

A Transvaluation of Oz

an esoteric instruction on rights, freedom, and magick
by [Master of Pelican Camp]

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*Limits of our hearing:
One hears only those questions for which one is able to find answers.
-Nietzsche, Section 196 of The Gay Science*

Introduction

Liber Oz is a brief text dominated by one syllable words and short, strong statements. Of the handful of tracts Crowley designed specifically for the purpose of promulgation, it is arguably the most popular. Perhaps this is because Crowley himself encouraged some of the earliest American brethren to go out and distribute this tract to the public. However, I maintain that *Oz's* popularity belies its agitating ineffectiveness, this being due entirely to its illuminating yet esoteric didactics. Further, I argue that this is deliberate and tactically aligned to longitudinal Aeon strategy.

Oz is the best thing to distribute if we want to alienate Thelema, the Order, and ourselves even further from the public. This is because *Oz* is being taken as a universal declaration of human rights rather than a more complex addition to the family of ethical philosophy – Thelema likewise. The average person of some intelligence critiques *Oz* as ethical relativism being championed as a universal right and a sustainable law. When used for promulgation, *Oz* could be the target's first foray into Crowleyana, and could leave them quite annoyed and bewildered. *Oz* is naturally disorienting and offensive to the public because it's being simultaneously presented as hyper-modern egalitarianism and devilish disinformation from Mr. Crowley. Thelemites may feel that the principles of *Oz* are self-evident, but the self-evident deserves explanation to some degree, especially if it's continually being misunderstood by Initiate and Troglodyte alike.

In this essay I will make several arguments. First, that *Oz* is grossly misread as an egalitarian document. Second, I will propose an alternative method of interpreting *Oz* while reconciling the more popular reading. Third, I intend to show how Crowley employs deliberate philosophical ambiguity to allow irony to imbue *Oz* with a clever magical potency. Fourth and lastly, I wish to highlight the consequences in utilizing *Oz* under fallacious pretenses and to bridge that into a critique of some modern promulgation tactics.

Not for the Poor and Sad

The root of the problem is that *Oz* does not endorse egalitarian rights. Too frequently, modernism needlessly influences Thelemic culture by imposing the fallacy “equality” upon our doctrines. This humanitarianism is nothing more than a vague endorsement of the crapulous concepts of herd-morality unhesitatingly attacked by both Nietzsche and Crowley. Crowley derides the identity of the Masses in *Magick Without Tears* (ch. 73: Monsters, Niggers, Jews) saying:

Well, what tortoise is that elephant based upon? Why, still obviously, upon the universal sense of individual weakness. We all want a big bruvver to tell of him! Hence the Gods and the Classes. Its fear at the base of the whole pyramid of skulls.

How right politicians are to look upon their constituents as cattle! Anyone who has any experience of dealing with any class as such knows the futility of appealing to intelligence, indeed to any other qualities than those of brutes.

And so, whenever we find one Man who has no fear like Ibsen's Doctor Stockmann or Mark

Twain's Colonel Grainger that strolled out on his balcony with his shotgun to face the mob that had come to lynch him, he can get away with it. "An Enemy of the People" wrote Ibsen, "Ye are against the people, O my chosen!" says The Book of the Law. (AI II, 25)

In Chapter 70 of the same, Crowley distinguishes between "common or area morality" and "the Magical Morality of the New Aeon of Thelema." He scorns Area Morality, Nietzsche's herd-morality,

the code of the 'Slave-Gods,' very thoroughly analyzed, pulverized, and de-loused by Nietzsche in Antichrist. It consists of all the meanest vices, especially envy, cowardice, cruelty and greed: all based on over-mastering Fear. Fear of the nightmare type. With this incubus, the rich and powerful have devised an engine to keep down the poor and the weak.

Crowley, in discussing Thelemic-morality, remarks that

About 90% of Thelema, at a guess, is nothing but self-discipline. One is only allowed to do anything and everything so as to have more scope for exercising that virtue... Concentrate on '...thou hast no right but to do thy will.' The point is that any possible act is to be performed if it is a necessary factor in that Equation of your Will.

Thelemic-morality, according to Crowley, is tactical and personal whereas the mores of the Old Aeon and the ethical standards of the modern world are irrelevant and alienating.¹

Crowley ridiculed Reuss in a letter to Traenker, saying that Reuss had accused "*The Book of the Law* of communistic tendencies, of which no statement could be more absurd." In his diaries, Crowley remarks on August 18th, 1943, in the midst of World War II, that "The system of the *Book of the Law* is aristocratic; I am an aristocrat. A better word for democracy is ochlocracy – the rule of the mob. It all depends whether you want quantity or quality. Are you going to produce sonnets or Sunday newspapers?" Crowley's disdain for government, prohibitionism, and profane laws had no limit in that there could be no macro-determination as to what was *good* for all, because the essential quality shared between people is a difference rather than a similarity.

This differentiation between persons had social repercussions as well which no modern would enjoy. This is discussed at great length in "Initiates vs Troglodytes" in *Doomsayer's Digest: 2.2*. Briefly, Crowley felt that the masses were a threat who, as slaves, required Masters. His mandate to "war down the serf" in *Antecedents of Thelema* reminds one of D. H. Lawrence's statement in his *Apocalypse*:

The religion of the strong taught renunciation and love. And the religion of the weak taught Down with the strong and the powerful, and let the poor be glorified. Since there are always more weak people than strong in the world, the second sort of Christianity has triumphed and will triumph. If the weak are not ruled, they will rule, and there's the end of it. And the rule of the weak is Down with the strong!²

Oz's declaration of everyone's equal right to kill thwarts seals the deal on the wretched moralism of its profane interpretation. Eventually, it would be everyone's moral obligation and ethical right to go about murdering everyone else. This is worse than the simple discordance of a violent society; it's Clausewitz's Absolute War or the 19th Aethyr's scene

¹ One might argue that Crowley is endorsing a type of moral relativism, but one that is partial to those who are of some higher or initiated type. In such wise also are the philosophical dilemma of the Order left to the Areopagus and the garden's maintenance left to the Master.

² The attempt to promote a legal code based on moral relativism from Oz as being in accord with the Law of Thelema is a catastrophe. If we take morality or quality as an *a priori*, something assumed of the purported individual, then we reduce human value to its least common denominator. To assume that all people are equal demands proof that there's something equal between them. We're ultimately forced to admit the only thing everyone has in common is two arms, two legs, and an ugly mug. Then we're forced to admit that we're essentially simian and that apes are comely people.

where:

...this is not a battle between two forces, but a melee in which each warrior fights for himself against all the others. I cannot see one who has even one ally. At least the fortunate, who fall soonest, are those in the chariots. For as soon as they are engaged in fighting, their own charioteers stab them in the back.

This is not Junger's anarch-ism, existing without form or identity or consciousness, but rather some type of petty punk-rock moralistic anarchy where it's your ironic social duty to go about slashing tires and tagging pyramids.

Whose Words are Truth

Once *Oz* is reconciled with Thelema's richer ethical system, a practical and purposive interpretation of *Oz* becomes possible. How then are we to read *Oz*? *Oz*'s seeming simplicity is quite the opposite: Aleister Crowley frequently employed a style of writing that utilizes provocative segments in a jarring manner to stimulate independent thought rather than conforming the reader to the opinions of the author. It is inspirational rather than argumentative; affective rather than explanatory; and artistic rather than scientific. Crowley was not the originator of this style. Schlegel, the Magus of German Romanticism, called this Fragments. Emerson called this the Joyful Science, from which Nietzsche coined his *Froehlich Wissenschaft*, popularly translated *Gay Science*, though Nietzsche called this style Aphoristic.

Commenting on this style in Section 381 of *The Gay Science*, "On Incomprehensibility," Nietzsche writes that the philosopher is as desirous of being understood as being misunderstood. His aphorisms are communicative tricks whereby the philosopher can convey different affective messages to multiple parties. Likewise, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" both subdues the slave and liberates the sane. The principle of the aphoristic style is to be provocative and protected and to communicate truth between the lines. It is the connection between the communicated concepts that contains the esoteric, as Nietzsche understood it, meaning. Initiated ingenuity is required to really get the picture, leaving Troglodytes in the dark.³

Leo Strauss builds upon the concept of the esoteric in relation to rational discourse's inability to inspire ethical thought. Robert Locke, in [Leo Strauss, Conservative Mastermind](#) (2002, FrontPageMagazine.com) remarks that

The key Straussian concept is the Straussian text, which is a piece of philosophical writing that is deliberately written so that the average reader will understand it as saying one ("exoteric") thing but the special few for whom it is intended will grasp its real ("esoteric") meaning. The reason for this is that philosophy is dangerous. Philosophy calls into question the conventional morality upon which civil order in society depends...

Strauss's esotericism was empowerment, initiation, and redemption. To understand the secret doctrines of philosophy is to understand philosophy's affective power of social control and historical precedence. For this reason, Strauss

³ This method of esoteric instruction also appears in the Gospels, where Jesus is explicit about the purpose in being esoteric. Take for instance Matthew 13, 1-13, "The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

is often blamed as being the ideological founder of neo-conservatism, when in fact a more appropriate legacy is as a philosopher who understood the dark power of the Word and Magick as the secret weapon of philosophers.⁴ Strauss' *History of Political Philosophy* reads like a history of Magick, showing how history has been moved and transformed by elegant thinkers who understand the relationship of the Machiavellian word and the Nietzschean metaphysics of the Will to Power.

Strauss also believed in one law of nature: the strong must rule the weak. They do this through their creative reading and practical interpretation of the utility of philosophy as a means of empowerment. Similarly, the Thelemite realizes *Oz* as a magical instruction and is empowered thereby. Alternatively, the Troglodyte is only confused and subdued.

Like Strauss' *History of Political Philosophy*, Crowley describes *Oz* as “an historical document”. It does more than navigate an Aeonic history of political thought; it illustrates the historical actualization of the individual.⁵ *Oz* is designed to philosophically empower the esoterically minded capable of hearing its instructions.

And Abrahadabra

Having established *Oz's* dual effect, its multiple meanings are in service of a singular goal. On one hand, it empowers the keen and the proud, restructures rights as the object of will, and transmutes Law per the alchemical metaphysics of the Will to Power. This recalls *Liber Tzaddi's* “But you who have defied the law; you who have conquered by subtlety or force; you will I take unto me, even I will take you unto me.” (L. 90.19) Simultaneously, *Oz* has the effect of subduing the weak by allowing them their illusive realism. Nietzsche's “artist” type and “realist” type (outlined in Sections 58 and 57 of *The Gay Science* respectively) each find their home. Speaking to the realist as an artist, Nietzsche says that “There is no 'reality' for us—not for you either, my sober friends. We are not nearly as different as you think, and perhaps our good will to transcend intoxication is as respectable as your faith that you are altogether incapable of intoxication.” (Section 57)

Nietzsche's artist is Strauss's Philosopher or Crowley's Magician. They create through the power of their Word and have social precedence because of their transcendental mimetic agency. Creation and destruction of concepts is not merely the fetish and religion of these happy few; rather, it is their survival imperative. Nietzsche remarks in Section 76 (ibid) that the “greatest danger that always hovered over humanity and still hovers over it is the eruption of madness” and that this seismic threat of the Masses losing control is a threat to the few or, by Strauss's pessimism, to the integrity of history. Nietzsche remarks that “We others are the exception and the danger—and we need eternally to be defended.” Our mode of defense is our mercurial elegance and subtle deadliness.⁶

Entrenching the realists in their realism and empowering the Artists through the Royal Art does more than satisfy the masochism of the former and sadism of the latter. In Crowley terms, it establishes the Law of Thelema by reinstating the Aristocracy of Spirit. Nietzsche noted (ibid) that “there actually are things to be said in favor of the exception, provided that it never wants to become the rule.” This dichotomous ontology prospers both parties, the few and the many, so long as the few do not attempt to extend their ethos or pathos to the many. Therefore, I hesitate to offer my esoteric interpretation of *Oz* in light of this philosophical precaution; however, the system is detailed in full elsewhere and the innermost secrets of even the OTO are published in Crowley's writings. What prevents its abuse is the hierarchical integrity of the Order. The real danger is the realization of “The Greatest Danger”, the extension of Initiation to the Many. It is cruel for the purported

⁴ Strauss deserves attention from all esotericists. For an analysis of the Strauss phenomenon and its relevance to the Magician, see S. B. Drury's article “The Esoteric Philosophy of Leo Strauss” in *Political Theory*, 13.3 (Aug. 1985).

⁵ In contrast to Robert Ellwood's “Politics of Myth”, I argue that 19th and 20th century mythologists cannot be considered “morally culpable” for the fascistic movements they influenced; rather, they can be seen as removed from profane history and only as having a vicarious effect on Aeonic initiations. Effectively, the slave is a victim of history, while the Magician is history's mover and is much a part as history as history is a part of him.

⁶ *Liber LXV*, 13-16, “Wolf's bane is not so sharp as steel; yet it pierceth the body more subtly. Even as evil kisses corrupt the blood, so do my words devour the spirit of man. I breathe, and there is infinite dis-ease in the spirit. As an acid eats into steel, as a cancer that utterly corrupts the body; so am I unto the spirit of man.”

individual just as it is cruel to give a dog some massive dose of LSD. Further, it is dangerous in that disaffected madmen are the most ferocious and resentful dissidents. Those without ears to hear the Glad Words will not; though we must be cautious in affixing prosthetic ears on the weak in spirit or offering our weapons to the blind.⁷

This is our law

My esoteric interpretation is such. There is a dynamic and transmutative interaction between Law, Rights, Freedom and Will. This relationship is critical to Crowley's philosophy as to that of his Continental antecedents, including Kant, Hegel, Schlegel, Feuerbach, Fichte, and Nietzsche. But, Crowley hesitates to offer a rationalistic map of their relationship because he understands the Straussian principle that the Ethos of Hierarchy cannot be rationally communicated but must be personally realized. This is the central premise of *The Soldier and the Hunchback: ? And !*. Knowledge and Conversation is the actualization of Will and realization of the peculiar sovereignty. Any attempt to rationalize or induce leads unerringly into Herd-Morality and its pathologically superstitious oppression. *Oz* communicates a formula by which the strong might realize Thelemic mysticism and Aeonian precedence.

Crowley remarks in his letter to Wilkinson that “*Rights of Man* is an historical document. The items don't go easily on the Tree; but I've got them down to five sections: moral, bodily, mental, sexual freedom and the safeguard tyrannicide.” Were Crowley Rabbi of the Old rather than Prophet of the New, variance between his initiatory formulae and Qabalistic Platonism would be more problematic. But, *Oz*'s five sections fit well into the initiatory framework elucidated in *The Vision and the Voice*, *One Star in Sight*, and elsewhere⁸. Further, when the various points are organized as sections, they fit well onto the Four Worlds of the Tree of Life, that being a structure more critical to parallel to Crowley's own.⁹

Analyzing the Title

Before addressing Section 1 a moment to consider the Liber's title and its introductory citations is deserved. OZ=77, which has numerous dichotomous equivalents including God, Dog, and Laylah. Their significance is elucidated in *The Book of Lies*. In Chapter 63 of the same, Crowley discusses all these in a type of romantic irony which is critically significant to understand the ethical genius of *Oz*. First, Laylah is mentioned in connection with the existential problem of Chapter 63, one of sacred semiotics. The Chapter asks if there is a reason to distinguish between the simple or immediate love of a woman and the greater Love unto Nuit. The author suggests that such conscious distinguishing is not advisable but rather, like a “see-saw”, one will transition between these modes of being as a Master of the Temple to whom “opposite rules apply. His unity seeks the many, and the many is again transmuted to the one. Solve et Coagula.” There is a transmutative reciprocity existing within the Master of the Temple wherein all things are destroyed and “reborn in other

⁷ The dangers of exporting technology – cultural and otherwise – to those who have not undergone the dialectical process of obtaining it on their own is detailed in Oswald Spengler's “Der Mensch und die Technik”, translated as “Man and Technics.” It is perhaps in the same spirit that the eighth's advancement requires his personal discovery of the ninth's secret.

⁸ The parallel of the five sections and the Man of Earth triad will be abundantly obvious to any person who has taken some Initiations. The introductory citations of *The Book of the Law* parallel the prologue to Initiation that is the Minerval. Sections 1-3 paralleling the I° through the III°. The remaining sections could be paralleled several ways. The simpler way would be 4=IV°, 5=PI, and the conclusive citations as KEW. Rather, I argue Section 4, “Sexual Freedom”, is both IV° and the Prince of Jerusalem with Section 5 as Knight of the East and West and the conclusive citation from *Liber Al*, “Love is the law, love under will.” being consonant with the V° who is “responsible for all that concerns the Social welfare of the Order” and “is attached equally to the higher and the lower, and forms a natural link between them.” These citations are taken from Liber 194 which can be found reprinted in *The Equinox Volume 3 Number 10*, which details the government of OTO and by comparison how one might rule one's own life.

⁹ For the sake of brevity, familiarity with Crowley's initiatory model and its parallel to the four worlds is very valuable for the remainder of this essay. This subject can be studied in connection with the above mentioned literature and Crowley's 777.

shapes.” He “wrenched DOG backwards to find GOD; now GOD barks.” But, from the vantage of the Master, there is a strange dynamism existing between himself and the world (wherein their subject-object distinction is abrogate) that allows him to experience the eternal through the immediate. His immortality is “no vain hope beyond the grave” but rather “a certain consciousness of bliss” offered “at once, upon the earth.” (Liber 90) So Crowley reflects upon Laylah, Night, or Nuit in relation to Leah, his girlfriend, Lover, and Scarlet Woman and says “Think me not fallen because I love LAYLAH, and lack LAYLAH. / I am the Master of the Universe; then give me a heap of straw in a hut, and LAYLAH naked!” For, Crowley remarks in his note to Chapter 56, “The exoteric blasphemy... may be an esoteric arcanum, for the Master of the Temple is interested in Malkuth, as Malkuth is in Binah; also 'Malkuth is in Kether, and Kether in Malkuth'; and, to the Ipsissimus, dissolution in the body of Nuit and a visit to the brothel may be identical.”

This chapter marks that the higher and the lower might be grossly confused from a certain point of view. To the profane man living in a world of moral dualism, the iniquity and sacrilege of the Master is evidential of their being “fallen” or disgraced. To the Master, the eternal and magnificent Body of Nuit is immediately tangible and attainable through all sacraments and acts of love and worship. The oppressive effects of moral dualism will be seen momentarily in consideration of the listed “Rights” of *Oz*.

What's more about the play between Laylah and God is that, Crowley notes in his commentary to Chapter 66 (ibid), Laylah is exalted above God. God, “wrenched backwards” barks, and is therefore a corruptible concept. Alternatively Laylah, taken as lofty or material, is equally holy, as the consonance between Mater and matter or Binah and Malkuth. Concerning Laylah, “Unity and GOD are not worth even her blemishes. / Al-lah is only sixty-six; but LAYLAH counteth up to Seven and Seventy.” While ALLH, Allah or “God” is only 66, Laylah, the Night, is 77, which carries Man beyond the Abyss and into the Supernals and the Body of Nuit.

The connection between these chapters and *Oz*, whose figure LXXVII is 77, is a commentary on moral dualism that emphasizes the contrast between the masses and the Artist. Elsewhere, Crowley notes that the theist is necessarily a slave in asserting God as something other than himself. The Man who dedicates his actions unto God will find that God, wrenched backwards, barks, and they the Master; alternatively, the common man who unwittingly devotes himself to God is himself a barking dog, the slave of his Master, God. Their will shall be constantly delimited by the authority of some externalized pathos or oppressive Consciousness. Alternatively, the Man who dedicates his actions unto Nuit,¹⁰ though they be effects upon the world or seemingly inane or base, will find freedom and power therein and a continued exaltation of the Will. Debauch is nearly always justified as a sacrament by the hedonist who has not taken to exceeding through delicacy.

There are initiatory reflections on the dedication of action in relation to their particular dedication unto Nuit. In the Hebrew, *Oz* is a “He-Goat”, which has bearing in relation to our espoused maltheism. First, the Goat is a symbol of the thoroughly Material, Sexual, and Creative, a blasphemy to the Christian Nihilist or Gnostic Dualist. Second, the Goat is traditionally identified with the Devil where “the Devil of the Tarot is the Phallus, the Redeemer, and Laylah symbolizes redemption to Frater P.” (ibid) The assumption of creative potency by man is the eternal blaspheme against the demi-urgic God attempting to monopolize the same. Third, the identification of Laylah, the woman, and the Devil is especially maltheistic, for their conjunction is the redemption of matter. Crowley remarks that “Laylah is herself not devoid of 'Devil', but, as she habitually remarks, on being addressed in terms implying this fact, 'It's nice to be a devil when you're one like

¹⁰ Note that Laylah is the Arabic word for “night”, recalling the Sufi love story of Laylah and Majnun (the madman). Night, phonetically transliterated, yields 77, as does Laylah. Night, in the French, is “Nuit”, and the two are very consonant concepts. Daniel Gunther in his *Initiation in the Aeon of the Child* argues that LVX, Light, is the initiatory formula of the previous Aeon while NOX, Night in the Latin, is the initiatory formula of the New Aeon. This concept deserves extensive study and is relevant in relation to the distinguishing between God's slave and the Lover of Nuit. However, it is noteworthy that ART, phonetically transliterated, yields 210, the number of NOX. Crowley remarks that “All art is magick” where the Artist, who in Hegel's system has agency over cultural-Consciousness or *Zeitgeist*, is free and fashions laws in accordance with his ideals. Devoting actions unto Nuit is referenced as a formula of liberation by Crowley in “De Sirenis” in *Liber Aleph* where he says that “all is Freedom, if it be done unto our Lady Nuit.” *Oz* or *Liber 77* is an instruction in the same.

me.” All this suggests a stark contrast between the man of God and the Man of Earth, who is essentially an embodiment of the Devil on the earth, at least in the context of *Oz*.

The final necessary point in relation to the goat as maltheist is its traditional association with initiation. The Goat is the candidate, the unrefined little devil whose instincts must be honed and put to use. Through its initiatory journey, the hairy animal becomes a massive devil, completely usurping divine authority and disseminating it into the world. Initiation is the ultimate blasphemy against the demiurge, as manifested by the theistic traditions purporting to practice an impractical pseudo-moralism and premised on the impotizing effects of dualism. *Oz* describes an initiatory journey by which the unrefined and profane instincts and actions of the candidate might be transmuted through an initiatory formula into ecstatic and affective expressions of Love and Will. In any given section of *Oz*, the “man” in question is capable of forfeiting their will or fulfilling their Will, and such is entirely dependent on Initiation.

Analyzing the Opening

The introductory verses encompass the entire mystery of *Oz*. The “law of the strong” in question suggests the Nietzschean metaphysics of the “will to power” as being critical to the dual nature of *Oz*. The “joy of the world” its fulfillment, as discussed above given the initiatory transmutation of matter through Magick's action upon the same. The next line, “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law,” introduces the dynamic relationship between Will and Law, describing their symbiotic advancement. The next verse, “thou hast no right but to do thy will” introduces the subject of “rights” into the equation.¹¹ Attempting to distinguish Crowley from his philosophical antecedents is far too tedious and important to simply survey here; however, some points are necessary to continue.

Ethics attempts to elucidate the hierarchical interaction between law, rights, will, and their capitalized complements. One is seen as being the object of another. For instance, the slave-mentality is of a Kantian disposition where Kant finds Law to be the object of God's will, and man's will is the object of rights which are the object of Law. Therefore, to do one's will, one must do God's will, per virtue of obeying his Law and the rights they impose. The sorrowful product is one's inability to determine whether one was doing “right” or “good” given the infinite abyss between the subject, man, and the noumenal, God.¹²

Alternatively, Crowley endorses a more tangled hierarchy, and one that places people in different positions in this dynamic intercourse, or at least as having varying degrees of autonomy based upon their ontological caliber. First, freedom=power in Nietzsche's schema, and this is carried into Crowley's.¹³ The Will is the object of Freedom. Rights are the object of the Free Will; or, the rights of the Will are those freely exercised. Law is the object of the exercised rights of the

¹¹ The interaction between rights, will, and law is the subject of Thelema's philosophical antecedents in the traditions of German rationalism, romanticism, and Idealism. While many other thinkers discuss these issues, it took the Germans to logically dissect and decipher problematic intricacies. Crowley responds to Descartes and Kant in *Soldier and the Hunchback* as his response to rationalism, but throughout his writings there is a frequent appeal to the Romanticism of Schlegel and Emerson and continuation of Hegel and Nietzsche. Their importance is their contradistinction, often found in the finer details of the implied Ethos in exploring the relationships of Will and Law; however, these finer details often highlight the subtle narratives the more critical variances.

¹² There is a certain degree of applicability of Kant's “Moral Law” to the Yetziratic man who relies upon the instructions of his superiors, recognized documents, and anecdotal techniques to attain. Upon achieving conversation with the Angel, Kant's dilemma yields to the angel's grace.

¹³ FREE=216=GBVRH, being the Sephirah of Power or Strength. It often carries a military or chivalric aesthetic, much like that discussed in relation to dedicating acts unto one's Lady, such as Laylah. I interpret this as meaning “to be free” is “to be powerful.” Nietzsche argues the same in *The Will to Power*. Power implies a differential relationship with one's environment to distinguish one's self as master within the hierarchy of spirit. In Hegel's terms, this is the Master-Slave relationship in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. 216=6x6x6, a bestial number. Further, FREED=220, as in Liber CCXX, *The Book of the Law*, or the paths(22) times the sephirah(10). Most importantly, the will that wills freedom and power is free in its free willing of freedom and power. A circular definition, but one that embodies the Romanticism of the Free Will. See: Deleuze's “Nietzsche and Philosophy”

Will. This is an almost total inversion of Kantian transcendental rationalism and is Thelemic to the core even on a grammatical level, where within “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law” where “Do what thou wilt”¹⁴ is the subject of the sentence, “shall be” the verb, and “the whole of the Law” the object. The “Rights” in question are products of the Will as “thou hast no right but to do thy will” rather than being determined by Law. The Law is in a state of becoming per the doing of one's will and the exercising of one's rights. In other words, the Will advances Law through exercising its Rights. It bends and breaks forms, like The Devil or an Artist, per the practice of Magick as *Oz* outlines it. Alternatively, “If Will stops and cries Why, invoking Because, then Will stops & does naught.” (L. 220.2.30)

Then follows “Every man and every woman is a star,” (L. 220.1.3) which is frequently referenced to endorse *Oz*'s egalitarianism and judiciary endorsement of equal-rights. This must be taken in two ways and left to the individual to determine its personal relativity. On the one hand, it is a statement of some type of egalitarianism, but one that is so homogenizing and unelaborative that its esoteric application, in relation to *Oz*, is powerless. Alternatively, the “man” or woman in question can be considered a reference to the I° (Man and Brother) of the Man of Earth¹⁵, that being the first Triad of the initiatory series MMM which comprises the first two of OTO's three Triads. In this case, the person in question is a man or woman inasmuch as they are a Star, not the other way around. The relationship of the “star” as Augoeides, Genius, or one's Angel to Phallus, that being the indwelling of the Sun's force in the man, has a strong sexual and pubescent overtone, distinguishing “man and woman” from “boy and girl.”

My logic is such. IF every (wo)man is a star THEN one must be a star to be a (wo)man; however, this does not imply that all stars are (wo)men or that not all people are each, but the statement would be a pleonasm and unelaborative if its to be assumed that all people are stars. I interpret the esoteric value of this verse as a prologue to the “Rights of Man” as allowing a dual interpretation of the Man in question. On the one hand, the Troglodyte is allowed to presume Man-ness of their person and go on to fail at the exercising of their below listed rights. On the other hand, the Candidate moved by the magnitude of the initiatory prologue might understand the necessity to undergo the challenges given in *Oz*. The exoteric interpretation is base and useless, but the esoteric interpretation suggests a means of total liberation and empowerment. This dual interpretation prospers the division between the weak and the strong, bestows power upon the latter that they might subdue or war-down the former, and establishes the dominion of the Law of Thelema to overthrow the ochlocracy of the insane remnants of the Old Aeon and make firm the Aristocracy of the New.

“There is no god but man” bridges the introductory verses and the instruction. The dichotomous interpretation is still tangible. On the one hand, we moderns can pronounce ourselves the new Job, being in every way superior to primitive ethics and magical thinking and in every way capable of accepting the tenets of *Oz* as givens. Alternatively, the esoteric reading recalls Nietzsche's Section 125 in *The Gay Science*, “The Madman,” who asks the crowd where he might find God, but answers himself, saying “*We have killed him* - you and I. All of us are his murderers... What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever is born after us - for the sake of this deed he will belong to a higher history than all history hitherto.” Nietzsche's remarks ring true, that the death of God is not to be taken tragically but rather heroically, as an opportunity to advance beyond the same, or at least as an ethical responsibility to assume his authority in maintaining the world. He remarks in Section 108 that despite God's death, “given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown. -And we- we still have to vanquish his shadow, too.” Section 343 notes that this God is the Christian God, making this passage prophetically Aeonically. With this in mind, “The only god is man” is both a historical testament and an Aeonically revelation that espouses the need for a new form. *Oz* is “an historical document” according to Crowley's explanatory letter to Wilkinson and does communicate that form.

¹⁴ “I am in a secret four-fold word, the blasphemy against all gods of men.” (L. 220.3.49)

¹⁵ Note that Earth, phonetically transliterated into the Hebrew as Heh-Aleph-Resh-Teth, yields 220, both “FREED” and the Figure of The Book of the Law, CCXX. The Man of Earth is the Man of The Book of the Law or the Freed Man. A man who was freed would have been a slave, and the means of his becoming free is The Book of the Law and Initiation.

Analyzing Sections 1-5

Section 1, the “moral” section, initiates the division between the higher and lower by announcing that “Man has the right to live by his own law.” This law is either the Kantian Moral-Law of the slaves or the “law of the Strong,” depending on the reader's proclivities. Schlegel initiates Romanticism in response to Kant's existential dilemma in *Blutenstaub* in the *Athenaeum Fragments* (1798), Aphorism 3:

If one becomes infatuated with the absolute and simply can't escape it, then the only way out is to contradict oneself continually and join opposite extremes together. The principle of contradiction is inevitably doomed, and the only remaining choice is either to assume an attitude of suffering or else enoble necessity by acknowledging the possibility of free action.

Therefore, the dilemma of whether one has or lacks free will or choice begins by making a choice to espouse one and not the other. The Kantian slave will sadly reconcile himself to helplessness; however, the Magician proudly proves his autonomy with pomp and puissance. This first line of Section 1 is the dividing point. The “Will” in question throughout becomes a subject of God's will or the True will, depending on whether the reader's heart can resonate with the predatory instinct or must reconcile itself as prey. I will note some examples of the slavish interpretation of *Oz* below; however, the exoteric interpretation is hardly an interpretation; rather, it is a condemnation. This bleeds into man's right to live as he will. A man can live freely or in fear depending on whether they embrace Thelema, the cult of life, or continue to suffer the Preachers of Death. The celebration of life is a central tenet in Thelema, not necessarily for the propagation of life or faith in its purpose but rather for the exuberance of its expression of the Will to Power. Alternatively, one can suffer life.

Man's various rights to work, play and rest are related to the general way of life. On the one hand, they endorse whimsical past times and tell the lay slave that their mundane choices are immaterial and therefore arbitrary to the course of history. On the other hand, it begins an instruction. The work might become the Great Work. The play may become the Play of the Magister. The rest might be realized in relation to *Liber VII:4.14-15*, “Nor is there any rest, Sweet Heart, save in the cradle of royal Bacchus, the thigh of the most Holy One. There rest, under the canopy of night.” The strategies of the chosen law and life necessitate certain tactics for success, those being certain lifestyles, and they allow for man to “die, when and how he will,” either liberated or enslaved, or the moment the bell sounds to signal his mystical death.

Section 2, “bodily”, begins to illustrate what this lifestyle expects in order to be realized. One lives in a manner suitable for attainment and, in this disciplinary Yama and Niyama, begins to exercise his “rights” to eat, drink, dwell, and move “as he will,” as his will is one of aspiration. The eating in question is his daily host such as consumed in the “Mass of the Phoenix” or *Liber XV*; otherwise, the “flesh of Besz, the Matter that destroys and devours God-head, for the purpose of the Incarnation of any God.” (Appendix to *Liber Samekh*) The “drink” in question is his daily sacrament, “Wine—the blood or venom of Apophrasz.” This dual sacrament prepares the Candidate for his Sacrifice upon the altar of initiation and Knowledge and Conversation, invoking “these two devils” to accomplish the same.

Man's right to dwell is in relation to the prepared place of operation, such as described in various instructive mystical grimoires such as *Liber VIII* or *The Book of Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*. Man's right to “move as he will upon the face of the earth” recalls Satan from *Job 2:2* who responded to God, when asked where he was, that he'd been “going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it.” In *Job* Satan appears as almost a colleague of God or an equal rival. This is an apt distinction between the Man of God and the Man of the Earth. In this K&C metaphor, God is the ordeal, that which is to be surpassed, while Satan is the initiator, and Job the candidate. The “law of the Strong” demands this mystical attainment.

Moving on, we have what Crowley defined as the “mental” domain in Section 3, which deals with Magick as mystical technique. Thinking, speaking, and writing are the works of the Angel, Seer, and Scribe such as initiated the Cairo Working or as form the traditional trinity in evocation operations. Section 3 heralds the Adept who, conversing with their

Angel, needs these three principles that they might look forth upon men and tell their glad word. His expression is a creative act and his word is a testament to the Royal Art Thinking, speaking, and writing share one word in the Egyptian, “heka”, which is also the action performed by the primordial creator Gods of Egypt who spoke, spat, or spermed the world into being.

The other acts here listed include drawing, etching, painting, moulding, and building. These are all magical or talismanic acts. In *The Book of Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, the Exorcist, having attained Knowledge and Conversation with his Holy Guardian Angel, sets about to conjure Demons from the nether-reaches and extend the benediction he received from on-high down to them. Otherwise, the Magician, empowered by the creative potency of his Genius, expresses his Art to transmute the world and transform lead into gold. His radiance heartens us to continual labor and enjoyment as he constantly partakes of the bounty of the Sun and, in his particular orbit, he gives out “light and life, sustenance and joy to them that revolve about [him] without diminution of substance or effulgence forever.” (*Collects from The Gnostic Mass*)

I would venture that the “building” in question refers to the reconstitution of the Third Temple within the Body that the Holy Ghost might indwell therein. This refers back to man's right to eat and drink as he will. The process of transforming “meat and drink” into “spiritual substance” is not just transforming our flesh and blood but also transmuting our fluids into apt vessels and vehicles for the SS (spiritual substance) or *Spiritui Sancti*, the Holy Spirit. Man must not only invoke the SS through Knowledge and Conversation, but must also extend that Gnostic Continuity unto the next Generation by “building” others to a state of preparedness and extending his benediction to bestow the grace of the Dove and accomplish the Miracle of the Mass.

The last portion of this section may seem a strange fit. However, man's “right to dress as he will” follows all the talismanic instructions. From *The Prince* to *The Book of the Courtier* to *The Book of Sacred Magic* to *Liber Samekh*, the metaphysics stay the same. As the spirits are acted upon and through by the talismans of the Magician, so too does the Angel or the Lord of the Aeon act upon and through the Talisman that is the Magician. The “dress” is the magical vestments or Body of Light of the Magician. It is the talismanic medium of the Initiator or the Angel.

This concept of adoring one's self, identity modification, has a connection to the magical revival of the Renaissance. Greenblatt, in his *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, argued against Jacob Burckhardt (who coined the term Renaissance), saying that the real defining point of the artistic upsurge of the high middle ages was that man saw himself as a medium for his creative expression just as he saw a stone through which he could hew or canvas upon which he could ejaculate. Various philosophers such as Ficino and Pico della Mirandola accepted the Aristotelian paradox this implied and asked: IF man has autonomy BUT the actor and acted-upon cannot be the same thing THEN how does man change? Their answer was the agency of the Angel or Free Will. Therefore, rather than willing himself to appear in some form, the man wills himself to be passive to his will, to let his prince adorn him.

While Section 3 addresses coming into communication with one's Will, Section 4 brings that great Thelemic Freedom of understanding one's relation to the Great Work. This section was denoted by Crowley as “Freedom of Love”, not only to revel in the love and lust of one's Angel but also to realize Love as Fraternity, Agape, Ecclesia, and Initiatory Continuity. As an Adept, it becomes one's responsibility to alight upon the world and disseminate one's Word and Will for its particular end, but also to inspire and instruct others. Section 4 establishes “Freedom of Love” as the Magician's proper alignment with existence and thereby his healthy ability to maximally enjoy the same. Further, it behooves the Magician who has accomplished his Operation in Section 3 to extend his benediction into Fraternity; be it the Brotherhood of Men or an Order or Institution. The Adept is in a position of authority in the AA, but in the OTO the robes of an Adeptus Major mark the Priest of the Gnostic Mass, as 6=5 is the highest grade one would expect from the OTO's initiatory system. Alternatively, this love mentioned in Section 4 might be the Abyssal or trans-Abyssal experience in contrast to the Angel experience of Section 3. This may put the Magician in Section 4 in the position of a Master of the Temple, responsible for

tending her Garden and also for extending her own roots in an Order by either corrupting an extant Order or forming her own under the auspices of the Aeon of the Child. This is her love and compassion, and through its Nightly formula is sexual freedom found.

Section 5, the “safeguard against tyranny,” has some interesting implications. On the one hand, tyranny can be taken as illegitimacy of heirship. “[T]hose who would thwart these rights” is a reference to the modern rulership of the world who reign without crown or royal blood. Man not only has the right but also the responsibility to subvert those extant forms of government and oppressive Old Aeonic institutions. The Master of the Temple, being beyond life and death, has precedence over these, keeping with the Initiatory gradations between the sections. Plato and Aristotle concur that the Tyrant is one who rules without law. In our case, the tyrant is he who is not a product of the Aeon of the Child, or an Initiate of Thelema, and is thereby an unrightful ruler and outside the Law of Thelema. Nemo must weed her garden, but this also is compassion. The conclusive “slaves shall serve” reinforces this document's social underpinnings and Critical Theory as endorsing the reinstatement of Hierarchy and Thelemic Aristocracy.

Oz concludes with an intimidating “Love is the law, love under will.” Like “the slaves shall serve” it reinforces that the forces which bind us are products of the will, even in relation to the establishment of Hierarchy.

Conclusion

The above firmly gnashes the notion that *Oz* is an egalitarian or straightforward text – in fact, it demonstrates it to be a magical text of demanding and thorough ethical instruction. Why then is *Oz* the text of choice for OTO's more banal activities like pamphleteering and recruitment? Promulgation efforts of the Order must distinguish between establishing the dominion of the Law of Thelema and attempting to recruit membership. The Law is for all; the OTO is not. If we must go about pamphleteering we must do so under the pretenses of promulgating Thelema, not attempting to pull membership in the Order. While I admire the efforts of the modern expositors and endorsers of promulgation, I would argue that we need separate strategies for promoting Thelema and the OTO.

I recently received a copy of *Oz* that had a list of OTO bodies on the back. Not only that, all the bodies listed were Oases and Lodges, the *de jure* Initiating bodies. The statement is such: if you like this, then think about taking initiation. We should hope that they layman would like *Oz* through their profane interpretation of it as endorsing their mundane and materialistic lifestyle; however, their spontaneous and potentially vulgar accordance with the text should not be considered an indication of their preparedness for initiation. If we judge potential members by whether or not they dig *Oz*, we can expect a greater amount of broski's than Brothers in the Order.

I have three suggestions for those who would use *Oz* to pamphleteer. First, be familiar with the premises outlined in this essay, as saying too much might be deleterious to the effects of *Oz*. Second, be prepared to engage in dialogue about *Oz* with a wayward rhetorician, or you might find yourself convinced by their indictment that you are a militant hippie. Third and lastly, include some complementary information on the reverse side, such as a reading list to suggest texts that might help expand on Thelemic principles; otherwise, folks are likely to think that *Oz* is the best we've got. Alternatively, something like *The Message of the Master Therion* is fittingly brief and explanatory and deserves the reverse of *Oz*.

Dangers in the voice:

Anyone with a very loud voice is almost incapable of thinking subtleties.

-Nietzsche, Section 216 of The Gay Science