time beyond conventional narrative)—has already manifested its initial concrete modes of practice today in music’s new forms of production and performance.

Edward Artemiev
As one of the pioneers of experimental electro-acoustic music, Edward Artemiev has attained the status of an icon today. Following academic training in Moscow, he became familiar with the synthesizer that Russian mathematician and engineer Yevgeny Murzin had developed in 1960. In going about exploring this new instrument—both its technical-compositional potential as well as its capacity to produce narratives and expressive tonal imagery—Artemiev quickly acquired a reputation as one of the most original soundscape composers of his generation. In the West, he is known primarily for the soundtracks he wrote for three of Andrei Tarkovsky’s films—Solaris, The Mirror and Stalker.

György Ligeti

Hungarian-born composer György Ligeti rose to international prominence with the 1960 International Society for Contemporary Music Festival premier of his work Apparitions, the first orchestral distillation of a style he had begun to develop upon joining the Electronic Music Studio at Cologne’s Westdeutscher Rundkfur. In contrast to the highly structured, pointillistic music to be heard elsewhere, Ligeti’s work presented a new concept of shifting masses of densely detailed “clouds” of orchestral sound. Beginning with the 1958 electronic composition Artikulation, 1959’s Apparitions and his work for organ, Volumina (1962,) Ligeti’s contribution to a new musical idiom called “micropolyphony” illustrated rich, intense arrangements that eliminated the historical distinctions between rhythm, melody and harmony. This sound is constructed through the extensive use of sustained massive, tightly packed clusters of buzzing, dissonant intervals which evolve over time: “The complex polyphony of the individual parts is embodied in a harmonic-musical flow, in which the harmonies do not change suddenly, but merge into one another; one clearly discernible interval combination is gradually blurred, and from this cloudiness it is possible to discern a new interval combination taking shape.”

The divergent textures of serial music were further eroded by his subsequent orchestral work, Atmosphères (1961). Here the density of the orchestration becomes so great that the perception of distinct pitches and rhythms is completely annihilated. The piece established an international reputation for him, and it brought attention of the general public when Stanley Kubrick used it in his film 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968). Using his trademark micropolyphony as his starting point, in pieces such as 1962’s Aventures and the 1962–65 work Nouvelles Aventures, Ligeti incorporated speech and vocal inflections in his work, exploring the musical expressivity of these distinct sound sources throughout the rest of the decade. Other notable works from this period are 1963–5’s Requiem, which won the 1967 Bonn Beethoven Prize, 1966’s Lux Eterna, and the 1967 orchestral piece Lontano.

Passage between Moments

Musik für 18 Musiker

Steve Reich
Music for 18 Musicians is approximately 55 minutes long. The first sketches were made for it in May 1974 and it was completed in March 1976. Although its steady pulse and rhythmic energy relate to many of my earlier works, its instrumentation, structure and harmony are new.

There is more harmonic movement in the first 5 minutes of Music for 18 Musicians than in any other complete work of mine to date. Although the movement from chord to chord is often just a re-voicing, inversion or relative minor or major of a previous chord, usually staying within the key signature of three shapes at all these limits harmonic movement plays a more important role in this piece than in any other I have written.

Rhythmically, there are two basically different kinds of time occurring simultaneously in Music for 18 Musicians. The first is that of a regular rhythmic pulse in the pianos and mallet instruments that continues throughout the piece. The second is the rhythm of the human breath in the voices and wind instruments.

The structure of Music for 18 Musicians is based on a cycle of eleven chords played at the very beginning of the piece and repeated at the end. All the instruments and voices play or sing the pulsating notes with each chord. Instruments like the strings which do not have to breathe nevertheless follow the rise and fall of the breath by following the breathing patterns of the bass clarinet. Each chord is held for the duration of two breaths, and the next chord is gradually introduced, and so on, until all eleven are played and the ensemble returns to the first chord. The first pulsing chord is then maintained by two pianos and two marimbas. While this pulsing chord is held for about five minutes a small piece is constructed on it. When this piece is completed there is a sudden change to the second chord, and a second small piece or section is constructed. This means that each chord that might have taken fifteen or twenty seconds to play in the opening section is then stretched out as the basic pulsing melody for a five minute piece, very much as a single note in a cantus firmus or chant melody of a 12th century Organum by Perotin, might be stretched out for several minutes as the harmonic centre for a section of the Organum. The opening eleven chord cycle of Music for 18 Musicians is a kind of pulsing cantus for the entire piece.

On each pulsing chord one or, on the third chord, two small pieces are built. These pieces or sections are either in the form of an arch (ABCDCBA), or in the form of a musical process, like that of substituting beats for rests, working itself out from beginning to end. Elements appearing in one section will appear in another but surrounded by different harmony and instrumentation.

Changes from one section to the next, as well as changes within each section, are cued by the metallophone (vibraphone with no motor) whose patterns are played once only to call for movements to the next bar, much as in Balinese Gamelan pieces, or as a drummer will audibly call for changes of pattern in West African music. This is in contrast to the visual nods of the head used in earlier pieces of mine to call for changes, and also to the general Western practice of having a non performing conductor for large ensembles. Audible cues become audible cues and allow the musicians to keep listening.
World Premiere: 24.04.1976, Town Hall, New York, Steve Reich and Musicians

Passage between Sound and Image

Extol/Salvo

Salutations to “Ligeterecki” (a composite) Tributes, Turbulations and remix

L’Espace Temporel is an evening for timeshifted musical travel. From fully fledged orchestras, string quartets, laptop electronics, tape and instrument playback to integrated moving images there is much to dwell on. By evening’s end there is something to reflect upon. Extol/Salvo explores a few of those options. From implications of the original works of György Ligeti and Krzysztof Penderecki played, an imaginary composite is arranged in the form of new sonic textures derived from the offspring “Ligeterecki.”

This very conjunction is the springboard Christian Fennesz and Naut Humon are utilizing in these audio tribute renditions. By locating spectral clustered characteristics and re manifesting their kinetic stimuli through auditory mimesis, a fitting musical homage is paid to the inspiration of these early sixties compositions.

KkAudio-Interpretationen: Naut Humon und Christian Fennesz
Visuals: Sue Costable und Lillevan
Programmierung der Software-Tools und technische Assistenz: Peter Segerstrom, Louis Dufort, Brian O'Reilly, Peter Otto und Aloveiz y.j. Heredic

Krzysztof Penderecki

Krzysztof Penderecki stands with György Ligeti as the most significant European composer of his generation working today. Penderecki’s work has always questioned traditional musical notation, emphasizing the use of raw sound and experimental techniques of orchestration to create aural collages, scores and deeply emotive, challenging pieces which interrogate the distinction drawn between music and the non-musical. Penderecki has forged an absolutely distinct, cinematic compositional style which, for all its disregard for traditional instrumental technique, has always been appreciated by broad listening audiences not traditionally interested in the avant-garde.

Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima, probably Penderecki’s most famous work, is scored for 52 string instruments. The composer evokes from these instruments a wealth of sounds, from the opening hair-raising scream and the noise of sirens to the panic and chaos that ensues.

Penderecki makes similarly innovative use of tone clusters—notes close together, that are played—to evoke both the effects and the aftermath of a nuclear bomb explosion. These disjointed sounds coalesce into a veritable firestorm that then fades into the silence of death.
Threnody is a gripping lament on the senselessness of all wars. At the time of its composition, th
represented an attempt to apply the sonoristic technique and rigors of specific counterpoint to a
strings treated unconventionally as to the manner in which the tone was obtained. The expression
was received by the audience in terms of solemnity and luridness, thus making its later classificati
fully justified.

In his so-called “sonoristic” period of the early 1960s—represented by pieces such as Threnody, F
Polymorphia, and others—Penderecki employed a compositional system whose axiomatic conc
single sound, but sound matter in its totality.

Christian Fennesz

A composer and improvisor of electronic music and the guitar, Austrian-born artist Christian Fennesz
the last decade amassing a collection of recorded works as notable for their musicality as for their
design.

However, the expressiveness of Fennesz’s work does not just lie in his ability to “play technology
identifiable ends. There is an equally significant factor of placement, of location in his work that
meaningful from a poetic perspective, as well as providing it with a sense of geographic groundin
Having released two albums oriented around the idea of physical location—1999’s plus forty-seve
minus sixteen degrees 51 ‘08, named after the grid of his hometown on the Austro- Hungarian boi
album was composed, and 2004’s Venice, Fennesz’s output has a particularly autobiographical fe
makes its invocation of the future (through its technological mediation of emotive and song ori
more of a physicalization of sound for all of us to listen through. His recordings are released thro
Mego labels.

FLÜUX:/TERMINAL
SKOLTZ_KOLGEN

FLÜUX:/TERMINAL is a bipolar performance that SKOLTZ_KOLGEN have named “dyptique réti
their work, their research here has established a point of contact between sound and image. But
FLÜUX:/TERMINAL pushes the dialogue between these two elements one step further: Their pe:
a dramatic trajectory, fuelled by the panoramic tensions (left/right) between hearing and seeing.

FLÜUX:/TERMINAL projects images onto two screens, in a parallel visual body of luminous parti
photographed or filmed images and wire frame displays. As stereophonic visual representations,
are the alter egos of the audio, which is also divided into two. The sound sources (left/right) are de
propelled into separate channels: the lefthand channel excites the left-hand image; the righthand
the righthand image. The image is distorted, bearing the marks that the sound imprints upon it, a
fossil of the sound.

A bipolar experience is therefore built by catalysing the lines of tension between two independent and visual worlds. Their dissociation in one instance and their synchrony or symmetry in another establish space-times that seem to float in weightlessness. These suspended moments are succeeded by fresh charges of energy that are massive and intense.

**Noisegate Remix**

Adapted from the Installation NoiseGate, by Granular Synthesis

Naut Humon / Tim Digulla

Noisegate Remix is a performance work reconfiguration of a 1998 installation piece by Granular Synthesis, the Vienna-based duo of Kurt Hentschlager and Ulf Langheinrich. In June of 2000, they invited Naut Humon and assistant Tim Digulla from San Francisco to participate in a night of remixes produced by Creative Time in New York City. Inside the Anchorage venue at the base of the Booklyn Bridge, Granular Synthesis had transformed the huge barren concrete walls into video projection surfaces depicting oversized human heads in virtual captivity, amidst a rumbling subsonic sea of ominous, mobile frequencies. As this denaturalized human image is repeated in several antechambers, one had the sensation of passing through an unusual zoo where the subjects were confined people whose behavior is mechanically altered by the captors’ machines. Going back to the inspiration of Granular Synthesis’s earlier opus MODELL5, and finding a bridge between that architecture of isolation found in Noisegate gave us an open invitation to mesh out a chronically destabilized visual dub version. Gone were the mysterious green toned hues of facial tissues so prevalent in the original. The sound was thoroughly replaced as well, except for the occasional breathing effects that Granular Synthesis had recorded. Spasms and shifting time stutters of the figures were further agitated and re-framed to exaggerate outbursts of color and light. By degenerating the flaws, we were regenerating a paradox. Machines that were once certain were becoming less recognizable. We were not so happy anymore …

Thanks to Tim Digulla, Chris Musgrave, & Scott Arford for their technical help in additional AV and consolidating film shooting material. Highest appreciation goes out to Granular Synthesis, whose stark images formed the foundation of this transconfiguration.

Translated from German by Mel Greenwald

Initiation

The structure of O.T.O., like that of Freemasonry and the ancient mystery schools, is based on a series of initiations or degrees. In the rituals of these degrees, O.T.O. seeks to instruct the individual by allegory and symbol in the profound mysteries of nature, and thereby to assist each initiate in discovering his or her own true identity.

Initiation can be conferred only in a physical ceremony conducted by a properly chartered initiator. See the membership page for information on how to apply for initiation.

Initiate membership is subdivided by degree. There are a total of 21 initiate degrees in O.T.O., including thirteen numbered degrees and eight un-numbered, intermediate degrees or sub-degrees. The degrees of O.T.O. are divided into three Grades or “Triads”: the Hermit, the Lover, and the Man of Earth, as follows:

The Third, or Man of Earth, Triad

0° Minerval
1° Man and Brother
Woman and Sister
2° Magician
3° Master Magician
IV° Perfect Magician and companion of the Holy Royal Arch of Enoch
Perfect Initiate, or Prince of Jerusalem
Outside all Triads
Knight of the East and West
The Second, or Lover, Triad

V° Sovereign Prince Rose-Croix, and Knight of the Pelican and Eagle
Knight of the Red Eagle, and Member of the Senate of Knight Hermetic Philosophers

VI° Illustrious Knight (Templar) of the Order of Kadosch, and Companion of the Holy Graal
Grand Inquisitor Commander, and Member of the Grand Tribunal
Prince of the Royal Secret

VII° Theoreticus, and Very Illustrious Sovereign Grand Inspector General
Magus of Light, and Bishop of Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica
Grandmaster of Light, and Inspector of Rites and Degrees
The First, or Hermit, Triad

VIII° Perfect Pontiff of the Illuminati
Epopt of the Illuminati

IX° Initiate of the Sanctuary of the Gnosis

X° Rex Summus Sanctissimus

XI° Initiate of the Eleventh Degree (This degree is technical, and has no relation to the general plan of the Order)

XII° Frater Superior, and Outer Head of the Order

The Minerval Degree (0°) is an introductory Initiate degree in which the aspirant is considered an "honored guest" of O.T.O. rather than a full member. The Minerval degree is designed to allow the aspirant to decide whether or not to pursue full membership, and to allow potential sponsors the opportunity to decide whether to support the aspirant’s application for full membership. Minervals may begin preliminary novitiate training under an E.G.C. Bishop towards ultimate ordination to the Diaconate and/or Priesthood in Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica, but they are not eligible for ordination or for service as an officer of a Local Body.

The First Degree (I°) bestows full membership upon the initiate. A First Degree initiate may retire from active participation in O.T.O., but the spiritual link forged between the initiate and the Order during the ceremony of the First Degree will remain throughout the initiate’s life. An initiate of the Second Degree is eligible for ordination as a deacon of Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica.

Beyond the degree of PI, advancement is by invitation only. Initiates of the intermediate degree of Knight of the East and West (KEW) are eligible for formal ordination to the Priesthood in Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica. Episcopal consecration in Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica is conferred as part of the Seventh Degree. The Tentl
The Man of Earth degrees follow a pattern based on the symbolism of the Chakras and the stages of Kundalini Yoga; and represent, in dramatic form, the Individual’s Path in Eternity. In the 0°, the Ego, a wandering God, is attracted to the Solar System. In the I°, the Child experiences Birth. In the II°, the Man or Woman experiences Life. The III° represents the Death of the individual, and the IV° represents the world beyond Death, the glorified state of the Initiate. In the PI Degree, the Initiate symbolically achieves ultimate Perfection (Completion), and is withdrawn into Annihilation.

Of these Events or Stations upon the Path, all but the II° represent single critical experiences. We, however, are concerned mostly with the varied experiences of Life. All subsequent degrees are therefore elaborations of the II°, progressive instruction in how to live, since in a single ceremony it is hardly possible to sketch, even in the briefest outline, the Teaching of Initiates with regard to Life.

The V° – IX° rituals and teachings are therefore instructions to the Initiate in the Mastery of Life; there is instruction in Hermetic Philosophy, Qabalah, Magick and Yoga, all aimed at preparing the Initiate for the revelation and application of one Supreme Secret.

Every man and woman of full age (18 or more years old), free, and of good report, has an indefeasible right to the first three degrees of O.T.O. (but not according to any particular time schedule). These “first three degrees” actually include all the degrees in the Man of Earth Triad (the Minerval is considered a prologue to the First Degree, and the Fourth and PI Degrees are considered pendants to the Third Degree).

Progress of the O.T.O. initiate toward the Fourth and PI Degrees is usually a matter of years. A certain amount of time is usually required to allow full maturation of the effects of the O.T.O. initiations, although under some circumstances the Minerval and First Degrees may be taken on the same occasion.

OTO and Masonry

O.T.O. membership does not, of itself, confer any status in Freemasonry. Nearly one hundred years ago, when O.T.O. was established in Germany, it was closely allied to several rites of European Freemasonry. However, in 1918, Aleister Crowley determined it appropriate for O.T.O. to assert its own unique identity as an independent system. At that time, while retaining the use of certain convenient customs and terminology used in early Freemasonry, Crowley revised the O.T.O. rituals, insignia and modes of recognition to avoid infringing upon the legitimate privileges of the established and recognized authorities of modern Freemasonry, and also to specifically reflect the teachings of Thelema. Crowley’s O.T.O. has not claimed to “make Masons” since that time. Further revisions along similar lines have been implemented in more recent years.

Despite some similarities between names and titles used within O.T.O. and the names and titles of various churches, and other organizations, conferral of any degree, rank, office, or status within O.T.O.
The Golden Ass

madauros ass an ass just outside of Madaura (Algeria)

The Golden Ass, also known by the alternative title, The Metamorphoses, is one of the greatest fantasies of the world. The latter name, The Metamorphoses, is found in the extant manuscripts, but Augustine, two centuries later at Madauros (as well as at Carthage), says that Apuleius called his work Asinus aureus or The Golden Ass, which name I shall use hereafter (the word ‘golden’ in this context denotes “a quality of excellence and admirability” rather than “the sense of being fashioned from gold”). Apuleius informs us that he is adapting a Greek story. This is supposed by many scholars to have been a story possibly by the Greek author Lucius of Patrae. This text is now lost, though Lucious or the Ass — thought to be an abridgement of Lucius of Patrae’s story — by Lucian, a Greek satirist and near-contemporary of Apuleius, still exists. However, the splendour of the Golden Ass is original to Apuleius, as Lucious or the Ass lacks all imagination and style; it is nothing but the story of an ass, not an image of human life like Apuleius’s tale.

The Golden Ass is simultaneously a blend of erotic adventure, romantic comedy, and religious fable, it is one of the truly seminal works of early European literature, with a distinctly Eastern flavouring and a very modern feel. There are very few works with the pleasurable impact of the Golden Ass. Apuleius’s images retain their vitality from almost 2000 years ago, losing nothing of their colour and magic. Indeed, the promise of the closing words of the Prologue: Lector, intende: laetaberis – ‘Lend me your ear, reader: you shall enjoy yourself’ are amply fulfilled. Over the centuries, the Golden Ass has brought pleasure and inspiration to generations of readers and writers, from Shakespeare to Salman Rushdie. A copy of the Golden Ass was one of the few things T.E. Lawrence (‘of Arabia’) carried in his saddle-bags throughout the Arab Revolt.

The charge to the reader: intende (lit. ‘be attentive’) — rather like the beginning of the first English epic Beowulf: Hwaet (‘listen’) — is a much more demanding commencement than ‘once upon a time...’ It requires an active participant in experiencing the tale, not simply a passive listerner (Apuleius’s style...
consistent with this notion). The Latin statement, in fact, is a conditional: ‘if you are attentive, then you shall take pleasure’, suggesting that the reader’s enjoyment depends upon the degree of attention paid to the tale.

The modernity of The Golden Ass originates from the timelessness of the text. This is true of the humour—what we found amusing two thousands years ago we still do today— but also of the non-comic aspect of the work: the continual struggle of individuals to come to grips with and function in a largely unintelligible world. The transformation of man into ass provides a well-lit stage for the drama of this struggle to play upon. But the story remains that of man and his place in the world. To say that Apuleius was not a believer in magic—he had been initiated into the mysteries of Isis and is reputed to have himself performed miracles necessitating the mastery of magic and sorcery.

However, The Golden Ass is not a story about magic, the supernatural of the novel is a convenience subordinate to the spinning of a story about man and the struggle of life in a world of limited resources. Magic in The Golden Ass may change a man too an ass, but it does not transform the Finite into the Infinite: it does not eliminate the ‘need’ for slaves, make all of the poor men rich or all the hungry satiated. Magic forms part of Apuleius’s natural world: the world in which it is winter during those months in which Ceres’s daughter dwells in Hades; a world in which the earth is not always bountious, not matter how much one propitiates the Gods with burnt offerings and other sacrifices. Spells and witchcraft do not change these facts.
If you are unfamiliar with The Golden Ass,
I recommended reading my review:

The Best Piece of Asse
in Ancient Rome

ass review Lucius & the lascivious woman – illustration by Jean de Bosschère

Part of the inherent struggle depicted in The Golden Ass is that of arises from man’s own inner de
In this we find one of the ‘Eastern’ elements of Apuleius’s work, the journey to escape from the bonds endured by Lucius is similar to the Hindu concept of moksha (“release”), the Bhagavad-Gita dialogue Arjuna and Krishna being an excellent expression of this philosophy. This is not to say that the Golden Ass any means a moralistic tale of a libertine who realises the ‘ungodliness’ of his ways and reforms in order to secure a seat in the heavens. Apuleius celebrates the sensual aspects of life and his vivacious descriptions illustrate his possession of the ‘cavalier-poet’ virtue of living life to the fullest, both the pleasurable and the painful.

Just as there is a Tantric school of Hinduism which does not strive to avoid the sensuous side of experience, Apuleius’s is a tale of maturation and the attainment of the wisdom needed to survive one’s desires.

Ramses Harem Ramsès dans son Harem (1885-86) – a photogravure from a painting by Lecomte Nouy

ass among men Lucius among the slaves – illustration by Percival Goodman

As well as being concerned with the conflicts arising from inside an individual, The Golden Ass also illustrates conflicts which occur between individuals, or between an individual and a larger group of persons in Apuleius’s society, being the earliest book (at least in the West) to show society as a whole. No one apart from the heroes, senators and other magnates of Roman power, but also simple shepherds and cooks and scullions, artesans, slaves and beggars, and the dacoits and thieves of the underworld. When Lucius, as an ass, is forced to work in a flour-mill, Apuleius’s pitiless description of the conditions of the slaves comparing the human and animal in a single breath–shows his keen observations of unacceptable conditions in the Empire and is a plea for reform:

‘Good Gods! what a tribe of mannikins I saw. Their skin was striped all over with livid scourge-scars; their backs were crusted rather than clothed with their patchwork rags; some had no more covering than a bit of dangled apron; and every shirt was so tattered that the body was visible through the rents. Their brows were branded; their heads were half-shaved; irons clanked on their feet; their faces were sallow and ugly; the smoky gloom of the reeking overheated room had bleared and dulled their smarting eyes; and (like boxers who fight befouled with the dust of the arena) their faces were wanly smeared with the dirtied flour. But how shall I describe the beast, my comrades? What superannuated mules and enervated geldings! They drooped their heads around the manger as they munched the heaps of straw; their necks were frotted with bleeding and putrefying sores; they coughed continuously and wheezed through their feeble nostrils; their chests were raw from the rubbing of the rush-ropes;
their sides were split by the ceaseless cudgelling till their rib-bones showed; their hooves were crushed out broad and flat by their never-ending tramp in the mill-round; and their hides were scarified all over with mange and emaciation’ (Lindsay trans. 274-275).

Apuleius’s novel has inspired many subsequent writers and artists and been one of the greatest influences in Western literature, including such classic works as Boccaccio’s Decameron, Cervantes’s Don Qui and Gulliver’s Travels. In these there obviously exists the same satyrical style as in the Golden Ass, the same basic image of human madness and endeavour.

As well, the bathetic form of the Golden Ass occurs (as well as in the above works) also in Sterne’s (which, along with Richardson’s Clarissa, are considered the first modern novels) and Joyce’s fan sort of ‘retelling’ the tale of Homer’s Odyssey, re-set in 19th century Dublin).

In more modern literature, the little known, but very important work of Anglo-Indian novelist G.V. Desani’s All About H. Hatterr also carries on Apuleius’s mad, bathetic style of story-weaving. More well-known winning Anglo-Indian author Salman Rushdie too writes very much in the Apuleian style–both in bathos as well as adapting Apuleius’s particular manner of interweaving ‘mirroring’ stories together: addition to style, an episode in Rushdie’s (in)famous novel, The Satanic Verses, displays a thema that it involves a transformation of the protagonist into bestial form and his subsequent attempts to regain human form:–’[the Golden Ass] serving as the central intertext [of Satanic Verses]’, in the words of Dr. M.

The shape-changing theme also occurs in Kafka’s Die Verwandlung (The Metamorphosis). This is obviously ubiquitous in human imagination, is unusual in Apuleius in that a first-person narrative is provided by the metamorphed man, as in Kafka. Kafka’s novel owes something to the Golden Ass in its plot of an ordinary person who one day suddenly finds himself in a shape not his own—a repulsive shape; and in the struggle to survive with his humanity intact.

The ‘Chinese-box’ structure of the Golden Ass (e.g. the stories set within the frame of the primary Lucius)–similar to the pattern of One Thousand and One Arabian Nights –is perhaps a remnant of the European epic tradition (and the Greek tradition in particular), which often exhibits the imbedding of myths not structurally part of the main narrative. The majority, if not all, of these interwoven ‘mini-stories’ are not original to Apuleius; rather, they were well-known tales and anecdotes belonging to the common community. Apuleius’s introductionary description of his work as ‘ At ego tibi sermone isto Milesio varias fabulas conseram auresque tuas benivolias lepido susurro permulceam’ [“What I should like to do is to weave together this Milesian mode of story-telling and to stroke your approving ears with some elegant whispers] Milesian tales are a sort of light entertainment; there existed a large repertoire of such popular myths and anecdotes, though Apuleius—as always—presents them in his unique style.
As E.J. Kenney points out, there exists a paradox in Apuleius’s preface. He begins by stating that he is going to string together a number of light tales, but then at the end of the introduction he says ‘It is a Grecian story I am about to begin’ (‘Fabulam Graecanicam incipimus’). Fabulam Graecanicam – a Grecian fable: singular, not plural. This obviously refers to the main story of Lucius’s transformation adapted from a Greek fable; making the plot of the ass primary. One suspects that Apuleius delighted in this seeming discrepancy—though the Golden Ass turns out to be both a single fable and a series of tales woven together (a bit like the Christian ‘mystery of the trinity’ in its unity/plurality contradictions). Apuleius’s abjuration to the reader to lector – ‘be attentive’ is quite right: only the attentive reader will be able to resolve the intricate mysteries of the Golden Ass.

Circe transforms Odysseus’s men into swine (1889) – a photogravure of a painting by L. Chalon

Alchemy & Metamorphoses – links between Apuleius’s Golden Ass and Salman Rushdie’s The Satanic Verses

sphinx

The Sphinx – painting by Norman Lindsay (Jack Lindsay’s father)
an essay on the use of historiographical topoi in the Golden Ass by Luca Graverini (negli Italiano)

Venus & Cupid

The Allegory of Lust (1540-50) [Venus & Cupid] painting by Bronzino

Illustrated story of Cupid & Psyche

Shakespeare’s Venus & Adonis accompanied by Venus artwork

Essays, &c. on ‘Cupid & Psyche’

Psycho-Analytic’ criticism – J. Schroeder
‘Psycho-Analytic’ criticism – Erich Neumann
‘Psycho-Analytic’ criticism – Bruno Bettelheim

Archetypes in ‘Cupid & Psyche’

Thought-provoking questions on ‘Cupid & Psyche’ 1

Thought-provoking questions on ‘Cupid & Psyche’ 2

At the centre of Apuleius’s interweaving of tales is that of ‘Cupid and Psyche’. This tale—like the others—was not invented by Apuleius either. The framework of the myth of ‘Cupid and Psyche’ is recurrent through...
cultures, from Scotland to India. The best known version of it is perhaps the Germanic fairy-story Cinderella. However, Apuleius’s retelling of this myth is an extraordinary feat of artistry—as P.G. Walsh puts it—of a Märchen (‘folk-tale’) into a Kunstmärchen (‘Art-Story’). The eminent Victorian aesthetic critic and essayist Walter Pater admired this section of the story so much that he included it in its entirety in his book Epicurean (a study of the intellectual and spiritual development of a young Roman in the time of ‘Cupid and Psyche’). ‘Cupid and Psyche’ is made by Apuleius to illuminate the larger whole of the Golden Ass, by being a reflection of the same theme. In this way, Apuleius projects the central thread of the tale of Lucius’s transformative plane of mythos. As Lucius indulges his curiosity about Pamphile’s witchcraft despite being repeatedly warned against doing so; so Psyche allows her curiosity to get the better of her, in spite of warnings parallel to those of Lucius. Both are punished by being forced to wander through the world, forsaken by all. Both are delivered from their misfortune through a series of trials—the labours of Venus in the case of Psyche, the serial stages of initiation into the mysteries of Isis for Lucius.

Both stories seem at first blush to set up a division between ‘appropriate’ and ‘forbidden’ knowledge, with punishment afflicting those who dare to open the Pandora’s box of the forbidden. However, it is overly hasty to extract such a moral from either of these tales. Psyche is eventually transported to Heaven and granted immortality; Lucius obtains an intimate relationship with the Goddess Isis. Neither Lucius nor Psyche would have attained the Divine in these parallel ways had they not first transgressed into the realm of illicit knowledge.

Apuleius’s Platonic philosophy is particularly evident in this episode, Cupid serving as an allegory of the soul’s restless attempts to reach the Divine (Isis). As well, both tales show the same sort of bifurcation into a higher and a lower form, as expostulated by Apuleius in his Apologia [12]:

‘But I will forbear to enlarge upon those deep and holy mysteries of the Platonic philosophy, which, while they are revealed to but few of the pious, are totally unknown to the profane; how, that Venus is a twofold goddess, each of the pair producing a particular passion, and in different kinds of lovers. One of them is the “Vulgar” Venus, who is prompted by the ordinary passion of love, to stimulate not only the human feelings, but even the wild beasts, to lust, and commit the enslaved bodies of beings thus smitten by her to immoderate and furious embraces. The other is the “Heavenly” Venus, who presides over the purest love, who cares for no few of them, and who influences her devotees by no stimulants or allurements to base desire’ (Bohn’s trans. 258).

It has been suggested that in this way two ‘Cupids’ compete for Psyche’s love; and that in the same way the ‘higher Venus’ prevails in the case of Lucius when Fotis is replaced by Isis. It does not seem clear that a relationship with both Isis and Fotis would be impossible for Lucius, however his attitude towards ‘love’ does seem to evolve from the lower Venus to the higher Venus in the course of the novel.

The solemn close of the Golden Ass—Lucius’s initiation into the sacred rites of Isis and Osiris—may strike many readers as incongruous with the light-hearted style of the majority of the novel. This comes from
approaching the Golden Ass as purely a comic romance. Apuleius constructs a careful alternation and tragic episodes, between romantic and dramatic. For instance, the comic encounter of Lucius host Milo is offset by the tragic drama of the story of Socrates’s death; the Lucius’s romantic sexual encounter with the maidservant contrast with the horrifying story of Thelyphron’s disfigurement he hears in the same book. Indeed, there are both comic-tragic and comic-romantic sections, as well as both dramatic-tragic and dramatic-romantic episodes. The Lucius-Fotis episodes, for example, could be termed comic-romantic; the Cupid-Psyche centre-story, dramatic-romantic. Lucius’s transformation from man to ass is comic-tragic; while Charite’s death is dramatic-tragic. In fact, the fates of Charite and Tlepolemus, Cupid and Psyche, and Lucius (and Fotis/Isis) are woven together in a complex counterpoint (what has been called the ‘Charite-complex’, see Schlam (1992)). For instance, the dramatic-tragic kidnapping of Charite in the fourth book complements Lucius’s own capture by the dacoits; the romantic rescue of Charite in the seventh book is parallel to the finale of the ‘Cupid & Psyche’ story in the preceding books, and juxtaposed with Lucius’s miserable experiences at the farms, also in the seventh book; Lucius’s comic adventures with the priests contrast with Charite’s tragic death in the eighth. All throughout, Apuleius alternates between jocular and often ‘vulgar’ happenings and ‘high-brow’ dramatic or tragic elements, also contain humorous episodes; and are meant to be enjoyed on more than one level.

Furthermore, there is a philosophic layer of the Golden Ass as well, as mentioned above, in the Platonic dualism between a lower, vulgar ‘path’ and a higher, heavenly ‘path’; for instance, Venus competes for mastery over Lucius in her lower form as Fotis and her higher form as Isis (though, again, it is not clear that these two could not be reconciled, that is, that a relationship with Isis prevents Lucius from having a relationship with Fotis, though it certainly restricts the form of that relationship). One major theme of the narrative of Lucius in the Golden Ass, reflected in the tale of ‘Cupid & Psyche’, is this dualism of a debased and a perfected form of the same entity. Lucius is punished for his prurient curiosity into Pamphile’s magic via his sexual liaison with Fotis by his transformation into a foolish ass. In the Apologia as well, Apuleius seeks to define healthy curiosity as that which endeavours towards knowledge of true reality by rational, intellectual means, as well as religious experience; as opposed to base curiosity which seeks an illusionary reality (Hindu ‘maya’) by way of left-hand magic (‘black magic’) and undirected sensuality. As William Adlington said of the Golden Asse during his Introductory Address and Epistle Dedicatory, delivered from University College, Oxford on 18th September 1566: ‘Although the matter therein seeme very light and merry, yet the effect thereof tendeth to a good and vertuous moral…under the wrap of this transformation is taxed the life of mortall men, when as we suffer our mindes so to bee drowned in the sensuall lust to the beastly pleasure thereof…so can we never be restored to the right figure of ourselves except we taste and eat the sweet Rose of reason and vertue, which rather by the mediation of praier we may assuredly attain’.

As Robert Graves reports in his introduction, mid-20th century research into the history of magic has revealed that there were Thessalian witches who preserved a pre-Aryan tradition of destructively
magic, associated with the Triple Moon-Goddess in her form of Hecate. The 'right-hand', benevolent magic is connected to the mysteries of Isis—the Goddess Lucius/Apuleius come to worship. Thus, the Golden Ass should not be read as containing a 'Puritan' moral of covertly sexual love into love of God, and the abandonment of magic in favour of 'religion'. Sensuality is not inherently vulgar, nor is magic always evil; both can take either 'left-hand' character or a positive, 'right-hand' form—just as the Moon-Goddess appears both as Hecate and as Isis.

Lucius's form as an ass is also significant in terms of the philosophy of the Golden Ass. Though thought to mean something like 'The Princes of All Ass-Stories' or 'The Best of Asses', there may be ambiguity between the sense of aureus as meaning 'best' and its more literal meaning of 'golden'. Martin has suggested that the Latin title may translate the Greek 'tawny ass' associated with the demon Typhon (as Plutarch details in his De Iside).

The worship of Isis in the form known to Apuleius and Plutarch actually arose in Greek and Roman times, her Egyptian precursor Aset (the latter name written with the hieroglyphic for 'throne') having been almost completely forgotten for hundreds of years, and there being very few priests left who could even read the hieroglyphics on the temple walls.

To continue, in Plutarch's account, briefly: Typhon (Seth in Egyptian) is the evil brother of the God King Osiris. Typhon contrived a plan to usurp his brother whereby he tricked Osiris into stepping into a heavily-ornamented box fitted exactly to his dimensions. No sooner had Osiris entered the box then Typhon had it nailed-shut and sealed with molten lead. He and his conspirators then threw this casket into the river. The pans & satyrs learn of this trick and inform Osiris's sister-wife, Isis. She searches all of the lands for the Osiris's coffin and, upon finding it, tears off the lid and caresses the dead face of Her beloved brother-husband. Her caresses turn more urgent until She begins to copulate with the cold body of Osiris (reminiscent of some representations the Hindu Goddess Kali astride the prostate, lifeless body of Shiva) and conceives a child, Horus. When Typhon learns of the body's discovery, he chops the body into tiny bits, casting them hither and yon through the lands. Isis retrieves all of the parts, except for Osiris's male-member (symbolising his virility and strength), which Typhon cast into the river to be eaten by pikes (Egyptians traditionally avoided eating pike for this reason). However, Isis made a replica phallus and consecrated it—this event replicated in ceremonies performed by the ancient Egyptians in a festival (again, quite similar to the Hindu Shiva-lingam worshippers, particularly prevalent in the south of India). Later Horus, Osiris's truly post-humous son, overthrows the cruel Typhon.

Because of Typhon's slaying of Her husband, the tawny ass of Typhon is particularly repellent to Isis, as She says to Lucius: ‘...de proximo clementer velut manum sacerdotis osculabundus rosis decerptis pessimae mihique iam dudum detestabilis belvae istius corio te protinus exue’ (Apuleius XI.6)—‘...when you have drawn near, make as if you intend to kiss the priest's hand, and gently detach the roses; at once then shrug off the skin of this most hateful of animals, which has long been abominable in my sight' (Walsh trans. 221—my emphasis). The owl, into which
shape Pamphile transforms, on the other hand, is a symbol of wisdom, and the owl is thus often Athena/Minerva. Isis’s deliverance of Lucius, despite his being incarcerated in the form most hateful to Her, is particularly praiseworthy when viewed against the backdrop of the Egyptian myths associated with Isis.

Pharaoh Ramses presents Roses to Isis

crete Crete (1940) – painting by Norman Lindsay (Jack Lindsay’s father)

Classical Isis Worship

Isis faience

Turquoise faience figure, 3rd century BCE of seated Isis, wearing the horns & sun-disc crown, with child Horus on her lap (click photo for close-up)

Island of Philae (centre of ancient Isis worship)

A timeline of Isis Worship

Modern Isis Worship

The Fellowship of Isis

Foundation Centre: Clonegal Castle, Enniscorthy, Ireland

Kemet Orthodox Faith

pan & psyche Pan comforts Psyche – painting by Sir Edward Burne-Jones

Following Plutarch’s De Iside et Osiride, Isis represents all that is well-ordered and beautiful in the world despite chaos and irrationality. The priest’s address to Lucius in the final book: ‘Sed utcumque Fortunae peccata, dum te pessimis periculis discruciat, ad religiosam istam beatitudinem inprovida produxit malitia’ (Apuleius). The lassitudes of irrationally cruel Fortune accidentally bring Lucius into Isis’s grace. Again,
‘Fortune with blind eyes’ is representative of disruptive Typhon, whose actions are unintelligibly cruel; as opposed to the rational order symbolises by Isis (note: this is a very different opposition from that of Apollonian-Dionysian chaos—as discussed in Nietzsche’s Die Geburt der Tragödie [‘The Birth of Tragedy’]—where chaos are aligned quite differently, i.e. chaos with the primal, with music, &c. and order with the sculpture, &c.).

The ass in Apuleius’s day therefore represented cruelty and lust; when Charite escapes from the dacoits and rides home on Lucius’s back, Apuleius remarks that this is an extra-ordinary sight: ‘virginem asino triumphantem’ (Apuleius VII.13). Literally, ‘a virgin triumphantly riding an ass’; figuratively, ‘purity dominating the lusts of the flesh without bit or bridle’. Further, Plutarch records an Egyptian festival in which asses and men Typhon’s colours (tawny gold-red) were pushed over a cliff in ritualistic vengeance for Osiris’s murder.

Lucius’s form as an ass may also be significant for another reason: Tertullian in his Apologeticus reports in that some Africans believed that Christians’s worshipped an ass’s head (‘somniastis caput asininum esse deum nostrum’). And that a condemned man in the amphitheatre guyed the Christian god by wearing ass’s ears and hoof. Tertullian suggests that this strange notion may have originated from a distortion of Jewish practices in Tacitus’s Histories.

If this is evidence of Apuleius’s antagonism towards Christianity (and it is supported by his representation of the cruel wife of the baker in Book 9 as adhering to a faith with a deity whom she proclaimed to be the only god), then it is not surprising, given the probable situation of Christian propaganda being spread both in Rome and in North Africa during Apuleius’s life.

It is probable that Apuleius met with Christians and Christian-missionary texts whilst in Rome, as by Marcianus Aristides is a nasty attack on Isiac religion (Isis-worship). And then, his return to Carthage coincides with the burst of Christianity in North Africa—Madauros, his own birthplace, being one of the centre of Christian witness (Turtullian’s reports are that all of Roman North Africa was in turmoil in the 190s due to the spread of Christianity).

Thus, the Golden Ass—and Apuleius’s rendering of the ‘Cupid & Psyche’ myth in particular—may be contrived as counter-doctrines to those of Christianity which Apuleius saw as threatening both the Isiac religion and Platonic philosophy. Thus his emphasis on the numen unicum multiformi specie (Apuleius XI.5), or ‘single godhead with manifold forms’ of Isis.

In the middle ages, the Inquisition, not surprising, attempted to destroy all known editions of Apuleius’s work due to its jabs at Christianity and Christians, such as the portrayal of the baker’s wife, one of the wickest characters in the novel:

‘Tunc spretis atque calcatis divinis numinibus in viceram certae religionis mentita sacrilega praes
quem praedicaret unicum, confictis observationibus vacuis fallens omnis homines et miserum matri matutino mero et continuo corpus manciparat’ (Apuleius IX.14) ‘She scorned and spurned the gods of heaven; and in the place of true religion she professed some fantastic blasphemous creed of a God whom she named the One and Only God. But she used her deluded and ridiculous observances chiefly to deceive the onlooker and to diddle her wretched husband; for she spent the morning in boozing, and leased out her body in perpetual prostitution’ (Lindsay trans. 276)

The baker’s wife is further described by Apuleius as ‘saeva scaeva viriosa ebriosa pervicax pertinax’ (Apuleius which provides a good example of Apuleius’s rich, musical style of Latin prose–here combining both rhyme and alliteration. Such phrases illustrate the immense challenge for translators of the novel, if they are to preserve both the meaning and the form of the original to any degree. Some abandon any try at reproducing the phonic-form, reading ‘mischievous, malignant, addicted to men and to wine, froward and stubborn’ (Bohn’s ed. trans. 175), ‘crabbed, cruel, lascivious, drunken, obstinate, niggish’ (Adlington trans. 209), ‘malicious, spiteful, lecherous, drunken, selfish, obstinate’ (Graves trans. 203). Other translators use quite a variety of verbal tricks to get at the rhythm of the original, and succeed to varying degrees: ‘crabbed and crotchety, bibulous, obdurate and obstinate’ (Walsh trans. 170), ‘hard-hearted, perverse, man-mad, drunker the last degree’ (Kenney trans. 154), ‘lewd and crude, a toper and a groper, a nagging hag of a fool’ (Lindsay trans. 276).

Apuleius has a liking for outlandish and bizarre expressions and tangles the archaic with the colloquial in a disorienting mélange. But it is this very exotic elixir of his language which sets the right tone for his tale of mingled drama and comedy, chivalrous love and comic lust. One should not be misled by his apologies for his poor Latin:

‘Mox in urbe Latia advena studiorum Quiritium indigenam sermonem aerumnabili labore nullo magistro praeeunte aggressus excolui. En ecce praefamur veniam, siquid exotici ac forensis sermonis rudis locutor offendero. Iam haec equidem ipsa vocis immutatio desultoriae scientiae stilo quem accessimus respondet. Fabulam Graecanicam incipimus.’ (Apuleius I.1)

‘Later in Rome, as a stranger to the literary pursuits of the citizens there, I tackled and cultivated the native language without the guidance of a teacher, and with excruciating difficulty. So at the outset I beg for any mistakes which I make as a novice in the foreign language in use at the Roman bar. In fact this linguistic metamorphosis suits the style of the writing I have adopted here–the same sort of trick, you might say, as that employed by a circus-rider who leaps from one horse to another–for the romance on which I am embarking is adapted from the Greek’ (trans. adapted from those of Walsh & Kenney, pp. 1 & 7, resp.)

Like his circus-rider, Apuleius has pulled a trick here, in switching from the horse of begging apology to that of insinuating that a Greek might be able to teach the Romans a thing or two about their own tongue. And indeed, the prose following this prologue is not only unique and wonderful in its content, but also in its linguistic form.
roman lamp
unusual Roman lamp, circa 100-300CE,
seemingly showing a scene from
the Golden Ass or .
owned/sold by Phoenicia Holyland Antiques

Roman morality: zoophilia
in the Golden Ass

ibis
Feeding the Sacred Ibis – an engraving of a
painting by E. J. Poynter

Turning from the flower of Apuleius’s style to the Mystical Rose which is the goal of Lucius for most of the novel, one may note the ubiquity of the rose in Western folk-tale and myth–e.g. in ‘Sleeping Beauty’, ‘Beauty and the Beast’, &c. (its place taken by the lotus in Eastern myths)–and its current establishment as a token of passion and love. The expression sub rosa or ‘under the rose’ (meaning something confidential) originates from a Greek/Roman misinterpretation of an Egyptian hieroglyphic (appropriately enough): adopting Horus as a God (along with Isis and Osiris), the Greeks translated his Egyptian name her-pa-khrad to Harpocrates. The Egyptian hieroglyphic showed boy sucking his finger; the Greeks thought the boy had his finger to his lips, in the sign of secrecy. Cupid is said to have given Horus/Harpocrates a rose as a token of gratitude for not paying too close attention to the amorous goings-on of Cupid’s Mother, Venus. Thus the rose became doubly-linked with confidentiality through Horus. The ceilings of Roman dining halls were rose-coloured to remind the guests that anything said there was sub vino (under the influence of wine) and also sub rosa and not for public consumption. This place ‘under the rose’ is the place where mothers tell their children that they were found, in a secret place; universally substituting the more pedestrian and innocuous cabbage for the velvety flower, which with its many flesh-coloured labial petals is much too close to the ‘genital’ reality the cabbage is meant to spare a child. As Lindsay says in his introduction, ‘the effort of Lucius to shed his ass’s skin can therefore be compared to mankind’s effort to transfigure the cabbage of experience into the beautified rose….it is from this effort that misery proceeds; but without that complex struggle to sublimate experience there would be no humanity at all’ (Lindsay viii).

This seems a key to understanding the Golden Ass, that it is a representation of a man’s effort to find a true interpretation of his experience–the universal human struggle to discover a meaning behind the blind fortune’s irrational, indiscriminate cruelty. Apuleius’s Asinus aureus or Metamorphoses is a fettered soul seeking to know its own action that is the true centre of the work; it is a radiant hymn introduced to counterbalance the image of man’s life as that of a galled beast-of-burden’ (Lindsay ix).
beast of burthen Lucius toiling – illustration by Jean de Bosschère

lucius as a beast of burthen

Lucius as a beast of burden – illustration by Jean de Bosschère

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References


APULEII ASINUS AUREUS

COMPLETE LATIN text ONLINE**

pompeii wall-painting

wall-painting from Pompeii showing the rituals of the cult of Isis

APULEIUS’S GOLDEN ASS

**COMPLETE ENGLISH text ONLINE **

(Adlington’s translation of 1566, ‘published’ on the web by Martin Guy, with a glossary)

Psyche entering Cupid’s Garden

Psyche Entering Cupid’s Garden – painting by John William Waterhouse

The Golden Ass:
Editions, Translations,
Textual Comparisons of Selected Passages
+ Links to Book Sellers
[click here!]

john price 1650

title-page from John Price’s Latin edition of 1650 (Gouda)

read selected passages from different translations alongside of Latin original;
information on translators & translations;
find & buy your favourite edition of the Golden Ass!

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The Genetic Bomb: Paul Virilio and Sylvère Lotringer

The Genetic Bomb: Paul Virilio and Sylvère Lotringer . 2002 from the Psychomilitary issue

Sylvère Lotringer: More than twenty years ago you warned against the militarization of knowledge. Mobilized to protect humanity, science is now in the process of destroying it.

Paul Virilio: For fifty years now – but those of our generation know it well – we have been witnessing the militarization of knowledge. Not simply with Nobel prize-winning scientists involved in the Vietnam War, but in all research we've seen it. The fruit of this is the three bombs: the atomic bomb, the cyber bomb – the internet comes from – and now finally the genetic bomb which is in the works: they are all the fruit of this militarization of science. That's why I was able to speak of the ‘politics of the worst’* today with regard to cybernetics.

SL: It all follows logically from what we had developed in Pure War.*

PV: Yes, unfortunately. Still I recall that this desire goes back to the Futurists and thus to fascism. You would have to reread Marinetti. We must not in any case forget what he says about bodies: he says that the body nourished on energy, nourished on technology, etc. Marinetti is a prophet of fascism, not only the Mussolini but also the eugenic fascism of Mengele. And he foresaw it. Futurism foresaw internal flesh-eating prostheses, the revolution of transplants, technology inserted on the inside of the body, this sort of cannibalism of...
man which causes him to feed himself on implants such as the pacemaker, all the way to additional memory, to microchips, and incorporated telephones.

SL: That is the first offensive. The other offensive is not to penetrate a body that is already there, but to construct one.

PV: The other aspect is genesis, the possibility of the industrialization of the living being, the industrialization of the species itself. It will no longer be a question of the eugenics of relative performance, Galton’s artificial selection, or Mengele’s for that matter. It will be a question of informational selection. It will go right to a total, an absolute eugenics, a eugenics of the perfecting of creation itself.

SL: It is no longer a modification of the body according to selection criteria we label ‘positive’ and ‘negative’—eliminating the handicapped or reinforcing the carriers of good genes—but a programming, pure and simple. They produce a new human object from nothing.

PV: In that case, it is the program that would be the essential and not the culture. In my opinion, artificial selection and informational selection cannot be separated because I believe that both are quite simply aberrations. Behind them, there is obviously the idea of an improved humanity, not to mention a post-humanity. Yet the human species no longer the human species in the singular, but human species in the plural.

SL: By altering the map of the human genome, you could create highperformance men, but also under-men.

PV: Behind the idea of the super-man, Galton’s idea that was taken up by Mengele, there is inevitably the idea of the under-man.

SL: The idea of the under-man did not have to wait for the genetic revolution. It’s the history of colonialism.

PV: But this world misfortune was not programmed in a factory. Whereas, in this case, with genome modification, it would be an industrial program as in Terminator. The whole question of the control of the living being is the contraception of the human species.

SL: And that raises again the question of racism…

PV: Or rather of super-racism. The biggest racist knows that there exists a unity of the species. Even if we degrade us within the unity of the species. He says ‘inferior,’ but it is a man or a woman. Through its massacres, its horrors, racism remains within the unity of the human species. It is relative to that unity. However, through transgenetic research, through chimeras or hybridization, through eugenics, the question of multiplying human kinds. The racist was yet preserved from his excess by the fact that there was only one human kind, and different races—blacks, whites, etc. But I am saying that the genetic bomb risks exploding this unity for the multiplicity of the human kind, and then racism will become exponential.
It would be a transhuman racism.

This is transhuman racism, whereas the other was endo-human.

The heterogeneity of races will make the old racism impossible...

...whereas heterogeneity will be a racism beyond the human kind. And that is the unthinkable.

In a sense, that’s what the Nazis had tried to do.

In my view, we cannot advance in the genetic question today without positing the fatal dimension of eugenics. As soon as you create the idea of the super-man, you discredit, you downgrade, you degrade a kind of man. In super-racism you would find all over again the foundations both of colonialism and of racism and of xenophobia, but on a cosmic level I would say – hence the idea that the extra-human is the future of the extra-terrestrial. And that the search for little green men was not at all science fiction, but the forerunner of the search for a superior man. Simply, since nobody dared to be part of Nazi eugenics, we went to outer-space and opted for little green men.

William Burroughs saw in genetic engineering the possibility of bringing about a final ecological leap into space. Science fiction pioneers, too.

It pioneers. It opens something, which has more to do with the human than the extra-huma the plurality of humankind is an unthinkable thing. In other words, it will be necessary to think that is, make the jump beyond ethics. And we know that they made this jump at Auschwitz.

The Nazi doctors made genetic research something that no longer had anything to do with kn

We can indeed ask ourselves whether genetics is still a science, or whether it is an art. If you art, then we entertain the possibility of creating kinds, or styles. The human kind becomes the pr But this time, it is no longer the creator who is the cause. It’s Monsanto, or Novartice, that does the programming...

If it’s art, it’s a mutant art...

Exactly. There is an esthetic dimension to the camps, which was voluntary, which was part of thinking of the Viennese Actionists, or certain forms of art today like the ‘Sensation’ exhibition in Gunther von Hagens’ exhibition in the Museum of Work in Mannheim, where he presented plastified bodies, cadavers of living beings sculpted in a surrealist manner, etc.

In both cases, in the camps as in the galleries, the border between art and science disappears.

It’s the same logic. Genetics would become an art, a genetic art, an expressionist art, which w multiplicity of humankind. The idea that in laboratories one would create – I’m exaggerating – im
beings, or pointillist, or cubist, etc., all the way to genetic operas. In other words, something from fashion is becoming a living phenomenon, and we know that fashion goes out of fashion. Here we are touching on the mutation of humankind.

SL: It will no longer be esthetic surgery, since they will no longer conform to a predetermined model. It will be genetic esthetics. They will create new species the way they present a new collection.

PV: Right, there will be chimeras, and then there will be hybrids, which we have already seen in the research on cow ova, that is, the centaur or minotaur research.

SL: Science will give birth to monsters, and they will be works of art.

PV: Yes. In my opinion, if you look at what is happening in contemporary art, they are at the pointillist genetics and cloning to be an art form. That is, a form of the liberty of expression. Or does the liberty of expression stop in the domain of the sciences? If it doesn’t stop, Mengele will be a prophet... We’re at the limit. This is total delirium. This delirium is comparable to the frenzy of atomic research. The third bomb is the genetic bomb.

SL: The phrase is Einstein’s, I believe.

PV: Yes. Einstein recognized three bombs: the atomic bomb, the cyber bomb, and the genetic bomb. And here we are faced with delirium. The atomic bomb has been a delirium, which we have not been able to leave behind. Then they set off the second frenzy, the cyber bomb, the bomb of information. And now the third bomb beginning, the third delirium, Einstein called it the demographic bomb, but it goes without saying that the demographic bomb is tied to the genetic bomb. It is possible to think that this research is in fact being done to counter demographics, that is, to introduce an under-species and a super-species.

SL: What does this have to say about the function of art in relation to science?

PV: Art is initiatory. Pointillism is already an analysis of light. The Impressionists did cloning too – Monet’s series. The art of these periods, it’s prophetic somehow. I don’t know if it is still the case today, but certainly since Romanticism, since the 18th and 19th centuries in any case, the arts have been, in the profane sense of the word, prophetic of political mutations. One can say that in some way the arts had a role comparable to philosophy, but the role of art was not to put on trial the way philosophy and religion did; the role of art was to announce prophetically what was happening. I think Romanticism as well as Surrealism announces this. Recall that Surrealism is born after WWI and is sort of the child of the war, whereas Futurism straddles 1910, so just before. But between Futurism and Surrealism, the prophecy of modern times, the period we are talking about, passes through Kafka, who is the profane prophet par excellence, the prophet of extermination, the prophet of extermination which is raised. Extermination has been undertaken...
since the 19th century. There was the extermination of the concentration camps, Auschwitz; the atomic extermination, Hiroshima. And now with the genetic bomb there is once again the possibility of another type of extermination in the works.

SL: Presented as a positive thing.

PV: Yes, presented as positive. We would have not only control over birth, or contraception, but also control over the living being.

SL: But it’s not all negative. As people have proposed, it’s possible that an ‘improved’ agriculture could prevent famines in the Third World, that we could replace coal and oil by renewable resources produced by microorganisms and plants...

PV: This is always the case. Good and evil cannot be separated. That’s why Aesop’s phrase is still with the same phrase that Aesop did: What is the best of things? Computer science. What is the worst of things? Computer science. Today we are faced with a kind of slack-jawed optimism with respect to new technologies, which is for me perhaps the latest conformism. Good and evil tend to be replaced by optimism. Optimism is good, and pessimism is evil. It’s an academic form of ethics. It is thus academic and media-friendly, I would say. And a thinker cannot be an optimist. That’s why I said a minute ago that genetics is the best and the worst of things, the possibilities of control over the book of life, of decoding the human genome, can promote treatments for the sick. But we know very well that those techniques invented for the treatment of the sick are quickly turned towards the treatment of those in perfect health [laughter]. We know that. For example, you can see it happening with Viagra. Viagra is for the impotent. Do you really think that those who are taking it are impotent? Of course not! It’s a stimulant. So we have the same thing every time we invent a technology. Its aspects are always presented in a positive light, an optimistic light, but they mask the negative dimensions. But you can’t mask it! We’re living in a double bind. Technology is a double bind. There is no progress without progress of the catastrophe. At the beginning we invent a new technology, and at the end, well, we render natural seeds sterile to make money.

SL: You think we’re heading for catastrophe?

PV: I think the genetic bomb has an apocalyptic dimension to it. The three bombs, moreover, together have an apocalyptic dimension. Not the end of the world, but extermination in the broad sense. You know what people think of me, I am not a thinker of the excess. I try to be a kind of periscope of probable catastrophes. What I believe is that these three bombs are developing in parallel. This catastrophic triptych is preparing a universal accident, a total accident whose dimension we cannot even imagine. Each time we invent a technology, whether electronic or biogenetic, we program a catastrophe and an accident that we cannot imagine. When we invented electricity, we didn’t imagine Chernobyl. So, in the research on the living being, on the
cannot imagine the nature of the catastrophe. We can imagine a monster, OK, but artists have been doing that since Breughel and Bosch. Since Bosch, the search and programming for monsters has already taken place. In my part, I believe that the total catastrophe, which these three bombs are programming, is the accident of science. It is no longer science that programs the accidents; it is science that is going to have a permanent accident. You see? The accident of science is that science is going to destroy itself. I believe that just as there was an accident of politics, so to speak, in the 20th century – and what an accident, otherwise we will understand nothing about Auschwitz and the Shoah – so at this very moment an accident of science and knowledge, whose consequences we cannot imagine, is being programmed. The cyber bomb and the genetic bomb are ripe, as they say, pregnant, two of them, with a scientific catastrophe which we cannot imagine because it is perhaps the catastrophe of science itself.

SL: The genetic manipulation of the human is the accident of science.

PV: In a certain way, the accident of science is an accident that has not yet taken place, even if we can say that the labs – I mean the labs, not extermination, not the gas chambers – the labs at Auschwitz-Birkenau were the prefiguration of this accident. Auschwitz was not only a crime against humanity; it is the beginning of the accident of science. But that drags in the question of art.

SL: What you call the Nazi esthetic, it is not the grandiose one that they have shown in museums or erected as monuments; it is the one that they practised in secret in the labs.

PV: Yes, that is what I call, citing Camus, a pitiless art.

SL: To sum up, what we don’t realize is that everyone is in the process of becoming Nazi in a new way.

PV: Auschwitz-Birkenau – and you have to say Auschwitz-Birkenau – was the prefiguration of what is happening today with transgenetics. The extermination camps – not the concentration camps, they had those in Australia for the indigenous peoples – have been the biggest genetic laboratories of the period. The whole thing enriched the big pharmaceutical labs and enriched science itself. And it is not by accident that ‘twin birth’ was at the center of this research.

SL: The Shoah would thus be not an event that separates from what went before, but the contrary: a way to follow...

PV: It’s a prefiguration. The Shoah is not an end but the beginning. A book by Ernst Klee which just appeared, on the role of doctors in the development of pharmaceutical complexes today, shows to what extent research on man today leads no longer to experiments on man, to human experimentation, as the Mengele twins, but to man-experiments. No longer experiments on man, but man-experiments of expression to produce a man, to create him, no longer to procreate him. We see there the religi
the divinization of the scientist: the demiurge. I believe that we are leaving biology behind to enter teratology, that is, the creation of monsters.

SL: Monsters that would be men.

PV: Monsters that would be men, that would be living beings. And there, teratology becomes an expressionist form of art, an expressionist form of science as art, of genetic science as art.

SL: They have already grafted a human ear on the back of a mouse, produced ‘Arnold Schwarzenegger’ athletic pigs with chicken genes... If this kind of experimentation is possible, we are already in the process of doing it in a certain way.

PV: I'm convinced of it. Who would dare claim that hybrids and human cloning have not begun? What America has done – I say America, but I could just as well say France – when they radiated their own citizens to test the atomic bomb, forty years later now let's not think that none of this can happen.

Translated by Mike Taormina

* Pure War, by Paul Virilio & Sylvère Lotringer, was published in 1983 by Semiotext(e), Inc. in New York and Politics of the Very Worst in 1998.

This is an excerpt from Crepuscular Dawn (New York: Semiotext(e)/The MIT Press, 2002), a book-length dialogue between Paul Virilio & Sylvère Lotringer.
Sleeping With The Enemy

This was a major shift in political theory. Actually and contrary to all appearances, it wasn’t unlike Deleuze and Felix Guattari advocated in *Anti-Oedipus* [*Capitalism and Schizophrenia*], or Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punishment*, in the wake of May ’68.

... Marxist rhetoric in politics had bottomed out. The student rebellion had proved at least one thing: the French Communist Party, trade-unions and the working class—the entire institutional left—had ceased to be revolutionary.

...

No wonder French post-’68 thinkers, Baudrillard included, looked somewhere else for revolutionary alternatives. Failing to enlist their allies, they resolved to sleep with the enemy.

...

All of the ‘children of May,’ revolutionaries bereft of a revolution, turned to capitalism, eager to extract their subversive energy they no longer found in traditional class struggles. Updating the theory of power and the fluctuations of subjectivity to the erratic shifts of the semiotic code, they assumed that they could redirect its flows and their wake new “deterritorialized” figures—psychotic creativity, desire, nomadism, becoming revolutionary in spite of the abrupt “reterritorializations” that the system was bound to impose in order to insure its own survival.

(Deterritorializations result from the absolute decodification of capital.)

Baudrillard didn’t disagree with them on the nature of the beast, only on the extent of the damage. Contrary to them, he maintained that their willful distinctions between various “regimes of madness,” or between thresholds...
and gradients of intensity (necessary to identify the direction and consistency of the flows) could no longer hold. Libidinal distinctions would prove powerless to stem the flow. He saw them as doomed attempts to reintroduce a modicum of human agency in a process that had become both irreversible (linear, cumulative) and inhuman. Energetic and intense, capital was gradually gnawing away at every singularity. Simulating its fluidity, they had been engulfed by it. Revolution had come and gone; they arrived too late, one day after the orgy, like Kafka’s Messiah. Boldly going beyond Marx, they had simply lost their moorings. “Theoretical production, like material production, “ Baudrillard wrote, “loses its determinacy and begins to turn around itself, slipping toward a reality that cannot be found. This is where we are today: indeterminacy, the era of floating, much as floating money…” (Symbolic Exchange, p.44). All the efforts to enlist capitalism on their side were bound to fail. The only way out of the morass was a radical leap of faith, a flight into the unknown. Only deterritorialization of theory itself could meet the absolute challenge of capital.

This is what Baudrillard meant by a total revolution: a strategy geared to escalate the system and push it to its breaking point. Then, giving up on every pretense of rationality, it would start revolving and achieve in the process a circularity of its own:” We know the potential of tautology when it reinforces the system’s claim to sphericity (Ubu Roi’s belly)” (SE, p.4). Coming back full circle to his early pataphysical roots, Baudrillard was taunting capital to emulate Jarry’s absurdism—and share in Ubu’s grotesque fate. After all, wasn’t pataphysical proposition? It was endlessly cutting the branch on which it sits, devastating the planet and endangering the human species while claiming to improve its lot. Capital didn’t care a fig for the real. It had cancelled the principle of reality and substituted a codification of a higher order, a hyper-reality that made the real obsolete. Its dirge-like flows were self-referential, leaving everything of self-induced simulation. The flows of capital were posthumous, post-human. In their nihilistic energy, they carried the seeds of their own destruction. Only Ubu, Jarry’s truculent hero, the coward king cannibalizing his own entourage, and himself in the process, could account for such a bullish cynicism. The society of the spectacle turning into a soft version of the theater of cruelty, a burlesque of death with the globe as its stage. Life was being exchanged for nothing, for a handful of glittering toys, work absorbed time like a sponge and left no traces.

Baudrillard wasn’t the exterminator, but the system itself. Yet no one was paying attention. In his Bastille days, De Sade challenged French regicides to draw revolution out of to its most extreme moral conclusions: “Fellow compatriots, a last-ditch effort is required if you really want to earn the name of Republican!” Already spinning himself silly with the system like an autistic child, Baudrillard was ready to make the extra mile. He would be the fool of capital and wave its Good News all around like a lantern: “Every system that approaches perfect operativity simultaneously approaches its downfall…it approaches absolute power and total absurdity; that is, immediate and probable subversion. A gentle push in the right place is enough to bring it crashing down.” (SE, p.4). Beware of gentle pataphysicians with a big hammer.
Ubu, the caricatural and gaseous state, the lower intestine and the splendor of the void. Because, stucco and fake... even a tree made of wood — and this intense bluff that facilitates the rising of the phenomenon — nothing prevents that this catabase towards the stucco and the fake and the blah began well before the form that so-called true objects have taken today... and that everything, before being born, was at the cancerous and imaginary state — which doesn't prevent things from being less false than we think — that is to say...

Pataphysics is the highest temptation of the spirit. The horror of ridicule and necessity lead to an infatuation, the enormous flatulence of Ubu.

The pataphysical spirit is the nail in the tire — the world, a wolf's mouth (lupo vesce). La gidouille balloon, a nebulous or even a perfect sphere of knowledge — the intestinal sphere of the sun. There is nothing to take away from death. Does a tire die? It renders its tire soul. Flatulence is at the origin of the breath.

The idea is to turn it back on itself, it is in this fashion that reality is demolished. In the opinonatedness of Ubu, our will, importance, faith, all the things that are carried to paroxysm where we perceive quite naturally that they are made up of breaths from our flatulence, from meat which we make the candles and ashes, from bone with which we make false ivory and false universes. It is not ridicule. It's an inflation, the brusque passage into an empty space, which is the thought of no one, cause there is not pataphysical thought, there is only pataphysic sours and embaums like milk, swollen like a drowning victim et defragrer like a greenish-blue truffle of Palotin. Pataphysics: philosophy of the gaseous state. It can only be defined in a new undiscovered language because too obvious: tautology. Better: it can only define itself by its own term, thus: it doesn’t exist. It turns around and around and rehashes the same half-assed incongruence, smiling stupidly, from girolles and decayed dreams.

The rules of the pataphysical game are far more dastardly than any other. It is a narcissism of death, an eccentricity. The world is an inane protuberance, an empty jack-off, a delirium of stucco and cardboard. But Artaud,
who thinks as such, thinks that from this brandished sex of nothingness can one day spring forth a true sperm, only from a caricatural existence can a theatre of cruelty surge forth, that is to say, a real virulence. Pataphysics, however, does not believe in the sexual organ, or the theatre. There is facade and no ventroloquicity of the bladder and lanterns is absolute. All things are infatuated, imaginary, an ed une nenie. There is not even a means to be born or to die. This is reserved for the rock, meat, blood has weight. Now, for Pataphysics, all phenomena are absolutely gaseous. Even the recognition of the knowledge of farting and purity, and coitus, because nothing is serious... and the conscience etc. Without goal, without soul, without sentences, and itself being imaginary, but nonetheless n pataphysical paradox is to die, quite simply. If, Artaud pushed to the edge by the renewed void in him, did not kill himself, it is because he believed in an incarnation somewhere, in a birth, in a se drama. The whole on a trestle of cruelty, since reality could not receive it there was a gamble, and immense. The confines of the bladder had an odor of a Chinese lantern. Ubu, himself, blew out a with his big fart. And what’s more, he was convincing. He convinced every one of nothingness ar He proves that we are an intestinal complication of the lord and of the limbs, that when he has farted yourself, it shall be resolved, everything will be in order. We are nothing else, but at the perpetual the notion of reality is given to us by a certain abdominal concentration of the wind which has not yet been released. The gods and mornings that sing are issued from this obscene gas, accumulated since the pyramidal Ubu digests us before expulsing us pataphysically into the void, obscure the re-cooled fart, which would be the end of the world and of all possible worlds.

The humor of this story is crueler than that of Artaud who is but a mere idealist. Above all, he is in proves the impossible of thinking pataphysically without killing yourself. He is, if you will, the ray spheric acid gidouille whose only limits are the imbecility of the sphere, but who becomes infinite li explodes. From this explosion of the Palotins comes humor, from their naive and fawning manner to return to nature under the form of farts, which believe themselves to be quite conscientious beings, and nc they give the spark to an incommensurable humor that will shine until the end of the world — the Ubu himself. Thus pataphysics is impossible. Must one kill oneself to prove it? Indeed, since it is is exactly this which is its seriousness. Finally, to exalt Pataphysics is to be a pataphysician without which is what we are all. Because humor wants humor in regards to humor, etc. Pataphysics is sc

Artaud is the perfect contrast. Artaud wants the revalorisation of creation and wants to put it into away like Soutine from his rotten beef, an image, no longer an idea. He believes that by piercing t sorcery there will spill a lot of puss, but good god, real blood, and when the entire world will be p Soutine’s cow, the dramaturge will be able to continue, from our bones, prepare a serious feast w longer be spectators. On the contrary, Pataphysics is ex-sangue and doesn’t get itself wet, evolvin parody, being the reabsorption itself of the spirit, without a trace of blood. And, moreover, all Pat.
procedures are a vicious circle where, maddening forms, without believing in each other, devour crabs at the edge of a cliff, digesting themselves like stucco buddhas and renders nothing in all its the fecal sound of a pumice rock and dried ennui.

This is because Pataphysics has reached such a perfection of the game and because it accords little importance to everything that it finally has little of. In themselves, all solennal nullity, all figures of nullites come to fail and petrify themselves before the gorgonal eye of Ubu. In it all things become artificial, venomous, and lead to schizophrenia, by the angels of pink stucco whose limbs rejoin in a curbed mirror. Loyola — may the world be av that I reign over it. If a soul doesn’t resist the emprise of volute, of spirals of imprinted vertigo, fixed at the moment of paroxystical tartufferie, when it is delivered to the sumptuous Ubu, whose smile renders everyt sulfurous inutility and the freshness of latrines…

Such is the unique imaginary solution to the absence of problems.

Acknowledgments and Credits

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Jean Baudrillard is an internationally acclaimed theorist whose writings trace the rise and fall of symbollic exchange in the contemporary century. In addition to a wide range of highly influential books from Seduction to Symbolic Exchange and Death, Baudrillard’s most recent publications include: The Vital Illusion, The Spirit of Terrorism, The Singular Objects of Architecture, Passwords, The Conspiracy of Art: Manifestos, Texts, Interviews (September 2005) and The Intelligence of Evil or the Lucidity Pact (November 2005). He is a member of the editorial board of CTheory.

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http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=569
Actor and photographer Lisa Jane Persky pays tribute to legendary B-movie director, avant-gardist and esotericist Curtis Harrington, and reports from a very strange memorial service.

He had barely started when he was interrupted by Anger, who shouted juicy ‘correct ions’ to Larson’s speech. Curtis Harrington, director of famed weird B-movies such as Night Tide (1961), Games (1967), Who Slew Auntie Roo? (1971) and What’s the Matter With Helen? (1971) was one of very few avant-garde directors to successfully make the transition into commercial filmmaking. He passed away at the age of 80 in Hollywood on 6 May 2007 from complications related to a stroke he had suffered in 2005.

“HIDEOUS BEYOND BELIEF… with an INHUMAN CRAVING!” was the tagline for Harrington’s best known cult classic, Queen of Blood (1966); strangely, it could have been applied to his fellow avant-garde celebrity Kenneth Anger when he made an appearance at Harrington’s burial service last month.

I met Harrington in 2006, at an opening for Dennis Hopper’s photographs and paintings. We were introduced by Gregory Poe, a friend with an apt last name. Harrington was a lifelong fan of Edgar Allan Poe and he began and ended his career with different versions of ‘The Fall of the House of Usher’. Gregory told me that he designed several urns and that Curtis had already ordered his. A year later, at the Forever Hollywood Cemetery adjacent to Paramount Studios, Harrington was ready to put Mr Poe’s handiwork to use.

Harrington’s memorial service was an open-casket affair held in the cemetery’s small chapel. Among other guests was Kenneth Anger, who arrived with a cameraman in tow. Best known for his films Fireworks, Inauguration of...
The Pleasure Dome (in which Harrington appeared, alongside Anaïs Nin) and Lucifer Rising, Anger is also the author of two compendia of trashy Hollywood scandals, Hollywood Babylon and Hollywood Babylon II, and his name is often linked to those of Satanist Anton LaVey and the notorious Aleister Crowley.

According to Harrington's executor, screenwriter Robert Mundy, Harrington and Anger had been 'friends' since childhood but had carried on a lifelong feud, during which Anger had repeatedly been cruel to Harrington. Because of this, as well as the attendant cameraman, Mundy asked Anger to leave. Anger in former times would have to call the police to get him off the property. Usually, they reached a compromise, and Anger turned off the camera. But this didn't prevent him from kissing the embalmed face of Harrington or from taking a seat in the front row. Anger, who is also 80, looks hardy and sports the intense, bullet-headed look of Aleister Crowley in his later years.

Actor Jack Larson (Jimmy Olson in the 1950s Superman television series), who was to be the only speaker at the service, described the Hollywood milieu that he and Curtis entered in the 1940s. He had barely started when he was interrupted by Anger, who shouted juicy 'corrections' to Larson’s speech. Larson persevered as Anger continued to provide a running commentary in a we-of-the-theatre tone. Larson referred to a mutual friend, 'Paul' from Pasadena, who ran a 'coven' which attracted many people, including Harrington and himself. At this, Anger shouted “NO! NO! It was an order of the Ordo Templi Orientis and it was of as high a degree Masonry. I am a 33rd-degree member through Crowley.” Preceding this, Larson had already mentioned Crowley and Anger had corrected his pronunciation: “Crow as in Crow. Then Lee.” Larson mentioned that ‘Paul’ had supposedly created a homunculus. Anger agreed – “OH HE DID! I saw it. Its little hand, like a tentacle, wrapped itself around my finger. There were 33 others in the crib, but not in full-fruition like this one” – suggesting that degrees of Masonry and homunculi litter have something in common. A number of actresses were involved in the “coven”, one of whom reportedly saw the homunculus. Anger informed the guests that whoever sees a homunculus is henceforth responsible for its life, and this, he suggested, may be why she ultimately became a recluse.

Larson recounted that ‘Paul’ supposedly had a tail. Anger concurred. “I SAW IT!” he shouted. “I showed it to Kinsey and he said that wasn’t so unusual – one man in 50,000 has one.” In the 1950s, the sexologist Alfred Kinsey became interested in Anger and his films, and in 1955 the two visited the site of Crowley’s ‘Abbey of Thelema’ in Cefalu, Sicily.

According to Larson, ‘Paul’s’ home burned to the ground. Anger explained why. “HOWARD DID IT!” he exclaimed. “Howard Hughes, who was crazy because he had syphilis of the brain.” For once no one disagreed, although this did produce some uncomfortable laughter.

Toward the end of Larson’s speech, Anger announced that he and Harrington had both been dying of prostate...
cancer (although Harrington didn’t die of this) and that he had told Harrington that he would outlive him. Anger then informed everyone that his own memorial would be here, in the same place. He turned to the crowd and said “Oh yes, It’s been confirmed. I know the date of my death. On Hallowe’en 2008. My memorial. RIGHT HERE! HALLOWE’EN 2008!” Then, as an afterthought, he added, “INVITATION ONLY! Sorry.”

Across from Anger’s seat was a huge floral bouquet. The card read: “For my old pal Kurtiz (sic) from his old rival Kenneth Anger”. The note, which usually bears the name of the deceased, read “Dr. Kenneth Anger,” making it look as though it was Anger’s funeral instead, well ahead of schedule. One of the themes Harrington explored in Queen of Blood and other films is that of beings who feed off others. With this in mind, one assumes that Anger won’t starve to death.

A second memorial service sans Anger was held at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences on historic Vine Street. Speakers there included scream queen Barbara Steele, directors Peter Medak (The Krays) and Bill Condon (Dreamgirls), and Dennis Hopper, who appeared in Harrington’s early work Night Tide featuring Marjorie Cameron, the widow of Jack Parsons, the scientist at Pasadena’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory who was also a follower of Aleister Crowley. Cameron appeared in Anger’s Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome and was part of the occult bohemia depicted in John Carter’s Sex and Rockets: The Occult World and it’s quite possible that Parsons was the ‘Paul’ that Superman’s pal and Crowley’s devotee had argued about at the previous service. Parsons blew himself and his house up in an ‘accident’, although there are suspicions it may have been suicide. Then too, they may have been speaking of Paul Mathison, the art director and actor who played Pan in Inauguration of The Pleasure Dome.

In a short documentary screened at the Anger-free event, Harrington had the last word: “There and the esoteric... That’s what I’m interested in. The esoteric. What goes on beneath.” He also had humour. “Did you know,” the husband asks his wife in Games, “that Aimee Semple McPherson was buried with a telephone?” “Why?” “Just in case,” a nod, to be sure, to Poe’s “The Premature Burial.” Harrington was now tombed at Hollywood Forever in an urn made by another Poe, in which, sadly, there is no room for a telephone.

The obituary in Variety claimed Harrington had no survivors, but this isn’t true. He has Anger, whether he wants him or not, along with a coterie of friends and admirers. Most importantly, he is survived by the prints of his films, which have been willed to The Motion Picture Academy.


http://www.forteantimes.com/strangedays/obituaries/645/curtis_harrington.html

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The 2010 Annual Ritual Abuse, Secretive Organizations and Mind Control Conference

August 6 – 8, 2010

DoubleTree near
Bradley International Airport
16 Ella Grasso Turnpike
Windsor Locks, CT

Internet conference information:
http://ritualabuse.us/smart-conference/

Conference Goals

– To help stop future occurrences of ritual abuse
– To help survivors of ritual abuse
– To name the groups that have participated in alleged illegal activities
– To unite those working to stop ritual abuse

Conference Schedule

There will be a small get together, deli dinner, dessert and early registration for pre-registered attendees only, on August 6, Friday evening. The conference will be all day on Saturday August 7 and Sunday August 8. Please check our conference home page for the latest conference schedule information. Some presentations will be recorded.

Speakers and Biographies

Please note: Listing of these speakers does not necessarily constitute our endorsement of them. They are speaking at our conference for educational value only and some may be heavy for survivors. Listening to the speakers at the conference may or may not help your recovery process, so use caution when listening to any speaker or any resource mentioned in this brochure. These descriptions may be heavy for survivors to read.

Neil Brick is a survivor of Masonic based Ritual Abuse and MK-ULTRA. He is the editor of S.M.A.R.T. – A Ritual Abuse Newsletter. His topics are: Fighting the Spin : The Truth about Child Abuse Cases and The Move from Blame the Victim to Blame the Helper.

Nick Bryant’s writing has recurrently focused on the plight of disadvantaged children in the Unit...
been published in numerous national journals, including the *Journal of Professional Ethics*, *Journal of Developmental Psychology*, *Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness*, *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, and *Journal of School Health*. He is the co-author of *America's Children: Triumph over Tragedy* addressing the medical and developmental problems of lower socioeconomic children in America.

Carmen Yana Holiday is a survivor of extreme domestic violence, human trafficking, child pornography abuse-torture and mind control. She has been an advocate for other survivors since 2001, developing and facilitating trauma recovery workshops and presenting as a survivor of RA-MC for several organizations. Her topic is: *Survivors of Extreme Abuse: The Awful Rowing Toward Social Emancipation*.

Lynn Schirmer is an artist and survivor of ritual abuse-torture and trauma based mind control. She exhibits where she engages audiences about the reality of extreme abuse and tax funded exploitation and adults. Her work has been exhibited the US and France. Her topic is: *Art & Activism: Finding Tell*.

Mary Keats RN BA wife, mother, grandmother, working in social services, is a survivor of Ritual Abuse Torture. She is a spiritual person who enjoys life to the fullest. Her energy and enthusiasm are infectious. She refused to be muzzled, decided early on in her recovery to break the silence, so others could be helped. Her topic is: *the Darkness*.

Wanda Karriker, Ph.D. is a retired psychologist who spent a career working with survivors of extreme abuse. She is author of the novel, “Morning, Come Quickly,” co-developer of the Extreme Abuse Survey Project of Survivorship. Her topic is: *The Ritual Abuse Controversy: A Personal Perspective*.

Julaine has spent over 21 years on this journey. As the daughter of a career military man, working in “intelligence”, she was turned over for government experimentation prior to the formal designations like Artichoke and MKUltra. A former polyfragmented woman, she has employed many approaches and therapies to heal, and talk about things she learned as she walked this journey. Her topic is: *Looking Back: Lessons from the Healing Journey*.

Suzie Burke, R.N., Ph.D. is the pen name of a real woman who is a registered nurse and licensed professional counselor with a doctorate in psychology. Suzie is the author of “Wholeness, my healing journey.” Her 10-year path to recovery was a result of a savvy counselor, her own determination not to let her perpetrators “win,” plus a family that never wavered. Suzie Burke is now thriving. Info on her and her book is at [http://www.suzieburke.com](http://www.suzieburke.com) Her topic is: *Wholeness: My healing journey from ritual abuse, and learn from it*.

Dr. Lacter is a clinical psychologist in San Diego, California, USA, for 24 years and specializes in...
dissociative disorders and ritual abuse and mind control trauma in both children and adults. She published chapters in edited books on the subjects of ritual abuse and mind control. Her website
http://www.endritualabuse.org/

S.M.A.R.T. 2010 Conference Schedule

(Please note: this schedule may be subject to change. Please write us for the latest schedule.)

Friday
7 – 9:00 PM – Deli Dinner and Dessert Buffet for Prepaid Registered Attendees

Saturday
10:30 – 11:30 AM – Nick Bryant – “Lessons learned from Franklin”
12:00 – 1:00 Lunch
1:00 – 2:00 PM – Carmen Yana Holiday – “Survivors of Extreme Abuse: The Awful Rowing Toward Social Emancipation.”
2:30 – 3:30 PM – Suzie Burke, R.N., Ph.D. – “Wholeness: My healing journey from ritual abuse, and what you can learn from it.”
4:00 – 5:00 PM – Wanda Karriker, Ph.D. – “The Ritual Abuse Controversy: A Personal Perspective.”
7:30 – Ellen Lacter presents the video of Trish Fotheringham
8:00 – Ellen Lacter “A Coloring Book of Healing Images for Child Abuse Survivors”

Sunday
9:00 – 10:00 AM – Mary Keats RN BA – “Hope after the Darkness.”
10:30 – 11:30 AM – Neil Brick “The Move from Blame the Victim to Blame the Helper.”
12:00 – 1:00 PM Lunch
1:00 – 2:00 PM – Julaine – “Looking Back: Lessons from the Healing Journey”
2:30 – 3:30 PM – Lynn Schirmer – “Art & Activism: Finding Effective Ways to Tell”
4:00 – 5:00 PM speaker panel discussion and closing

http://www.antifascistencyclopedia.com/allposts/connecticut-the-2010-annual-ritual-abuse-se
Ms. Winfrey’s production company, Harpo, is named after the Greek/Egyptian god Harpocrates. In occult literature Harpocrates arguably identifies with Baphomet or The Sabbatic Goat, also known as the Goat of Mendes.

In Kenneth Grant’s Typhonian manifestation (or current) of the OTO (Ordo Templi Orientis), Harpocrates, the God of Silence, is associated with the child god Horus and his violent homo-erotic counterpart Set. The feminine aspect of Set is Typhon. The Egyptian god Set-Typhon, according to “retired” US Army psychologist and former Church of Satan member and Temple of Set founder Lt. Col Michael Aquino, is the closest correspondence to the Hebrew Satan.

The story of Horus-Set is also an obvious metaphor or archetype for pedophilia and sexual abuse.

**MK-OPRAH: “Sun Will Set” on ABC’s Winfrey Show 9/9/11**
OTI The Sign of Hor-US: Silence aka The State Secrets Privilege

Oprah Winfrey is giving network television one of her trademark aha moments.
Ms. Winfrey, the billionaire queen of daytime television, is planning to announce on Friday that she — from her daily pulpit, “The Oprah Winfrey Show,” in two years in order to concentrate on the forth coming cable channel that will bear her name.

“The sun will set on the Oprah show as its 25th season draws to a close on Sept. 9, 2011,” Tim Bennett, the president of Ms. Winfrey’s production company, Harpo, said in a letter to her 214 local TV stations on evening. She will appear on her cable channel, called OWN: the Oprah Winfrey Network, in some form. But “The Oprah Winfrey Show” will no longer be.

In Greek mythology, Harpocrates is the god of silence. Harpocrates: the Greeks from the Egyptian child god Horus. To the ancient Egyptians, Horus represented the new-born Sun, rising each day at dawn. When the Egyptians under Alexander the Great, they transformed the Egyptian Hellenistic god known as Harpocrates, a rendering from Egyptian Har-po-khered (meaning “Har, the Child”).

The list of repercussions of her decision is long. For CBS, the owner of rights to her show, it means the loss of its signature program and millions of dollars every year in revenue.

For ABC stations, where her show was largely seen, it means the most popular program, a generator of giant audiences leading into evening news programs.

Larry Gerbrandt, an analyst for the firm Media Valuation Partners, said “any show that ABC comes up with to replace her will not draw anything near the ratings guarantee they could count on with Oprah. At least for the first year, ABC is going to take a serious hit.”

More widely, her departure will surely be interpreted as an endorsement of the cable TV business, fortunes of broadcast television. Discovery Communications, which will co-own the new channel, creation of OWN 20 months ago. Now Discovery will parlay Ms. Winfrey’s anticipated exit from broadcast into higher per-subscriber fees and will also seek more lucrative commitments from advertisers.

For Ms. Winfrey herself, the move represents an enormous bet — that her popularity and golden programming can sustain an entire cable channel and that she’ll remain a central cultural figure.
mass exposure of broadcast television every day.

Far and away the most popular daytime talk show host, Ms. Winfrey has spent two decades spinning her TV fame into a vast media empire, including her own show, a popular magazine, a book club and several reality shows. She is also one of the most successful daytime producers in television, with longtime talk shows like “Dr. Phil” and “The Dr. Oz Show,” this season’s syndicated success story.

Her talk show regularly draws seven million viewers, nearly twice as many as the next biggest talk show. Her endorsement of Barack Obama is widely credited with helping elect him president in 2008. She even claims to own the trademark on the phrase “Aha moment.”

It remains unclear what on-camera role Ms. Winfrey will have at OWN, which is a 50-50 joint venture with Discovery. The management team at OWN has been busy creating a programming plan but has remained mostly silent about the lineup in deference to Ms. Winfrey and her decision-making process. Discovery executives declined to comment on Thursday evening. The OWN channel will have its premiere in January 2011, according to a person with knowledge of Ms. Winfrey’s decision who insisted on anonymity.

Ms. Winfrey was believed to be in renewal talks this fall with CBS Television Distribution and another syndicator, Sony, which distributes her most recent spinoff, “Dr. Oz.” At the same time, she considered ending her talk show altogether. In recent days television executives said they sensed that Ms. Winfrey was leaning toward an exit.

CBS seemed eager to keep its door propped open for Ms. Winfrey, saying in a statement that, “We look forward to working with her for the next several years, and hopefully afterwards as well.” Acknowledging OWN, CBS said, “We know that anything she turns her hand to will be a great success.”

OWN is expected to replace the Discovery Health Channel, which is currently available in more than 70 million homes. Her cable plans, however, have been fraught with delays. OWN was announced in January 2008 and was originally expected to make its debut this winter, but those plans were scuttled because of management turnover and a turbulent advertising climate.

During her decades of daytime TV, she had a number of highlights, including a show in 1988 when she appeared after losing 67 pounds, a show in 2005 when the actor Tom Cruise declared his love for the actress Katie Holmes by leaping all over Ms. Winfrey’s couch, and another show that year when she sent her audience into a screaming frenzy by giving them all free cars.
Levi also incorrectly identified Baphomet with The Goat of Mendes, an ancient Egyptian god whose name should more properly be translated as “Harpocrates, the Ram sheep-god,” who was the Creator and tutelary deity of his region (the city of Mendes). Har, granter of fertility, but he was not associated with debauch or lust — and, most importantly from the standpoint of this investigation into mythography, in animal-form, he was a ram, not a buck goat.

Ms. Winfrey’s show was at the height of its popularity when she conducted what was at the time called the most-watched interview of all time with the singer Michael Jackson. That prime-time special in 1993 was seen by 80 million people in the United States and almost 100 million people worldwide.

Robert Thompson, a professor of television at Syracuse, said Ms. Winfrey’s impact on the medium has “always been characterized by hyperbole: the biggest this, the most-viewed that.”

He added, “We have come to use the term ‘Oprahfication’ in almost same way we use a term like ‘Hellenization.’ And it’s not completely inappropriate. She was able to colonize cultural territory the way Alexander was able to colonize physical territory.”

As recently as Monday, Ms. Winfrey showed that she can command the country’s attention. Having TV interview in months with the former Alaska governor Sarah Palin, Ms. Winfrey asked her guest worried about competition, “because I heard you’re going to get your own talk show.”

Ms. Palin smiled and answered: “Oprah, you’re the queen of talk shows.”

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Sopdet (Sepdet, Sothis) personified the ‘dog star’ Sirius. This star was the most important of the stars to the ancient Egyptians, and the heliacal rising of this star came at the time of inundation and the start of the Egyptian New Year. As a goddess of the inundation, she was a goddess of fertility. She was linked to the pharaoh and his journey in the afterlife.

She was represented as a woman with a star on top of her headdress, or as a seated cow with a plant between her horns (just as Seshat’s hieroglyph might have been a flower or a star) as depicted on an ivory tablet of King Djer. The plant may have been symbolic of the year, and thus linking her to the yearly rising of Sirius.
Sirius and the New Year. She was very occasionally depicted as a large dog, or in Roman times, as Sopdet, she was shown riding side-saddle on a large dog.

Sirius was both the most important star of ancient Egyptian astronomy, and one of the Decans (star groups into which the night sky was divided, with each group appearing for ten days annually). The heliacal rising (the night that Sirius is seen, just before dawn) was noticed every year during July, and the Egyptians used this to mark the start of the New Year (wp rnpt, ‘The Opening of the Year’). It was celebrated with a festival known as ‘The Coming of Sopdet’.

The time period between Sothic risings is called the Sothic Cycle and it is one of the tools Egyptologists use to create a chronology of Egyptian history.

— Sopdet, April McDevitt

Even as early as the 1st Dynasty, she was known as ‘the bringer of the new year and the Nile flood’. When Sirius appeared in the sky each year, the Nile generally started to flood and bring fertility to land. The ancient Egyptians connected the two events, and so Sopdet took on the aspects of a goddess of not only the star and of the inundation, but of the fertility that came to the land of Egypt with the flood. The flood and the rising of Sirius also marked the ancient Egyptian New Year, and so she also was thought of as a goddess of the New Year.

Her aspect of being a fertility goddess was not just linked to the Nile. By the Middle Kingdom, she was believed to be a mother goddess, and a nurse goddess, changing her from a goddess of agriculture to a goddess of motherhood. This probably was due to her strong connection with the mother-goddess Isis.

Not just a goddess of the waters of the inundation, Sopdet had another link with water – she was believed to cleanse the pharaoh in the afterlife. It is interesting to note that the embalming of the dead took seventy days – the same amount of time that Sirius was not seen in the sky, before its yearly rising. She was a goddess of fertility to both the dead.

In the Pyramid Texts, she is the goddess who prepares yearly sustenance for the pharaoh, ‘in this “Year”’. She is also thought to be a guide in the afterlife for the pharaoh, letting him fly into the sky showing him ‘goodly roads’ in the Field of Reeds and helping him become one of the imperishable stars. She was thought to be living on the horizon, encircled by the Duat.
In the Pyramid texts, paralleling the story of Osiris and Isis, the pharaoh was believed to have had a child with Sopdet:

Your sister Isis comes to you rejoicing for love of you. You have placed her on your phallus and your seed issues into her, she being ready as Sopdet, and Horus-Soped has come forth from you as Horus who is in Sopdet.

— Sopdet in the Pyramid Texts

Sopdet was believed to be wife of Sah (the star Orion) and the mother of Soped (Sopdu). She was also thought to give birth to the Morning Star (Venus), the pharaoh being described as the father in the Pyramid Texts. She was linked closely with Isis, just as Sah and Soped were linked with Osiris and Horus. In ‘The Lamentations of Isis and Nephthys for Osiris’, Isis calls herself Sopdet, saying that she will follow Osiris in the heaven. Sopdet was also connected to the goddess Satet at Abu (Elephantine).

Sirius happens to travel the sky just ahead of the large constellation of Orion. (His belt of three stars serves as an easy pointer towards Sirius, the unmistakable bright star that is one of the few visible even in city lights’ glare). Orion was identified with the dying-and-resurrected god Osiris, in Egyptian mythology, who was well-known gods of the pantheon. His wife and sister Isis was Lady of Magic, who brought her husband back to life, and the bright star his constellation followed naturally came to be associated with her.

— Inventing the Solar System: Early Greek Scientists Struggle to Explain How the Heavens Move, Ellen N. Brundige

She was also given a masculine aspect, and linked with Horus as Sopdet-Horus during the Middle Kingdom. She was also linked with Anubis during Greek Times as Sopdet-Anubis, probably because of the iconography of her as a god, or riding on the back of a dog. She was also linked with other goddesses such as Hathor, Bast and Anqet.

She was venerated in Per-Soped (Saft al Hinna), in the 20th Nome of Lower Egypt. She was the goddess who helped the pharaoh reach the realm of the gods, who heralded the inundation, and the goddess of the ancient Egyptian new year. She was the personification of the most important star of ancient Egypt, so important was she that her worship Egyptian history, from predynastic times, through to the Graeco-Roman period.

http://www.thekeep.org/~kunoichi/kunoichi/themestream/sopdet.html

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