

# “The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia”

Marguerite Johnson

You don't know what your long letters mean to me;  
understanding and eloquent they are and happily satisfying to  
my nature, occult, obscene, and of other worlds and beings.

Eugene Goossens to Rosaleen Norton  
Incomplete Letter. Undated

... the truth can only enhance his reputation by revealing him  
as a radical spiritual / sexual explorer many years ahead of his  
time.

Drew Crawford  
“Dialogue,” *Sydney Morning Herald*  
25 February 2002

On 9 March 1956, Sir Eugene Goossens (1893-1962), the first permanent conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Director of the New South Wales State Conservatorium, was apprehended at Sydney's Mascot Airport and subjected to a customs' inspection of his luggage. This unearthed alleged indecent material, namely books, photographs, and film. He was subsequently charged under Section 233 of the Customs Act with importing prohibited goods. At Martin Place Court of Petty Sessions on 21 March, Goossens pleaded guilty *in absentia* and was fined the maximum penalty of £100. He resigned from his positions as Chief Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and

Director of the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music and returned to England on 26 May. The events that led to the charges against Goossens were initiated by the discovery of a series of letters he had written to Rosaleen Norton (1917-1979), the “notorious” Witch of Kings Cross, an occultist and esoteric artist, which detailed his practice of sex magic with her and her companion Gavin Greenlees (1930-1983). The correspondence, which can be dated between c.1953-c.1955, had been stolen from Norton and Greenlees’ flat in September 1955 by Joe Morris Senior, a crime reporter for *The Sun*. Morris handed over the letters to the police who subsequently placed the unsuspecting Goossens under surveillance prior to and during his time abroad.

Detective Sergeant Bert Trevenar of the Sydney Vice Squad, the chief investigator of the events of 1956, kept a copy of the correspondence in his Ashfield home until his death in 2003.<sup>1</sup> The originals were lost, possibly destroyed by the police, when they failed to gain permission to prosecute Goossens on an additional charge of scandalous conduct. The latter charge was dropped because of the intervention of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Mr R. R. Downing, who, according to Carole Rosen (1993):

... instructed the Commissioner of Police to take no further action against him on the grounds that the evidence did not disclose any criminal offence with which he could be charged. Premier Cahill, when questioned as to his future, emphasised that he had been fined under a Federal Act. The Crown law authorities had examined the police report of the case and decided to take no further action against him. (p 357)

A historical and cultural study of these events, which saw the public disgrace of a man regarded as a cultural giant, a musical innovator and a champion of Australian classical music, has not been undertaken to any significant degree to-date. The apparent absence of scholarly discourse may be partially in response to the subject of sex magic and the esoteric in general that has until recent years remained as a subject worthy of enquiry only outside the academy (cf. Owen 1997). The trio's occult interests, particularly in sex magic, have, however, been treated in three separate genres: the print media, creative works and documentaries. In most instances, the letters have been utilized to varying degrees ranging from direct quotation to artistic interpretation.

David Salter, in his 1999 lead article for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, "The Strange Case of Sir Eugene and the Witch," discussed the letters and quoted from them. In the research for the 1990 fictionalized account of the relationship between Goossens and Norton for the novel *Pagan*, Inez Baranay accessed the correspondence and utilized it, particularly in Chapter 28 entitled "The Letters." There have been four plays: Barry Lowe's *Rosaleen – The Wicked Witch of the Cross* (1983), Timothy Daly's *Complicity* (1998), *The Witch of Kings Cross* directed by Jocelyn McKinnon (2003), and Louis Nowra and Mandy Sayer's *The Devil is a Woman* (2003).<sup>2</sup> The latter was promoted as a documentary-drama based on extracts from diaries, letters, poems, fiction and non-fiction although the authors later claimed that references to the letters were removed owing to legal threats over alleged breach of copyright. In 2004 two documentaries were screened: Geoff Burton's *Fall of the House* and Salter's "Sir Eugene Goossens: Sex, Magic and the Maestro." The quotations in Burton's film were loosely based on the letters and Salter's ABC

documentary included direct passages from them.<sup>3</sup> Finally, Act I (“Disgrace”) of *Eugene and Roie*, an opera-in-progress by Drew Crawford, premiered on 17 January 2004 at the Riverside Theatre, a premier venue in the Sydney suburb of Parramatta. Partially inspired by the letters, Crawford was also threatened with a legal injunction, but, as with Nowra and Sayer’s play, the show went on.<sup>4</sup>

It is the subject of Goossens’ letters – his practice of sex magic with Norton and Greenlees – that constitutes the theme of this essay. Far from contributing to the scandalous reputation of the three individuals involved, it is anticipated that this research will augment the limited academic material available on magic in Twentieth Century Australia. It is an exegesis of a personal experience and represents Goossens, Norton, and Greenlees as serious adherents to an occult system that has been, and sometimes remains, quintessentially misunderstood. It also makes use of Norton’s writings and artwork to augment the examination of her life as an occultist and to complement Goossens’ descriptions of sex magic with her and Greenlees.

The analysis begins with a survey of the practices of Aleister Crowley (1875-1947)<sup>5</sup> whose multitudinous writings (seldom read by his detractors) reveal another side to the man popularly regarded as wicked (cf. Sutin 2000). This paper does not seek to defend Crowley’s ethics and certain ritual activities but aims to discuss his philosophical systems, particularly sex magic. This will provide a basis for the assessment of the rites of Goossens, Norton, and Greenlees, whose magical practices paid significant deference to Crowley’s work.

## **Crowley and Sex Magic**

Hugh Urban (2003) notes that “[Crowley] stands out as one of those remarkably enigmatic characters who has had a tremendous impact on contemporary new religious movements, esotericism and occultism, even as he has been almost entirely ignored by academic scholarship.” (p 139). Indeed, it is Crowley, as opposed to, for example, Gerald Gardner, who served as the major influence on Norton, Greenlees and Goossens when it came to sex magic.

Crowley is exceptionally well-known among scholars and practitioners of magic and related traditions and is usually regarded as infamous, immoral, if not terrifying by those among the general public even vaguely familiar with his name. Arguably, Crowley’s most significant contribution to western esotericism was the theory and practice of sex magic, a complicated system that was partially developed in 1904 as a result of several visits he and his wife, Rose, made to the Boulak Museum in Cairo, during which they experienced communications with an entity called Aiwass (or Aiwaz), a messenger of Horus. A well-documented episode in the life of Crowley, the Cairo experience led to the *Liber Al vel Legis* (1936), a text in which he chronicled and analysed the significance of the encounters, the result of which was the beginning of his philosophies on sex magic:

Now ye shall know that the chosen priest and apostle of infinite space is the prince-priest The Beast, and in his woman called The Scarlet Woman is all power given. They shall gather my children into their fold: they shall bring the glory of the stars into the hearts of men. For he is ever a sun and she a moon ... (I.15-16)

Crowley dedicated the rest of his occult life to the art of sex magic and the pursuit of the ultimate Scarlet Woman with whom he could perfect his system of Thelemic “Will.” Through his encounters with the Scarlet Woman, Crowley believed he was demonstrating his powers as the Lord (or the Great Beast) of the New Aeon through serious acts of ceremonial “magick” (Crowley’s variant spelling). Sex magic was intended to not only bring about the conception of “a child mightier than all the kings of the earth” (Crowley 1936, III.44-45) but also to lead to the attainment of absolute consciousness.

The intrusion of Karl Theodor Reuss (1855-1923), founder of the *Ordo Templi Orientis* (O.T.O.), into Crowley’s London apartment in May 1912 is sometimes regarded as the unofficial – and unceremonious – revelation of a deeper significance of sex magic to Crowley (for a discussion of this event and its chronological problems, cf. Kaczynski 2002, pp. 202-3; Sutin 2000, pp. 225-26; and Owen 1997). According to Richard Kaczynski (2002), Reuss ranted about Crowley’s unauthorised use of “[t]he magic secret of sex” (p 202) contained in the secret documents of the O.T.O. Crowley was bemused until Reuss placed a copy of Crowley’s *The Book of Lies* (1913) before him. The text contained the “The Star Sapphire,” a ritual that included the following: “Let the Adept be armed with his Magick Rood [and provided with his Mystic Rose]” and “Let him drink of the Sacrament and let him communicate the same.” For the first time Crowley became aware of the sexual symbolism inherent in his writing as it applied to the IX<sup>o</sup> initiation of the O.T.O. (a level Crowley had not yet reached). Reuss interpreted the rood and the rose as terms for the male and female genitalia respectively, and the second passage as reference to the sexual congress between the priest

and priestess as the culminating ritual of the IX<sup>o</sup> initiation. Crowley was astonished (he had, for example, taken the rood as the cross) – not so much about the allegations of plagiarism and breaking the code of silence of the O.T.O. – but by the revelations Reuss’ arrival had heralded. According to Lawrence Sutin (2000), the two spent the following hours in intense discussion, resulting in Reuss conferring upon Crowley the IX<sup>o</sup> and, later, the X<sup>o</sup> along with the title of “Supreme Rex and Sovereign Grand Master General of Ireland, Iona, and all the Britains” (p 226).

Crowley assumed the magical title Baphomet, an idol believed to be worshipped by the Order of the Knights Templar, to whom the O.T.O. claimed occult lineage. The origin of the name is uncertain: a corruption of Mahomet (Mohammed); a combination of the Greek words *baphe* and *metis* (“absorption of wisdom”); or, in the system devised by Eliphas Levi (1910), a symbol of the “Universal Agent,” the all-powerful force in “Nature” that the adept can adapt and guide. Levi’s artistic interpretation of Baphomet, entitled *The Sabbatic Goat*, clearly inspired some of Norton’s work. For example, there is a photograph printed in the *Sydney Truth* on 7 September 1952 that shows Norton’s mural of Baphomet on the office wall of her publisher, Walter Glover. Likewise, Nevill Drury’s “Introduction to the Second Edition” of *The Art of Rosaleen Norton with Poems by Gavin Greenlees* (1982) notes that “There were other major deities too [besides Pan]: Lucifer, Baphomet, Hecate, Jupiter” (p.8).

Crowley had experimented with sex magic prior to this revelation, as exemplified by the Cairo sojourn and also the time he spent in the North African desert in 1909. Accompanied by his novice Victor Neuburg (1883-1940), Crowley performed a series of rites, spiritually terrifying

and dangerous, which involved crossing the thirty Aethyrs (or Aires) – metaphysical spirit spheres surrounding the earthly plane. Kaczynski (2002) states that Crowley had attempted this in Mexico in 1900 but could not “pass through or comprehend any Aethyrs beyond the first two” (p 71). Crowley understood the meaning of the Aethyrs in terms of the system of magic practised by the Elizabethan scholar and occultist Dr John Dee (1527-1608) and his diviner Edward Kelley (1555-*c.*1593) and the adaptation thereof by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, of which Crowley had been a member (1898-1900). This involved angel magic based on the Kabbalistic tradition as adapted by Henry Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535), which Dee had modified to develop his Enochian system: a cosmology of angels and demons as well as thirty otherworldly realms, which he called Aethyrs.

In 1909 Crowley aimed to regress through the thirty Aethyrs over a period of several days with Neuburg assisting and recording the visions (as a Kelley to his Dee). During his attempt at contemplating the fourteenth Aethyr, however, he experienced an obstacle in the form of an angel who ordered him to depart (Crowley 1911). On descent from Mount Dáleh Addin, where the rite had been attempted, Crowley was inspired to build an altar to the god Pan and offer a sacrifice. This sacrifice took human form: to experience the fourteenth Aethyr the magus sacrificed himself via submission to Neuburg in the form of homosexual passivity.

The theme and concept of offering oneself for sacrifice, an ancient Mediterranean tradition, was a keystone of anthropological works that inspired Crowley, such as James Frazer’s *The Golden Bough*. The practice permeated the occult revival as epitomized by Rosicrucianism and the



Golden Dawn, as well as featuring in Masonic rites, which in turn had inspired the aforementioned magical societies. Crowley's experience in the North African desert, where he attempted to enter Dee's fourteenth Aethyr, exemplifies the magical connections he made between accessing various esoteric planes, encountering angelic and demonic entities therein, and negation of the conscious self through sexual ritual in order for this to be achieved.

After the sexual ritual with Neuburg, Crowley again embarked on his Enochian quest and encountered Chorozon (the Dweller of the Abyss). The Abyss is connected with *Da'ath*, the so-called eleventh sephirah on the Tree of Life. Alex Owen (1997) describes Crowley's understanding of the term, after the time in the desert: "It represented Dispersion: a terrifying chaos in which there was no centre and no corresponding consciousness." (p. 111).

The episode of 1909 is a salient example of Crowley's understanding of sex magic. What he and Neuburg experienced in the desert "prefigured his elaboration of the techniques of sex magic" (Owen 1997, pp. 99-100), which he was to consciously pursue – especially after Reuss' arrival on his doorstep in 1912. The quest for heightened imagination and power through self-sacrifice and the subsequent obliteration of the ego came to underline Crowley's system of sex magic. The rites that evolved, which included autoeroticism and homoeroticism in addition to heterosexual sex, became a significant component of Crowley's reworking of the various degrees of initiation in the O.T.O. under his leadership (which he assumed in 1922 and held until his death in 1947) and the main focus of his own order, the *Argentum Astrum* (Silver Star), established in 1907.

Crowley's legacy, most notably sex magic, has had a profound impact on practitioners of magic, quite often through direct means via his writings or through the conveyance of his work via interpreters. Crowley's famous mantra, as quoted below, was to inspire occultists into the Twentieth Century and beyond:

I personally believe that if this secret [of sexual magic], which is a scientific secret, were perfectly understood, as it is not even by me after more than twelve years' almost constant study and experiment, there would be nothing which the human imagination can conceive that could not be realized in practice. ([1929] 1969, p 767)

### **Norton, Greenlees, and Goossens - magical experiences**

Norton remains one of the outlaws of Australian bohemian culture. Born in New Zealand in 1917, she and her family moved to Lindfield on Sydney's North Shore in 1925. Despite her adult poverty, living in squats and impoverished flats in Kings Cross and other inner-city suburbs, Norton's family was well-off and she lived a comfortable, middle-class childhood until she chose to leave it behind and make her own way in the world at the age of 16. While working in an assortment of jobs in the city, then hitch-hiking along the north and south coasts of Australia, Norton developed her artistic talents and read various occult texts. On returning to Sydney, Norton dedicated her time to her art and burgeoning magic activities. Her pictures were published in the alternative journal *Pertinent* during the early 1940s and her first exhibition in 1949, held at the Rowden-White Library at The University of Melbourne, suggested

a promising start to a public career had it not ended in a court case for obscenity (cf. Drury 2002, pp. 39-40). Undeterred, she continued to paint and draw, and in 1952 *The Art of Rosaleen Norton with Poems by Gavin Greenlees* was released to extensive media coverage for its alleged vile nature. Another court case ensued.

After the drama of Goossens' arrest in 1956, Norton continued to be interviewed by various tabloid journalists and her life was extensively chronicled, almost always in an exaggerated, voyeuristic manner for the prurient interests of the Australian public. During the late 1960s and until the early 1970s, however, she tended to shun publicity, living quietly near her beloved sister, Cecily, surrounded by an assortment of animal companions. She left the earthly plane on 5 December 1979, her departure the result of colon cancer. Greenless followed her, four years later to the day.

Norton was clearly influenced by Crowley's work, most notably his *Magick in Theory and Practice*, although she also refers to the writings of Eliphas Levi (1810-1875), Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891), Alice Bailey (1880-1949) and Dion Fortune (1890-1946).<sup>6</sup> Norton's determination not only to explore and develop her belief system, but also to publicly acknowledge it, occurred at a time when witchcraft was still illegal in Australia (cf. Hume 1997, p. 224). Although dubbed a "witch" by the tabloids and eventually embracing the title herself, Norton's religion was far from stereotypical witchcraft (for example, Satanism, gross forms of sacrifice and other related inversions of Christianity). Her worship and beliefs were intense, complex, and eclectic; in addition to the aforementioned authors, her system of magic drew on the Kabbalah,

Theosophy, and world mythology articulated through her readings and interpretations of Sigmund Freud and, more significantly, Carl Jung.

In contrast, Greenlees' early occult experience is not documented although his precocious poetic talent reveals an early interest in surrealist literature and visionary or mystical poetry. The major influences on Greenlees included Comte de Lautréamont (1846-1870), Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891) and Peter D. Ouspensky (1878-1947). Lautréamont's work was characterized by its overtly obscene imagery, which created visionary, nightmarish scenes peopled by blasphemous characters intent on evil. Rimbaud, like Lautréamont, was regarded as a precursor to the Surrealists and experimented with free verse and *synesthesia* (the representation of one sense experience in terms of another). He urged fellow poets to become seers by the submission of the self to a total derangement of the senses. Ouspensky was also an experimenter in alternative states of consciousness and promoted the occult teachings of the Armenian mystic Gurdjieff (1878-1947). These sources of inspiration are present in the poems Greenlees was writing by the age of thirteen, as evidenced in his work for *Pertinent*, which included the dreamscape pieces entitled *Poem* (May 1944) and *The Square* (June 1944). As Norton's artwork was also published and reviewed in *Pertinent* (for example, October 1941), the pair may have sought out each other as a result of a perceived "connection." Drury (1988) suggests that it is "likely that Roie and Gavin first met one another in the last year of the war, when Beresford [Norton's husband at the time] was away in New Guinea and Roie was living in the stables in Bayswater Road [inner Sydney]. Cecily [Norton's sister] remembers seeing him there" (p. 48).

Norton and Greenlees worshipped Pan and conducted rituals to this god (and others) in their shared accommodations in Kings Cross during the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s. In a letter to C. S. Lewis dated 14 November 1952, Norton referred to Pan as “the unfallen one who expresses Itself through” the “powers of Earth:” “geological activity,” “animals, vegetation, [and] place intelligences” (Norton in Drury 1988, p. 76).<sup>7</sup> Her definition of Pan was closely aligned to her interpretations of Gnosticism and the Kabbalah in particular: she worshipped the god, “the Elemental,” (Norton in Drury 1988, p. 76) who functioned as a “neutralising power” (Norton in Drury 1988, p. 79) juxtaposed to Adam Kadmon (the archetypal human; the body of God), “the fallen ... the one who expresses itself through the human race” (Norton in Drury 1988, p. 76). Norton articulated her system, beginning with Pan:

A being whose state has been supreme delight and harmony, who has expressed nothing but goodwill – and knew of no other – and who had reached for still higher forms of manifestations ... Adam K. would have destroyed all his creation ... and any other under his influence, except for the neutralising power of Pan the Elemental. (Norton in Drury 1988, p. 79)

Norton and Greenlees’ worship of Pan may have been partially influenced by Crowley, whose rituals to the god played a significant role in the workings in 1919. In *Magick* (1929 [1973]), Crowley included an elaborate hymn to the god prefaced by an excerpt from the Greek tragedy *Aias* by Sophocles (496-406 BC). Owen’s work on Neuburg and Crowley’s time in the desert references Crowley’s *Confessions*, in which Crowley defines the god as “All devourer, all begetter” (1997, p. 130).

For Crowley, to understand Pan is to understand “Panic,” and “to know “Panic” is to experience both ecstasy and terror at the hand of the god” (Owen 1997, p. 130). Owen goes on to write:

Pan, representative of a pagan Greece that had special significance for Victorian homosexual men, and long associated in the Christian imagination with the devil, was a powerful signifier of the sexualized magic initiated by the two men. When Crowley and Neuburg speak of Pan, the imagery is redolent with heat and violence; a god, half man, half beast, who rapes and ravishes men and women alike. (Owen 1997, p. 130; cf. also Newman 2004, pp. 36-61).

In addition to Crowley’s profound experiences of the god, and his narratives elucidating these, Fortune’s work, particularly her 1936 novel *The Goat Foot God*, “did honour to Pan as the prime symbol of a paganism needed to heal the modern world” (Hutton 1999, p. 85). Here we detect an alternative comprehension of Pan in comparison to Crowley’s experiences of the god; an understanding which, nevertheless, was of interest to Norton:

Some occult theories hold the stars and planets to be the bodies of great beings and so do I. I think the God Pan is the spirit whose body – or such of it as can be seen in these four dimensions (the fourth being time) – is the planet Earth, and who, therefore, in a very real sense, is the ruler and god of this world. Perhaps that is why he was given the name ‘Pan, which in Greek means ‘All’, for he is the totality of lives, elements and forms of being – organic, ‘inorganic’ and otherwise,

comprising the planet as a whole: much as an animal body is a totality of myriads of cells, bacteria etc, in which ordered whole these live and function, having their own forms of “intelligence” and perception, according to type. *Such a body would be the “world” to any of its micro-organisms*, and the integrated consciousness of the body’s owner would exist in another “world”, and on a different plane from theirs. (Norton 1957, p. 15)

Norton’s understanding of “different plane[s]” is highly relevant to an appreciation of the magical content of the letters she received from Goossens. Her practice of self-hypnosis as a means of artistic enlightenment (begun in c.1940) was the beginning of a process that indeed carried over into the realm of astral travel (mentioned by Goossens in several correspondences).

Her development of trance art techniques, partially inspired by the practices of the Surrealists, notably Salvador Dali and Yves Tanguy (cf. Drury 1994, p. 106), had a profound effect on her art and life. As means of example, the following is an extract from an account she wrote to psychologist L. J. Murphy in 1949:

Eventually I decided to experiment in self-induced trance; the idea being to induce an abnormal state of consciousness and manifest the results, if any, in drawing. My aim was to delve down into the subconscious and, if possible, through and beyond it. **[A description of the trance process follows.]**

The drawings were quite different in form from previous ones, and full of symbols, many of which were previously unknown to my conscious mind ... prominent symbols being crescent, fish, ram-headed mask, cornucopia, swastika, 6-pointed star, triple sign, tower, etc.

Each of the drawings at this period were compositions having another significance not realised until much later, since they prophesied in symbolic form a future subjective experience for myself.

Numerous other things took place which I need not record here: my consciousness, however, was extremely exalted over the entire period—about five months in all. I seemed, while experiencing a great intensification of the intellectual, creative and intuitional faculties, to have become detached in a curiously timeless fashion from the world around me, and yet to be seeing things with a greater clarity and awareness than normally. I was working day and night, having very little sleep or rest, yet a supply of inexhaustible power seemed to flow through me. (Norton in Drury 1988, p. 30)

As the following passages from the same account reveal, the practice that enabled astral communication with higher beings involved more complex magic, of which Norton became an adept:

I had heard that it was possible to achieve transition to a different Realm of existence and live consciously the type of life that is generally experienced after physical death. **[There**



**follows passages describing Norton's preparations for this event, her various experiences leading up to it, an early experience and finally an explication.]**

I doubt if any impression of the actual initial experience could be conveyed in words, so I shall not attempt to describe it, beyond saying that there was a sensation of ecstasy, during which my entire being seemed to dissolve and disintegrate, then gradually re-form into a new whole. **[The description continues, and then Norton describes the physical sensations.]** Far from being devoid of sense enjoyments, a plasmic body of this type contains the very essence of sensuousness to a degree that renders the physical sensory organs utterly negligible by comparison. **[This is elaborated.]** 'There,' the body is completely a reflection of the mind, so that any type of pleasure, whether emotional or intellectual, engenders as part of itself a corresponding sensuous enjoyment. **[This is elaborated.]**

Contrary again to the usual idea of such states, sexual sensation still exists in an equivalently more advanced and intensified form.

I have been asked how a purely intellectual activity such as abstract thought could be attended by sensual enjoyment. It is, nevertheless, for instead of feeling interested one 'becomes' an embodiment of Interest itself. It is rather difficult to explain what I mean by this since a sense or state of Consciousness peculiar to the other realm is concerned. To

begin with, 'thought' in those realms is very different from that which is normally understood by the word. There, 'thought' or rather the energy generated by such is felt as a tangible thing, a current of living force which assumes palpable or visual form. I had been told, earlier, that 'entities in the Plane assumed form at will'. This is literally true; one actually changes shape very frequently, since the new 'sense' referred to is that which could be described as 'being'. (Norton in Drury 1988, pp. 34-35)

Norton's descriptions of her psychic travel through inner and outer worlds or planes of consciousness are, as she noted, difficult to describe in written form. Her letter to Murphy, nevertheless, raises some key interpretations, particularly when juxtaposed to her artistic representations of these experiences.

Prior to meeting Goossens in 1952/1953, Norton (with Greenlees) was also a practitioner of sex magic. The work entitled *Witches' Sabbath*, included in Norton's 1949 exhibition at the Rowden-White Library at The University of Melbourne, exemplifies her experience with such rites – albeit in exaggerated form (the rituals did not include bestiality, for example). Here a demonic animal and witch embrace in an ecstatic moment of joyful lust while a crucified, naked nun (top left) and a sensuous, winking Virgin Mary (top right) look on. Police confiscated this picture, along with *Lucifer, Triumph* and *Individuation*, after two officers attended the exhibition in response to alleged complaints.

Norton explained to one of them, Detective John Olsen, that *Black Magic* (another name for *Witches' Sabbath*) “was a ‘symbolistic’ drawing: the female figure depicted was a witch, the panther personified the powers of darkness, and their embrace represented the initiation of the witch into the ‘infernal mysteries.’” (Norton in Drury 1988, p. 40).

Despite the fact that Norton was charged under the Police Offences Act of 1928 and appeared before a court hearing while the remaining works were still being exhibited, she included a revised version of the work, re-entitled *Black Magic* (Plate I) in the 1952 publication, *The Art of Rosaleen Norton with Poems by Gavin Greenlees*. This confident decision may have been motivated by the fact that the court case was resolved in her favor. Such confidence, however, was misplaced, as the artistic collaboration between Norton and Greenlees was to cause another obscenity charge.<sup>8</sup>

In the book (p. 42), *Black Magic* was accompanied by one of Norton’s poems, which elaborates on the theme of the piece and points to her erotic sacred rites; an excerpt follows:

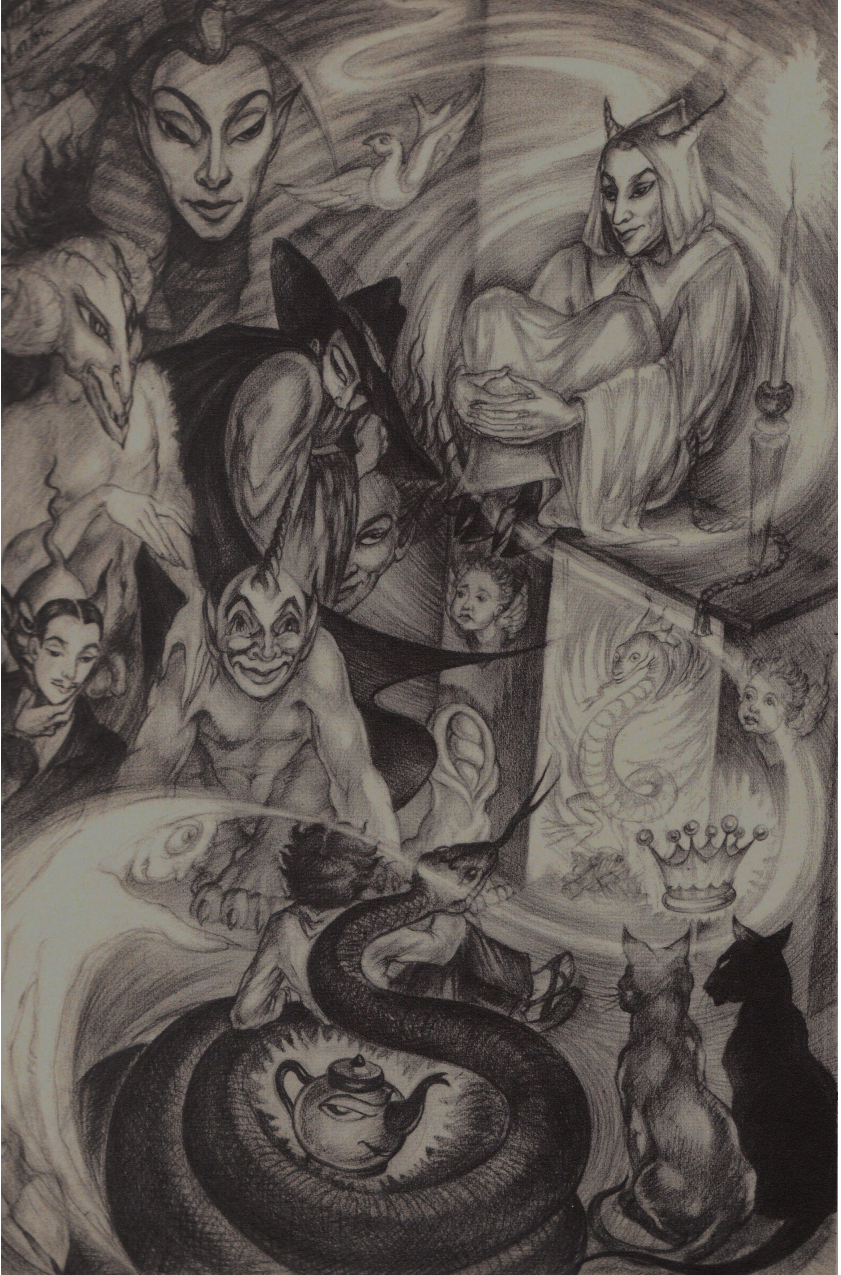
Light’s Black Majesty: Midnight Sun: Lord of the wild and  
living stars:  
Soul of Magic and master of Death;  
Panther of Night ... enfold me.  
Take me, dark Shining One; mingle my being with you,  
Prowl in my spirit with deep purring joy  
Live in me, giver of terror and ecstasy  
Touch me with tongues of black fire.



1. *Black Magic*

Through the practice of magical travel to alternate realms of existence Norton was able to encounter esoteric forces in a visceral sense, mingling her “being” with the entity encountered. Her experiences therefore differed from the standard Jungian interpretation of the Collective Unconscious that entailed an interpretation of other-worldly beings as “projected thought forms” (Drury 1994, p. 109); she believed that the deities and demons of these planes were real and could be contacted. In view of her statements concerning her earlier experiences of trance techniques, which inspired her art and supplied her with “inexhaustible power,” the more highly developed practice of astral communication may be interpreted as enabling her to access a more exalted level of consciousness and creativity.

Norton’s artwork remains the best expression of her experiences, as further demonstrated by the work entitled *At Home* (Plate 2) included in *The Art of Rosaleen Norton with Poems by Gavin Greenlees*. This piece combines a comfortably comic home setting with a figure depicting the artist experiencing a psychic visitation from a range of beings. The accompanying essay has the bracketed heading “From an episode by Rosaleen Norton.” This may suggest that despite the many beings depicted, the work is a representation of an actual “episode.” Yet the number of figures, combined with the text, establishes a playful ambiguity that suggests alternatively an artificial depiction of one or, more likely, many astral experiences. Nevertheless *At Home*, like many of Norton’s artworks, if not possibly the majority, pays deference to her trances and astral travels. Here the beings are shown in the presence of a human figure (Norton) that sits semi-upright and alert as a witness



to the event(s). The text opens with a passage on Asmodeus who also features in the picture (top right-hand corner):

Meet the Monk – alias Jannicot, alias Brother Hilarian, alias Frater Asmodeus – who, as Familiar Spirit-in-Chief is President and Master of Ceremonies. He wears the cowl and habit of a mediaeval monk, and his subtle, rather cryptic face generally shows traces of a lurking secret amusement. His feet are curious, for if you look closely, you will notice that they are actually neat, cloven hooves. Brother Jannicot also has other names known only to his most intimate friends; and it is believed that he is an extremely important Personage. Certainly he is to me since he manages most of my occult activities, supervises trances, escorts me into other planes of Being, and sometimes assists the Sphynx in selecting visions for me. (p. 74)

Asmodeus, the chief conveyor of Norton to her astral planes, referred to as Abaddon in *The Apocalypse* (ix.11), features in a narrative in the apocryphal *Book of Tobias* (iii.8) and is also mentioned in the Testament of Solomon. In *The Goetia: The Lesser Key of Solomon the King*, translated by S. L. MacGregor Mathers with an essay by Crowley, Asmodeus (called Asmoday or Asmodai) is the thirty-second spirit of the seventy-two listed:

He is a Great King, Strong, and Powerful. He appeareth with Three Heads, whereof the first is like a Bull, the second like a Man, and the third like a Ram; he hath also the tail of a Serpent, and from his mouth issue Flames of Fire. His Feet are

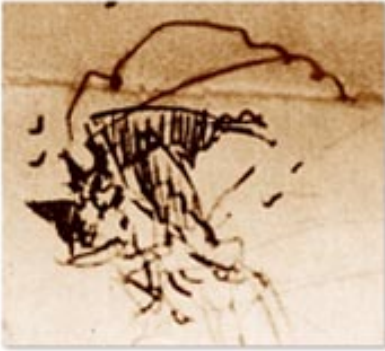
webbed like those of a Goose. He sitteth upon an Infernal Dragon, and beareth in his hand a Lance with a Banner.  
(Mathers and Crowley 1904 [1980], p. 32)

In Mathers' *Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* (Crowley had worked with this text for several years prior to his visit to Egypt in 1904, using it to attempt to summon his Holy Guardian Angel), Asmodee (Asmodeus) is described accordingly: "Some Rabbins say that Asmodeus was the child of incest of Tubal-Cain and his sister Naafrafah. Others say that he was the Demon of impurity." As Goossens' letters show, Asmodeus was to play a part in their rites.

Goossens had occult interests and possibly practical experience prior to meeting Norton and Greenless. Born in England to a musically gifted family, Goossens came to Australia in 1947 to become the first permanent conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and assume directorship of the Conservatorium. He wrote to Norton in response to the publication released in September 1952, which he had purchased at the Notanda Gallery; Norton subsequently invited him to tea. This suggests a meeting sometime late that year or during the following year.

In addition to being well-versed in occult writings, particularly those of Crowley, Goossens' circle of friends in England included composer and pianist Cyril Scott (1879-1970) and Philip Heseltine (1894-1930), composer, critic, and editor, better known as Peter Warlock.<sup>9</sup> Scott, described by one his teachers, Iwan Knorr, as "brilliant and revolutionary," (cited by Rowena Pearce) and by Goossens as the "father of British modern music," (Tame 1984, p. 264) was an occultist who published extensively on Theosophy, theology, philosophy, and various





3. *Examples of Goosens' Letters*

other esoteric matters. The series of works known collectively as The Initiate Books, penned under a pseudonym, reveals Scott's active involvement with Theosophy, expressly the work of Blavatsky and her philosophy of the "Great White Brotherhood," an assembly of Himalayan masters who possessed the mystical powers to connect humans with the masters of the divine cosmic hierarchy.

Scott actively explored occultism, particularly the connection between esotericism, music, and literature although, unlike Heseltine and Goossens, he openly articulated his research and practices. In *Music: Its Secret Influence Throughout the Ages*,<sup>10</sup> Scott expounded his Theosophical beliefs in a discussion of the "two types of composers; those we may refer to as the inspired ones, in that they possess qualities which permit of their being used by the Higher Powers, as opposed to these, the uninspired ones, who, lacking such qualities, cannot be used as mediums" (1933 [1958], p. 28). In turn, it is not only the esoteric forces that inspire great works; great works inspire humanity and its spiritual awakening. As with Heseltine, the direct influences of Scott on Goossens in terms of occultism cannot be traced owing to the absence of direct communication between the men on the subject. Goossens' circle of close friends, which clearly included these men, nevertheless point to a friendship not only based on music and composition, but also on a shared personal philosophy despite its different manifestations.<sup>11</sup>

According to Goossens' younger sister, the celebrated harpist Dame Sidonie Goossens-Millar, her brother's interest in the occult can be dated from the time of his friendship with Heseltine (cf., Rosen 1993, p. 339 and also Smith). Goossens and Heseltine were close companions during

their youth, and in his autobiography released in 1951 Goossens records a summer spent in the company of Heseltine in 1915:

Sometimes Philip and I, on a decrepit motor-cycle, would explore together the neighbouring countryside for old parish churches and hostleries: the former to sketch, and the latter to sample the local Cotswold brew. Twice we encountered staid friends of mine on these trips ... Later we sustained a puncture opposite Marie Corelli's home during a tea-party on the lawn, which we were promptly invited to join – and did. The charming, rather eccentric authoress of *The Sorrows of Satan*, whom I had previously met professed little love for contemporary music or musicians. (Goossens 1951, pp. 111-12; cf. also Rosen 1993, p. 45)<sup>12</sup>

Extant letters from Goossens to Heseltine reveal an intense relationship of shared intimacies:

I miss you muchly – on your return we must have many evenings at the Savoyard – or elsewhere. There's lots I really want to talk about – as you're quite the most 'understanding' person where I'm concerned. (Goossens to Heseltine, undated in Rosen 1993, p. 46)

Prior to the summer of 1915, Heseltine had become increasingly absorbed in occult matters. His meeting with musician and composer Frederick Delius (1862-1934) in 1911 was to prove significant in relation to this interest, as the latter was experienced in astrology and the casting of horoscopes and was a collaborator on *Anatomie et physiologie de l'orchestre*

(1894) with renowned French occultist Dr Gérard Encausse (1865-1916), better known as 'Papus' (cf. Smith 1996, p. 117). This pamphlet placed the four instrumental groups into a Kabbalistic system thus: strings: God, the head, the nervous system; brass: man, the chest, arterial system; woodwinds: woman, the chest, the venous system; percussion: nature, the abdomen, the lymphatic system (cf. Jensen 1994). Although in later years Delius made light of his occultism, passing it off as the folly of youth, Heseltine's biographer writes: "It is more than likely that at some stage he would have discussed his opinions and experiences [on occultism] with the young and impressionable Philip" (Smith 1996, p. 118).

Heseltine's friendship with the unorthodox composer Bernard van Dieren (1887-1936), whom he met in 1916, has also been cited as having an influence on him. Of the latter, Heseltine's son, Nigel, wrote: "Of his own Satanism we know little except by inference and analogy. But we do know that he captured and held Philip" (Heseltine 1992, p. 81).<sup>13</sup> Yet Heseltine, by his son's own admission, already knew Crowley in London (c.1914):

... it was Aleister Crowley who had the most immediate effect and who no doubt (to quote Augustus John) 'held me by his glittering eye as any bore is apt to do,' arousing in Philip a curiosity for the history and practice of magic, which he pursued for several years, and which eventually destroyed him. (Heseltine 1992, p. 75).

Heseltine continued his study of the occult, meeting and striking up a friendship and literary partnership with Neuburg in 1922 after the latter had ended contact with Crowley.

The associations between the occult and music influenced Heseltine, as revealed in the following letter of 22 August 1918 to Colin Taylor (1881-1973):

... in my view individuals in artistic matters (as elsewhere) are but tools of certain tendencies and forces. One is given certain talents, certain forces in order that one may play a particular part in the general operations. ... One allies oneself with a certain force or direction and the more one effaces oneself, the more strongly can this force operate through one ... For years now I have been led by some power stronger than myself along strange paths or preparation for the work that has now clearly revealed itself to me. I have travelled in the dark, often ignorant of the end of my journey, often ignorant of the very fact that I was travelling at all. During the last few months the light has begun to break: I have had experiences which have brought me to the realization of things which seemed before incredible ... when we meet I shall tell you of experiences which will astonish you, which you will probably be unable to believe at first. ... It is not for no purpose that I have been drawn to the study of the things that lie beyond the confines of our narrow sensuous world: and I will tell you, in strict confidence, that I have already received very definite and detailed communications *concerning music* from sources which the ignorant and unheeding would call supernatural: and that

there is unlimited power behind these sources. (Smith 1996, p. 155).

In view of the fact that 1918 was the year in which Heseltine produced “the songs that made him,”<sup>14</sup> the letter to Taylor appears to be an acknowledgement of the power of occult practice in the production of great works.<sup>15</sup>

While Goossens’ friendship with both men was more than likely influential on his own belief systems, Salter refers to an earlier fascination with the occult: “Even as a child, Goossens seems to have had an almost compulsive interest in pagan symbolism. Sidonie remembers the fixation emerging through young Eugene’s talent for drawing: ‘When he was 11 years old, he was doing etchings which were quite beautiful. Little caricatures and things. He always loved to draw pictures with gargoyles. He had a sort of mania about gargoyles.’ ”(Salter 1999, p. 17). As an adult his private reading on witchcraft and related matters were alleged to have disturbed his third wife, Marjorie (cf. Rosen 1993, p. 339). If one considers Goossens’ musical output there is an additional indication of his fascination for and familiarity with the occult. According to the family biographer, these interests “had inspired the magical atmosphere he conjured up in the First Violin Sonata and *Don Juan de Mañara*; an extreme sensuality of sound expressed in constantly changing chromaticism and a shimmering orchestral palette.” Rosen continues: “His was the world of *Faust* and *The Tempest*; his search was for the secret formula that would enable him to reconcile his Catholic conflict between desire and conscience and engender perfect harmony between body and mind.” (Rosen 1993, pp. 239-40).

But it was *The Apocalypse*, Goossens' masterwork that best represents his attempts to combine the esoteric, the religious and the occult; it is his exploration of the musical coalescence of the sacred and the profane. Its world premier was at the Sydney Town Hall on 22 November 1954 after some eleven years of contemplation and writing. Based on The Revelation of St John the Divine, the concluding book of the New Testament, the opera chronicles the eschatological visions of the saint including the deliverance of the New Jerusalem. Rosen posits that the opera even popularised magic for a while: "Since the performances of *The Apocalypse*, interest in the occult had become far more widespread amongst the fashionable circles of Sydney's prominent citizens. A little indulgence in Pantheism with sexual overtones made a welcome contrast to barbecued ribs on the North Shore or cocktails in Katoomba." (1993, pp. 364-65).<sup>16</sup>

## **The Letters**

There are eleven extant letters written by Goossens to Norton and Greenlees although one takes the form of instructions in the use of an unguent, which suggests it may have been included in one of the other letters or in a lost piece of correspondence; one is incomplete with only page three intact. Each of the letters extends to approximately two-and-a-half handwritten pages; they had been composed in Australia and overseas; seven open with a greeting to Norton; four either refer to and / or send greetings to Greenlees (one is actually a postcard from Lord Howe Island addressed to Greenlees);<sup>17</sup> three are signed with Goossens' magical name, "Djinn" (discussed below); five include references to caution and anonymity; six contain small sketches, two of which are sex magic images (cf. Plate 3 for reproductions of Letters I

and II). The letters are not dated, although one has an intact envelope stamped 4 June 1953 with a Canberra postmark. Another includes a series of potential meeting times, which suggest four possible dates: March 1952 (too early), August 1953, May 1954 or January 1955. Each letter deals with magic and sex magic is expressly mentioned in all of them, with two particularly lengthy descriptions, which begin the following analysis.

In one letter Goossens describes an erotic magical experience with both Norton and Greenlees:

... as promised, you came to me early this morning (about 1.45) and when a suddenly flapping window blind announced your arrival, I realised by a delicious orificial tingling that you were about to make your presence felt in a very real sense! Seriously you were very definitely here, and you were doubtless enjoyably aware of what took place. I was in the middle of a rite with A. and he had just asked for the “osculum infame” (which I was about to administer) when you took advantage of my position and administered it to me. A strange hooped creature was in the room with us – upper and middle parts female, lower centaur, and a pretty crustacean creature with large milky breasts also appeared. I will draw it for you when I see you. All night I was in s.m. delight, and my offerings were, by results, more acceptable to the beings ...  
More of this later.

Your description of the triple s.m. rite (you, G. and me) was curious because I was aware of you both as female (G. always



comes to me as a female,) and I was fully present, also in changing form. **[Letter One]**

It is evident that Goossens believed in astral travel and it appears that he understood this occult experience in a similar way to Crowley, namely that astral travel “was conducted within ... [one’s] own mind” (Owen 1997, p. 106). Crowley had perfected astral travel and was in the process of instructing Neuburg in the practice during his sojourn in the desert. What Crowley had experience with, and so too it appears did Goossens, was a form of psychic travel akin to that studied by the Golden Dawn, namely accessing “Astral Light,” “separate planes or orders of existence which interpenetrate the world of earthly perceptions.” (Owen 1997, pp. 105-106).<sup>18</sup> Here we also detect the influence of Norton whose experiences (as described above) would have been discussed with Goossens.

Earlier in the letter Goossens refers to travelling to Norton via “aerial coven,” which establishes an appropriate tone for the description of psychic or astral sex magic that follows. Goossens states that prior to the “arrival” of Norton he was preparing to perform the “osculum infame” (the obscene kiss) to “A.” The abbreviation could refer to Asmodeus, named in full in another letter and discussed in some detail by Norton (as quoted previously). As the “Demon of impurity,” Asmodeus is an appropriate guide to the realms involving sex magic rites. The “osculum infame” that Goossens was about to administer to “A.” refers to the standard practice accused witches in the early modern European age were believed to perform on the devil, namely the kissing of his anus. Within the rites as practised by the trio, however, the act may well have been fellatio and cunnilingus. The reference to Norton’s

“arrival” and her performance of the same act on Goossens is indicative of the sex magic they shared. This may be comparable to Crowley’s offering of himself to Pan (Neuburg): the submission of the self as the necessary ritual in order for an esoteric experience and subsequent enlightenment to manifest.

The reference to Norton’s “description of the triple s.m. rite (you, G. and me),” clearly refers to the trio’s shared participation in magical sex on the aforementioned alternate plane. Goossens notes that Norton’s words were “curious” because he experienced both partners as “female.” The theme of shared correspondence is a feature of the letters, and the exchange of ideas and events that occurred to each writer during the other’s physical absence is common. In this context, Norton’s description of a rite involving the three of them, in Goossens’ physical absence, is indicative of an active communication about sex magic rites. Norton’s non-extant correspondence, in view of Goossens’ response, appears to have indicated she came to him in both male and female form (note his reference to “I was fully present, *also* in changing form” [my italics]). The mutability of both gender (male “becomes” female and female “becomes” male) and sexual roles (active becomes passive and vice-versa) is another feature of such rites as R. J. Stewart articulates:

In magic the relationships or exchanges made are undeniably sexual; polarised energies are exchanged, entities react with one another. But they are not sexual in the commonly accepted illusionary sense of personal gratification, or of the basic breeding drive that perpetuates the species. Magical psychology does not limit sexuality to gender-oriented interaction; ultimately it emphasises the balanced androgyny

or total being reflected through mankind (Stewart in Hume 1997, p. 75).

Norton understood the sexual philosophies penned in Goossens' letter. She was aware of (what Stewart refers to as) "balanced androgyny" through her extensive readings of Jung in particular whose theories on Individuation she had represented in her artwork, including one of her best known pieces that bears the Jungian term as its title (cf. Plate 4). Drury writes of the work, *Individuation*, that it is "a work which was intended to demonstrate a universal mystical principle: the cosmic union of opposites. The title itself presents the key, for 'individuation' was Jung's term for psychic unity or inner wholeness" (Drury 1988, pp. 121, 124; cf. also Jung 1968). As Crowley interpreted the philosophy of the union of opposites, so did Norton, as this excerpt from one of her journals reveals:

*Individuation* – The unified Self which contains all the opposites (such as the conscious and unconscious minds, masculinity and femininity, the animus and the anima etc.) in polarisation symbolised by the Hermaphrodite figure. Whenever the Hermaphrodite is shown it indicates polarisation (unity of opposites) and/or equilibrium. (Norton in Drury 1988, p. 124).

In another letter, written on an aeroplane, Goossens refers to "a pleasant unguent" that he procured from "one familiar with these things" in Paris "where they are by no means uncommon." The instructions on the use of the unguent is described on a single page and written in uppercase. It reads as follows:



4. Individuation

USE HALF LEVEL TEASPOONFUL, MASSAGE CREAM INTO SKIN OVER WIDE AREA ON INNER FACE OF THE THIGH (BETWEEN CROTCH AND KNEE) OR ON ABDOMEN. USE ON UNWASHED SKIN. DON'T BATHE ANOINTED AREA ONE HOUR BEFORE OR THREE HOURS AFTER. DON'T USE DURING MENSTRUAL PERIOD. NO MAN MUST USE THIS UNGUENT. IT WOULD BE MORE THAN DANGEROUS. [Space]. DJINN. [Space]. BASE CREAM D'EGYPTE PREPARED BY ANNA (PARIS). [Space]. HERB OINTMENT – BLOOD BASE. [Space]. APPLY ONCE A DAY FOR 3, 4, OR 5 DAYS.

The purpose of the potion was to augment “mutual physical evocation,” which suggests a rite with Goossens again *in absentia*, similar to the activity described in the correspondence above but with Norton and Greenlees simultaneously aware of the events.

This is followed by a passage on Crowley:

Thanks ... also for retaining the A.C. writings. I re-read them again recently. So far, they merely touch on the future sequel of operations which culminate in what A used to term “il magico della s-x” (or what may be referred to as s.m.). His dual nature and build well equipped him to deal with its every manifestation ... consumingly, and with results – [In this connection in your last letter, I wanted you to mount this “favourite hobby horse” of yours still further (Dualism). It is also mine!] [Letter Two]

This description of Crowley and his “dual nature and build” in the context of his “il magico della s-x” continues the theme of gender and role fluidity. While the words here are somewhat coded, the meaning may be interpreted as Goossens’ desire to be “mount[ed]” by Norton in a “s.m.” rite in keeping with his understanding of the term “Dualism.” Basically defined as “twofold,” dualism seems to be associated by Goossens with the merging of male/female identities in the context of sex magic. Crowley interpreted dualism in the context of the “three main principles of the Universe: Dualism, Monism and Nihilism.” (1929 [1973], Part III.O). The destruction of Dualism, right and wrong, good and evil, male and female, was the aim of high magic according to Crowley:

Any idea that is thus in itself positive and negative, active and passive, male and female, is fit to exist above the Abyss; any idea not so equilibrated is below the Abyss, contains in itself an unmitigated duality or falsehood, and is to that extent qliphotic and dangerous. (1929 [1973], Part III.VIII.I)

On the term “qliphotic” Crowley writes: “Qliphoth generally suggest the vice characteristics of the Sephira” ([1912] 1973, p. 58). The word literally means “husk” or “empty shell.”

Norton, in recorded psychological records penned by Murphy in 1949, discusses her bisexuality and fantasies of penetrating women. She also spoke of her encounters with male homosexuals: “These men are soft and rounded, and they let me do what I like with them” (Norton in Drury 1988, p. 47). Indeed, her understanding of sexual/gender fluidity

is associated with her interpretation of the Jungian concept of Individuation.

Despite Norton's public reputation as a witch that has maligned her and cast her as the initiator and malevolent influence on Goossens in the material to-date, the letters occasionally reveal *his* role as the occult educator. This is best illustrated in a third piece of correspondence:

Yes, I'll instruct you in the grimoire. The diagrams are necessarily crude but none the less effective, being all from unimpeachable sources. You will be my best – and only – pupil, and I shall appoint you keeper of the seals. (You nearly / really [?] hit the nail on the head in your bit about A.C. and self in letter).

Unfortunately, I didn't bring the book, but shall bring it next week for lesson one. **[Letter Three]**

The composition of a grimoire, a handbook of magic, has an ancient tradition as illustrated by the Greco-Roman material collectively known as the *Greek Magical Papyri* discovered in Egypt in the Nineteenth Century and covering a history of beliefs and practices dating from the First Century BCE to the Fifth Century CE. Such manuscript traditions were continued during the Early Modern and Renaissance ages. The co-production of the aforementioned *Goetia: The Lesser Key of Solomon the King* by Mathers and Crowley in 1904, attributed by them to the legendary ruler, exemplifies the extension of the tradition into the Twentieth Century. Goossens' reference to the "grimoire" appears to define it as a personal record of the practices that he devised from his own studies

(note the somewhat self-deprecating line: “[t]he diagrams are necessarily crude.” The reference to “A.C.” (Crowley) that immediately follows the discussion of the grimoire points to him being one of Goossens’ “unimpeachable sources.”

In the first letter quoted, there is also attention paid to the creative output of the three practitioners:

Tell G I’m thrilled by the conclusion of the H. of U. It’s better than I had hoped for!! Also I’m equally thrilled by his drawings, which will go in the witch book. **[Letter One]**

This alludes to the planned opera, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, based on the short story by Edgar Allan Poe: Goossens would write the musical score and Greenless the libretto, while Norton would provide the artistic design. It appears that the sex magic had paid off.<sup>19</sup> On this theme, one is reminded of Crowley’s mantra (previously quoted) that points to one of the prime reasons for such practice, namely the attainment of imaginative, indeed artistic, epiphany that would lead to the production of master works of illumination. As Urban (2003) writes: “Sex magic, particularly in its transgressive, non-reproductive forms, can thus unleash the supreme creative power: the power to create not an ordinary fetus, but a magical child of messianic potential” (p. 166). It was most probably with this aim in mind that Goossens, a conductor and composer, Norton, an artist, and Greenless, a poet, combined their magical forces to enhance their creative ones.

The use of magical names is consistent throughout the letters. Goossens’ magical name, Djinn, has a long history in mysticism, theology and magic



and features predominantly in the Koran. The *djinni* were created from the flame of a smokeless fire (Koran 15:27), and it was believed they could be summoned by an Arab magician (*muqrrribun*) to attain knowledge and acquire power. According to the Islamic scholar Ibn Taimiyah (b.1263 CE), the *djinni* also possessed humans, notably those inclined to be wrongdoers, those who indulge in lust, and interestingly, musicians (cf. al-Ashqar). In Arab myth they were also associated with inspiring artistic powers, again through possession or madness. Crowley also mentions the *djinni* and refers to them as beings an adept magician is able to summon and as forces able to copulate with humans, which aligns them to incubi, vampires, and similar sexual entities.

Magical practices performed by Goossens independently of Norton and Greenless are also noted, including a reference to his experiment with Crowley's Cakes of Light:

I LEFT THE SECONDHAND COPY OF THE "G.B."  
PROPPED AGAINST YOUR DOOR, AND HOPE YOU  
FOUND IT SAFELY THERE ON YOUR RETURN. I  
FOUND IT AT THE OFFICE AFTER LEAVING YOU  
THE OTHER DAY; HAVE SINCE READ IT AND  
CONFIRMS ALL I KNEW OF A.C. THOUGH  
EXAGGERATES CERTAIN THINGS OVERMUCH. I  
EXPERIMENTED ON ONE OF THE CAKES OF LIGHT  
(PG 64) (NOT SUCCESSFULLY) HOPE YOU WILL HAVE  
BETTER LUCK WITH THE UNGUENT' ... **[Letter Four]**

This excerpt is revealing on a number of levels, especially Goossens' reference to the book confirming all he knew of Crowley, suggesting

that at some time in his pre-Australian life he had either got to know the man or, as discussed above, associated with those who did. The book referred to may be John Symonds' biography of Crowley, *The Great Beast: The Life of Aleister Crowley*, which was released in 1951.

The Cakes of Light were a delicacy of Crowley's, and a recipe was included in *Liber Al vel Legis*:

24 For perfume mix meal & honey & thick leavings of red wine: then oil of Abramelin and olive oil, and afterward soften & smooth down with rich fresh blood.

25 The best blood is of the moon, monthly: then the fresh blood of a child, or dropping from the host of heaven: then of enemies; then of the priest or of the worshippers: last of some beast, no matter what.

26 This burn: of this make cakes & eat unto me. This hath also another use; let it be laid before me, and kept thick with perfumes of your orison: it shall become full of beetles as it were and creeping things sacred unto me. (III)

Crowley intended the cakes to be used in the "Mass of the Phoenix ... mixed with the blood of the Magus" (1929 [1973], Part III.XX.I). The Cake or Eucharist, consumed daily, enabled a magus to replace matter with spirit, the human with the divine, thereby becoming capable of any task. As the letter indicates, it is uncertain in what context Goossens used the formula, except that the process was unsuccessful.

Goossens composes his supersensual experiences within the clear, unadulterated vocabulary of reason and realism. The accounts of sex magic within the realms of astral planes are juxtaposed to everyday observations, updates on Goossens' travels, and requests for updates from Norton, such as the enquiry concerning her cat, Gray, who apparently went missing [**Letter One**]. Amid these commonplace snippets are some fascinating pieces of information, which conclude this analysis.

Goossens reveals his contact with Heseltine in one brief note, clearly in response to an inquiry by Norton:

Yes I knew P.H. in both phases:- remind me to tell you about our doings together! [**Letter Five**]

The reference to “both phases” may indicate his friendship with Philip Heseltine *and* Peter Warlock, while the allusion to “our doings together!” suggests several possibilities: their time in the summer of 1905, a same-sex relationship, and / or the practice of magic together. As lovers of music, particularly the classical repertoire as the reference to “P.H.” indicates, Norton and Greenless had yet another passion to share with the conductor and composer. Goossens in fact, as several letters show, invited them to dress rehearsals and performances and Norton “was often to be seen on guest tickets at his concerts in the Town Hall.” (Rosen 1993, p. 341).

Goossens also reveals the extent of the friendship with the pair, which involved the exchange of family histories and anecdotes. For example, Goossens refers to the family nickname for him, Zenny (Rosen 1993, p.

119), which in reference to Norton's slight lisp in its pronunciation, entices him:

I see your argument about changing over from Djinn, but anonymity is still best served by sticking to it ... than the more familiar family name. Yet let it serve you in our private speech, if you will, but never in written. It would sound wonderful from your little tongue – the hiss of the Z would be intoxicatingly perverse. **[Letter Six]**

He writes of his acquaintance with Yusapov, the Russian noble who killed Rasputin **[Letter Seven]**, his love of castles **[Letter Seven]** and his delight in Norton's gift of the infamous *Black Magic* painting **[Letter Five]**.

It seems superfluous to note that the activities of Goossens, Norton, and Greenlees were decidedly against the normative sexual practices and values of Australia during the 1950s, a reality not lost on Goossens:

And how I agree with you about all that normality “pap”! Let's “piss it out” of existence (as A.C. used to say). It would be intolerable if the conventional set-up of “social sex” fastened even a shadow on our transpirings – of all kinds!! **[Letter Seven]**

Despite this defiant tone, Goossens consistently pleads that all the correspondence be destroyed. Homosexuality or more specifically sodomy was illegal<sup>20</sup> and the 1950s saw “the sharp increase in the number of people charged and convicted for what was officially labelled unnatural offences” (Willett 2000, p. 10). This increase was a result of

the intensification of policing ordained at “the highest level” (Willett 2000, p. 10). The New South Wales Commissioner of Police at the time of Goossens’ apprehension at Mascot Airport, C. J. Delaney, was a committed campaigner against homosexuality, “calling it in 1958 ‘the greatest social menace’ facing Australia” (Willett 2000, p. 10). Delaney’s rhetoric is in keeping with that “directed against homosexuality during the Cold War” that connected it with “disease, decadence or security risk” (Murphy 2000, p. 62). While gays and lesbians were obviously a presence during the 1950s, they were an invisible and silent one, represented in the meagre media coverage usually in the context of court cases concerning sexual misconduct. In this environment the sexual relations between Goossens and Greenlees, which a more sophisticated reading would reject as equating to homosexuality, were against the male hegemony that characterised Australian society, culture, and sexual mores at this time.

Bisexuality was, like sex magic, unfamiliar to the average Australian. Indeed the very concept of sex magic was almost unheard of, and when Norton was covered in the newspapers of the day, her beliefs and art were not only regarded as Satanic but also perverted and pornographic. Norton’s individuality and personal independence – let alone her sexuality – were also at odds with the traditional female role that was essentially confined to the idealized image of the homemaker or the “career” nurturer such as teacher or nurse. The expression of female sexuality was not absent or necessarily repressed in the 1950s, but it was predominantly confined to marriage and marriage that was preferably sanctioned by the Christian Church. As John Murphy has recorded, approximately nine out of ten Australians identified themselves as Christian in the census

of 1954 and that for “a growing number of Australians, particularly women, religion continued to provide a frame of moral reference in the 1950s” (2000 pp. 64-65). In this context, Norton, an artist, bohemian, divorcee and witch who lived intermittently with a male who was, for all intents and purposes, identified as homosexual, was the antithesis of the widely held stereotypical image of “woman.” Such an image of Norton was consistent in the multifarious reports on her in the print media as summarised in the memoirs of crime reporter Bill Jenkins (1992):

I'd encountered her on many occasions and I reckoned she was on the lowest rung of humanity. She was the epitome of depravity, but she must have had some sort of diabolical charm, because she had a large circle of devoted worshippers around her. Norton was a self-styled high priestess of black magic, who led a coven of witches and warlocks in the bohemian Kings Cross area. She exuded evil – I used to feel like sprinkling holy water whenever I was in her presence. (pp 221-22)

Jenkins was at the airport the day Goossens was arrested (his memoirs also detail this event), and while his words may strike the modern reader as hyperbolic, they do encapsulate the media's representation of Norton during the late 1940s and 1950s. One is here reminded of the similar reception of Crowley, particularly in the English press, the most infamous description of him as “the wickedest man in the world,” as described in London's *John Bull* magazine on 24 March 1923.

Goossens' letters to Norton and Greenlees speak of sex magic but of many other things besides. Contained herein is a documented friendship between three practitioners that broke social and class barriers not only in the pursuit of sex magic but of the achievements it promised. Goossens came to Australia as a prominent musician and composer with a world reputation. He also came as an experienced occultist who found in Norton and Greenlees a partnership of equals, two individuals who could match his knowledge and were prepared to explore the possibilities of artistic genius. The rituals never reached the ultimate aims the practitioners sought; potential rites were unrealised and *The Fall of the House of Usher* remained unfinished. After Goossens' public humiliation in 1956 and his subsequent return to England, the letters stopped.<sup>21</sup>

## Notes

- 1 Copies of the letters came into my possession through contact with filmmaker Geoff Burton in 2003. Burton obtained copies from Trevenar during a series of interviews with him for the documentary entitled *Fall of the House*. As the letters are now in the public domain and the incorporation herein is selective, the use of them is regarded as fair dealing. For the sake of convenience, the letters quoted have been artificially numbered for easier cross-referencing.
- 2 *Rosaleen – The Wicked Witch of the Cross* (unpublished script) was performed at the Tom Mann Theatre in Sydney and directed by Roddie Thomas. *Complicity* debuted at Sydney's Marian Street Theatre. *The Witch of Kings Cross* (unpublished script by the ensemble cast) premiered at The Hangar, The University of Newcastle (Ourimbah Campus, New South Wales). *The Devil is a Woman* (unpublished script) premiered on 1 November 2003 at the Aussie Rules Club, Kings Cross. The venues for the plays are informative as they represent the small, select interest in Norton; the Tom Mann Theatre in the inner-city suburb of Surry Hills caters for amateur and professional groups

and regularly showcases non-traditional, non-mainstream productions; Marian Street Theatre, on Sydney's North Shore, was a small operation with its performance space in a community hall (it ceased trading in 2001); The Hangar, a student performance space at the small campus of Ourimbah (Central Coast, New South Wales) was a run-down building, off-campus, along a quiet street;\* the Aussie Rules Club, Kings Cross is a somewhat rough-and-tumble club, with a performance space upstairs for the culture-vultures of inner-Sydney, while downstairs club members play the 'pokies' and watch sport on cable television.

- \* I was honoured to be a member of the group that wrote, staged and performed *The Witch of Kings Cross* at The Hangar in 2003. The venue, then the only performance space for drama students at this small campus, a satellite of The University of Newcastle, was closed several years ago owing to its state of ill-repair. The production was staged for three nights and had full-capacity crowds in its small space (seating roughly 60 people) - a triumph considering the cold winter nights and the demography of the region (albeit most of the attendees were connected to the university in some capacity).
- 3 Burton's film was first screened at the Sydney Film Festival on Sunday 20 June 2004. The ABC (Australian Broadcasting Commission) documentary "Sir Eugene Goossens: Sex, Magic and the Maestro" aired on Sunday 5 September 2004 on *Rewind*.
- 4 Pamela Main, Goossens' companion in later years and the beneficiary of a will he wrote 11 days before his death, threatened legal action. No official proceedings eventuated.
- 5 Prior to the work of Aleister Crowley, Paschal Beverly Randolph (also spelt "Randolph") (1825-1875) developed and practised a form of sex magic (cf. Deveney 1996). In addition to Randolph, Karl Kellner (originator) and Karl Theodor Reuss (founder) of the *Ordo Templi Orientis* (O.T.O) organized initiations (the seventh, eighth and ninth degrees), based on sex magic.
- 6 Cf. Drury (1988, pp. 136-37) and Richmond (2000, p. 2). Drury concludes: "Rosaleen's main occult sources, books one could actually use, were the occult manuals prepared by writers like Dion Fortune and Aleister Crowley" (p. 137).



- 7 Interestingly, Drury has claimed: “As far as we know, Rosaleen received no reply to her letter” (p. 80). There was, in fact, a reply, which as been preserved in a private collection. Lewis’ reply is rather short, distanced and clearly intended to curb any further correspondence Norton may have been contemplating.
- 8 As a result of the book, Wally Glover was charged with producing an obscene publication and appeared at Central Court on 25 November 1952. The prosecutor Mr D. J. Vine-Hall singled out *Black Magic*, *Esoteric Study* and *Individuation* as particularly offensive. Glover was found guilty and fined £5 plus costs. Two works from the book, *Fohat* and *The Adversary*, were blacked out in remaining copies; for related details on the Post Office and Customs ban, cf. Drury (1988) and Coleman (1962, pp. 58-59). In September 1955 *Black Magic* was exhibited at the Kashmir Cafe, Macleay Street, Potts Point. The manager of the establishment, David Goodman, was charged with “a breach of the Obscene and Indecent Publications Act” and in the ensuing court case, Mr Dash SM described *Black Magic*, *Beelzebub* and *Belphagor* thus: “I deem that all three pictures emphasise matters of sex unduly and as tending to corrupt the morals of unsophisticated members of the general public, and, in consequence, they are obscene.” *Black Magic* was further described by Dash as “lewd, lustful and erotic.” (Anonymous 1955, p. 45). Goodman was found guilty and fined £5 plus costs (cf. also Drury 1994).
- 9 In November 1916, Heseltine published an article on Goossens’ chamber music in *The Music Student*, which marked the first usage of Heseltine’s pseudonym, Philip Warlock. Heseltine wrote to Goossens explaining that “for very important reasons” he had to conceal his identity from the editor of the journal, Walter Wilson Cobbett (cf. Smith 1996, p. 103). While it is unwise to accredit too much significance to what may be a coincidence, this nevertheless may point to a mutual understanding and sharing of occult beliefs that had developed during the previous summer.
- 10 Cf. also, Scott (1969) where he discusses his friendship with Percy Grainger (1882-1960), also a friend of Goossens. Grainger was a virtuoso pianist and innovative composer as well as a sexual adventurer (cf. Bird 1976). He and his wife Ella were among

- Goossens' few supporters during the crisis of 1956 (cf. Rosen 1993, p. 361).
- 11 One of the positive results of Goossens' return to England was his renewed closeness with Scott. When Goossens died, Rosen (1993, p. 387) reports that Scott telephoned his sister Sidonie and offered the following condolences: "It's all right. Eugene's with Percy Grainger on the other side and they've already formed their own orchestra!"
  - 12 This summer of 1915 was not in its entirety as idyllic as Goossens recalls; cf. Smith 71-73. Novelist Jean Rhys (1890-1979) recorded the holiday in her short story 'Till September Petronella,' cf. Rhys 1960 [1987].
  - 13 It is noteworthy that Nigel Heseltine equates magic with Satanism and his intense dislike for the occult is evident throughout this account of his father's life.
  - 14 Taylor (cited in Smith 1996, p. 154). Taylor, Heseltine's piano teacher at Eton, remained a mentor and friend throughout his life.
  - 15 Smith (1996, p. 154) also suggests the influence of the medium Hester Dowden at this time.
  - 16 Rosen's reference to the North Shore is to the Goossens' residence at Wahroonga, a most well-appointed locale, and to Goossens' "getaway" in Katoomba in the Blue Mountains some 100 km N-W of Sydney. Goossens refers to his cottage in Mount Victoria in the Blue Mountains in Letter 3 and provides Norton with directions for getting there, writing: "Obviously a pied-à-terre is necessary, hidden and private ..."
  - 17 Lord Howe Island, off Australia's east coast, is the closest island resort to Sydney.
  - 18 Cf. Crowley, *Magick* Part III.XVIII. Fortune's system was also in keeping with Crowley's; cf. Fortune (1935, pp. 180-81).
  - 19 As noted by Rosen (1993, p. 341), there were sketches for *The House of Usher* found among Goossens' papers after his death, but these were for a ballet not an opera.
  - 20 Australia had inherited its sodomy laws from the United Kingdom through colonization. During the Nineteenth Century, these laws were

maintained in the criminal codes of colonial parliaments, and by the state parliaments in the post-Federation era. In response to the Wolfden Report in Britain (1957) that initiated change to the Sexual Offences Act (1967), the Dunstan government of South Australia introduced its “consenting adults in private” defence in 1972 and repealed the state’s sodomy law in 1975. Between 1976 and 1990, with the exception of Tasmania, the other states and territories repealed the sodomy law. Tasmania did so in 1997.

- 21 I am grateful to Inez Baranay for permission to access her files held at the National Library of Australia; Geoff Burton for his generous attitude towards the sharing of information; Graham Stone for the collection of material from the late Jock McKenna; Timothy Daly for providing me with a copy of *Complicity*; a private collector for allowing me to use his extensive material on Norton; Colin Rosewell for formatting the visual material from the letters; Nevill Drury for comments on the paper and to the anonymous referee for insightful comments and suggestions.

Copies of the letters herein have been altered digitally in order for a clearer representation of the artwork without interfering with the integrity of the originals.

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**Title:** "The Witching Hour: Sex Magic in 1950s Australia"

**Source:** J Acad Study Magic no5 2008 p. 234-87

**ISSN:** 1479-0750

**Publisher:** Mandrake of Oxford

P.O. Box 250, Oxford, OX1 1AP, United Kingdom

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