

Patria 7:

Asterion

A Pataphysical Hierophany

"What lies beyond is full of marvels and unrealities, a land of poets and fabulists, of doubts and uncertainties."

Plutarch: *Life of Theseus*

"If we wish to outline an architecture which conforms to the structure of our soul..., it would have to be conceived in the image of a labyrinth."

Nietzsche: *Aurore*

"As the eye to the sun, so the soul corresponds to God."

Jung: *The Religious and Psychological Problems of Alchemy*

1. Labyrinthos

A lecture is about to be given on Cretan mythology at a university. It does not matter where, nor does it matter who the lecturer is. Whether many people have gathered to hear the lecture, or few, or none at all, is also unimportant. The lights in the hall are dimmed as the lecturer bends over his notes and begins. At this moment a person standing by the open door at the back of the hall becomes intrigued and, entering, takes a seat at the back. This is what is heard.

* * * * *

It is rare in drama when an artifact figures more prominently than the leading characters of the story, but such is the case with the labyrinth at Knossos in Crete, the site of a drama

concerning Theseus, Ariadne and the Minotaur, later to be immortalized in Greek mythology. The labyrinth Daedalus built for Minos to house the Minotaur is not merely the scenery to the drama: it *is* the drama. And the image of the labyrinth still holds, transposed to countless baffling contemporary structures and situations, each seemingly controlled by an invisible force at the centre, dark and malignant. All ancient accounts agreed that anyone entering the labyrinth would never return. Either they would become lost among the endlessly forking paths, or they would be devoured by the Minotaur who prowled there. Theseus was the only person who ever returned, and he did so by means of a thread given to him by Ariadne. Somewhere in the labyrinth he met the Minotaur, killed it, and escaped, taking Ariadne with him, then later abandoned her. The myth, it is said, was invented to explain the destruction of the Minoan empire by the Greeks, sometime after 1400 B.C.

It took over three thousand years before Sir Arthur Evans was to excavate the palace at Knossos, but he failed to discover any convincing archeological evidence of a labyrinth there.¹ In a later study, the paleontologist, Hans Georg Wunderlich, has suggested that the palace itself, far from being a habitation for living kings and queens, was actually a huge necropolis where embalming rituals were carried out.²

The Minoan labyrinth was not the only one known. Many existed in ancient times, and Pliny (in his *Natural History*) called them "the most stupendous works on which man has expended his labours." The Egyptians had one that the historian Herodotus considered it more fascinating than the pyramids.

It has twelve covered courts – six in a row facing north, six south – the gates of one range exactly fronting the gates of the other, with a continuous wall around the outside of the whole. Inside, the building is of two stories and contains three

¹ Sir Arthur Evans, *The Palace of Minos*, 7 vols. (New York, 1964).

² Hans Georg Wunderlich, *The Secret of Crete* (New York, 1974).

thousand rooms, of which half are underground, and the other half directly above them.

Herodotus was allowed to visit only the upper rooms, those below being reserved for the tombs of the kings who built the labyrinth, and also the tombs of the sacred crocodiles.

The upper rooms, on the contrary, I did actually see, and it is hard to believe that they are the work of men; the baffling and intricate passages from room to room and from court to court were an endless wonder to me, as we passed from a courtyard into rooms, from rooms into galleries, from galleries into more rooms, and thence into yet more courtyards. The roof of every chamber, courtyard, and gallery is, like the walls, of stone. The walls are covered with carved figures, and each is exquisitely built of white marble and surrounded by a colonnade. Near the corner where the labyrinth ends there is a pyramid, two hundred and forty feet in height, with great carved figures of animals on it and an underground passage by which it can be entered.³

We do not know what rituals were associated with the Egyptian labyrinth if any. Evidently it was not an administrative centre; the Egyptians did not build airtight office blocks for their slaves. Nothing of the Egyptian labyrinth remains and no myths have been preserved concerning it. The Cretan labyrinth alone provided the spectacular drama, or rather vestigial drama, celebrated in mythology. I say vestigial because no details of what transpired within its walls were ever made known; the sole survivor never spoke of his experience there.

Though many myths and legends were associated with his name, Theseus was not a god. He is believed to have been a historical person, the founder of Athens, and it is as such that Plutarch treats him in his *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*; but, unlike Greek heroes, Theseus associated freely with divine figures, notably Ariadne. As the eldest daughter of the moon queen

³ Herodotus, *The Histories*, Book 2 (Penguin Books, 1954), pp.188-94.

Pasiphae, Ariadne was destined one day to inherit the queendom in that matriocentric society, had not love intervened. In aiding Theseus to escape the labyrinth she abandoned her country for love, only to be abandoned in turn. Mythology provides two conclusions to her story; either she died of sorrow on the isle of Naxos, or she was discovered by the wine god Dionysus, who raised her up as the queen of a cult of love. Certainly she had none of the hubristic cunning of her sister Phaedra, whom Theseus eventually married, and who sought to bring down her husband by falsely accusing her stepson, Hippolytus, of violating her.

The legends concerning Theseus, as preserved by Plutarch, adequately provided him with super-human powers. Believing they were descended from the gods, not ascended from the apes, the lives of all ancient heroes inclined upwards; they set themselves extraordinary tasks and aspired to awesome goals. Odin and Osiris, probably historical figures like Theseus, actually became gods. Aeneas was divinely protected in the execution of his mission. Such faith kept the back straight and the eye firm throughout life's adventures and adversities.

Heroic myths are not popular today because there is no room in them for mediocrity. Either one wins or loses. And winning is not to win the lottery or inherit a tax-free fortune. Losing was more frequent. Even in the days before republicanism dwarfed everyone, society was conspicuous for its losers, the victims, whose only claim to memory was that they provided Minotaur with his dinner.

I doubt if much has changed. There is still massive subjection, and the world is full of contrivances to prevent us from achieving illumination, even though the classrooms of all our educational institutions are packed full of citizens desperately cramming techniques for personal advancement. The modern megalopolis advertises conviviality and produces loneliness, exploitation and an environment increasingly unhealthy and dangerous. Many of the victims of these streets are unwilling, but equally as many destroy themselves willingly. There is as much meanness, vulgarity and determined ignorance as there is poverty or lack of opportunity. One might say that an unwritten article in the

republic's constitution is the right to remain ignorant.

What *has* changed is the approach to solving these problems. The victims are treated as invalids, requiring crutches and social workers rather than the inspiration of heroes and heroines. The artist is not a social worker, but can serve a valuable social function if art is allowed to inspire even a few people to raise themselves up and move forward with dignity, confidence or a new-found sense of purpose. It is strange, then, that even during eras when the arts were expected to provide inspirational leadership, the Theseus-Ariadne story did not attract the attention we might expect. There are few plays and fewer operas (Monteverdi, Strauss), but none present the heroic aspect of the drama effectively. Like Wagner's Siegfried, Theseus seems to be a very simple hero, without doubts, sufferings, reflections or conflicts of conscience; he was totally unconscious of his actions, driven by instinct rather than premeditation. We know nothing of what he thought while he groped his way through the labyrinth, nothing of the dialogue of words or eyes that took place between himself and Minotaur. Nor do we know how he felt about Ariadne, whether he loved her or why he abandoned her.

If heroism becomes chronic, says Jung, it ends in a cramp. The problem with Theseus is that he is never *not* a hero. It is the same problem Virgil had with Aeneas and what makes him a cardboard figure despite the poet's genius. If a work celebrating the Cretan myth was to become capable of firing the modern imagination, Theseus would need to be provided with a more subtle character, Ariadne's role would require expansion, and the Minotaur would need special treatment, either by giving him the intellectual cunning of a Nietzsche or the physical prowess of a Nijinsky. But how would that be possible within the cramped space of a labyrinth, where the corridors are so narrow that two people could scarcely pass? Clearly, the execution of such a work would require something quite unlike the traditional theatre as a performance space. I know some people believe that the newer technologies are creating formats for intense one-to-one confrontations; but what is missing is terror – the smell of the beast and its roaring in

the darkness everywhere. You cannot produce darkness on the light medium of the computer.

A few years ago there was a ritual drama called *Ra* where the participants were initiated into the cult of the Egyptian sun god. All participants were robed. Priests instructed them as they passed through the underworld. They died with the god after sunset and were reborn with him in the rising sun of the next morning. But the experience for the most part was collective. Any drama in a labyrinth would have to be experienced individually, one on one; and that is why traditional theatre or opera couldn't deal with it.

That Crete was a matriocentric civilization has been mentioned by many researchers. Though classics' scholars of the past (mostly male) developed this theme less ambitiously than modern feminists, the theory is that Cretan religious and civic life was dominated by the worship of an Earth Goddess or Mother Goddess from earliest times up until the destruction of Knossos. Certainly women are very much in evidence in Cretan iconography, appearing as boxers, acrobats, charioteers, potters and hunters. As priestesses they often dwarf their male companions. Animals associated with the Mother Goddess were snakes and bulls; the emblem was the two-headed axe or *labrys*, depicted everywhere, and presumably employed as a sacrificial instrument. Robert Graves has pointed out that the two crescents of *labrys* symbolized the waxing and waning of the moon,⁴ the planet most often associated with woman since it measures the rhythms of fertility. In Crete the moon goddess takes helios as her spouse in the form of the bull; Pasiphae ("the one who shines for all") rules with her consort Minos "the moon's creature," according to Graves's suggested etymology. If all this sounds convincing, would it be too far-fetched to equate the labyrinth with the feminine body? A body of dark passages anticipating penetration by the male, absorbing him, devouring him, exulting over his demise.

The bull cult of ancient Crete is quite well known and there are

⁴ Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* (New York, 1955), p. 297.

many illustrations of women turning somersaults over the backs of bulls as if to arouse their passion. Perhaps they were slaughtered in ritual sacrifice by the two-edged axe that was so conspicuous among the decorations of the Knossos palace. In the myth, Pasiphae has Daedalus construct a cow in which she may hide to court the bull and couple with him. But Pasiphae's coupling with the bull could also be a distortion or pollution by the Greeks of an earlier story in order to discredit the bull rituals so prominent throughout the Middle East. In any event, the incident gave rise to one of the most disturbing and unforgettable characters of any mythology: the Minotaur.

Then who or what does the Minotaur symbolize? Traditionally he was a chthonic figure, dark, blood-thirsty and evil. With his cloven hoof or horns (for he is sometimes depicted as a bull with a human head and sometimes as a man with a bull's head) he is a prototype of the devil, ruling his underworld labyrinth with a ferocity that chilled the hearts of the entire Aegean. But just as there is ambiguity about his appearance, we cannot forget that this dark prince was the progeny of the Moon Queen Pasiphae. Might he not have had a more incandescent identity among the bull worshipers of Crete, rather than the blood-thirsty beast the Greeks made him out to be? Might we dare to call him Asterion, acknowledging the celestial light he inherited from his mother? At any rate, he retains the mystery of everything we do not know or cannot know, and as such he may be said to prowl in the unconsciousness of each of us.

His presence is revealed long before he is encountered in the intangible worlds of smell and of sound. The labyrinth is an odour: a miasma, a sewer, an abattoir of rotting human corpses, overlaid perhaps with rich perfumes and incenses to beguile the visitor. Its odiferous *leit motif* is the tawny smell of the Prince of Darkness, whose identity is also made known by the clattering of his hooves and his bellowing roar. We hear him throughout the labyrinth, now near, now echoing further away. At times he may howl or whine or mewl or growl. At times his voice reaches our ears deceptively as enchanting music.

None of the characters in the Cretan myth are real people. They neither talk like real people nor do they develop like characters in realistic drama or even hyper-realistic opera. They are archetypes, symbols of the psyche, paradigms of exemplary behaviour, drawn from both the light and dark sides of our nature and presented for inspection in order that we might know ourselves better. There is nothing new in this; it is the function of all mythology and folklore to turn the dimly-perceived intuitions of the unconscious towards consciousness so that they can be interpreted and integrated. When an idea is clear and straightforward, there is no reason for more than one name for it. But when it is little known or can be envisioned from many angles, then a multiplicity of forms is needed to express its mysterious or unsettled nature. When society was homogeneous and accepted more uniform dogma, these figures were clearer and were more easily accepted, but in today's shifting and unrooted society their function is cloudy and their forms less easy to identify or name. Joseph Campbell put it this way:

There can be no question: the psychological dangers through which earlier generations were guided by the symbols and spiritual exercises of their mythological and religious inheritance, we today (in so far as we are unbelievers, or, if believers, in so far as our inherited beliefs fail to represent the real problems of contemporary life) must face alone, or, at best, with only a tentative, impromptu, and not very effective guidance. This is our problem as modern "enlightened" individuals, for whom all gods and devils have been rationalized out of existence.⁵

If a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, digressions will lengthen it so that the eternal digression of the labyrinth, one might say, is the flight from death. Death might be endlessly avoided if we could go on inventing increasingly complex

⁵ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (New York, 1949), p.104.

diversions and imaginary stratagems to escape it. This is not the way of Theseus. He would move by the most direct route to confront the enemy without delay.

But the nature of the hero has changed in our day. No longer is he a warrior with a sword ready to gore everything in sight. No longer is his aptitude merely that of the swash-buckling youth. No longer is he necessarily masculine. There are heroes of faith, heroes of perseverance, heroes capable of realizing the most fragile dreams without any visible weaponry at all. These are the heroes of a different order, I don't say higher, but certainly in possession of talents badly needed in the modern world. And so let us allow Theseus to dissolve back into the mists of Greek mythology and preserve only the vehicle by which anyone, male or female, young or old, might test whatever heroic strengths they possess or aspire to.

The crucible in which this perilous, puzzling, profound and illuminating experience takes place is the labyrinth. For ancient man, their meandering paths, imitated in initiation dances, ceremonies and complex ritual objects, represented the archetypal endeavour to merge into the world, or to be born anew. This reincarnation theme interested the romanticists also. For them, one must descend into darkness, confront the adversary, some sort of evil *Doppelgänger* or Mephistopheles, triumph over him, and emerge transfigured into the light of higher reality.

But the experience of a quest amid diversions is not merely a romantic notion. It fans out into life itself and is replicated in the plans of all civilized communities. The labyrinth is in the alleys of the Middle Eastern bazaars, as well as in the intricate plotting of the thousand and one tales of Shahrazad. It is in the twisted passageways of catacombs, strewn with the bones of martyrs; and it is in the plan of the city with its endless network of streets and shopping malls. The palace is a labyrinth to anyone but a king. Government administrations adopt the labyrinth as their model, and all institutions have followed their example. The hospital may be a labyrinth, and also a school or office building. The mazes of the library are equally

inexhaustible to anyone who fails to understand the cataloguing system. And books themselves can be labyrinthine, especially those in which endless digression becomes the theme: Sterne, Diderot, Musil.

Then there is the map. How baffling are the towns and cities with unpronounceable names. Then the victim is anyone who gets lost in the unknown metropolis, with its dangers of traffic, hooligans and muggers. Does one ever find a destination, or is one condemned to eternal wandering? Does one want to find a destination? Isn't it easier to remain a *flâneur*, wandering about town like a visitor with plenty of time and money in one's pocket? Ah yes, it would be a mistake to think that the labyrinth's victims are all killed off at the entrance. Some wander amazed and contented for years without realizing their predicament, for the labyrinth serves opiates of all varieties to the gullible. The Minotaur will find them eventually in whatever trough they slurp, ramming his horns into their flabby bodies, no matter which Ariadne they cry out to in mortification.

Then there are the labyrinths of the telephone system in which the enquirer, seeking perhaps some elusive information, is shunted from dead ends to busy signals, endlessly ringing phones, answering services, decoys, changed numbers, operators who refer the caller to further sequences of new numbers, and so on. And there are labyrinths beneath the streets, in the waterworks and sewer systems, or above the streets in the coursing of electrical pulses and the wave forms of broadcasting, amplifying and cancelling each other in turn. Here is the real labyrinth of modern life, from which one seeks release in weekend visits to the country.

But there, too, stands another labyrinth, the densely productive labyrinth of nature, the jungle, the forest, the swamp with its myriad forms of life, even the tall grass and weeds that crowd in on the garden and ploughed field, erupting from nowhere to choke out all botanical designing.

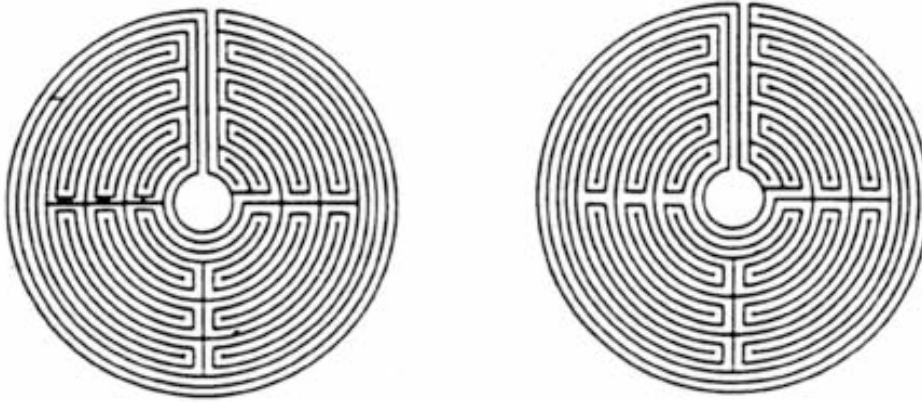
And finally there is the labyrinth of your own body: of the ear, of the stomach, of veins and arteries, neurons and synapses

leading to the brain with its millions of tiny charges, memories and traces of half-comprehended or half-forgotten thoughts.

What the youth found and finds outside himself, the middle-aged person finds within. Thus the labyrinth is an invertible figure, both exotopic (outward facing as in the life of the adventurer) and endotopic (inward facing as in meditation). Both processes are necessary in the search for individuation. But how could anyone presume to arrange a series of experiences suitable for everyone? The folly of the labyrinth is the folly of life: experiences rarely arrive at the moment when they could be most useful, that is, to stimulate existential change. Any arrangement of experiences in a linear sequence is bound to seem contrived, like an unrelieved exercise in religious dogma or an educational curriculum. The means of breaking it is the forking path, and the insertion of a sufficient number of these into the labyrinth immeasurably increases its complexity.

Like no other construction on earth, the labyrinth seeks to create maximal complexity and tension within minimal space. To be so near and yet so far from victory or from death – just a wall away – that is its appeal. One wrong turn and one could be lost forever; but by some miraculous accident of correct turns one might equally well find the treasure.

The original Cretan labyrinth was unicursal with a single path leading from the rim to the centre; or at least this is how it is presented in the innumerable motifs on Cretan seals and coins.



This has led some researchers to believe that such diagrams do not replicate the real labyrinth but suggest, by means of the number of turns to the left or right, the solution to the puzzle. This can be appreciated by removing the key. If, for instance, we take out a single straight line on the left side, the figure is at once exceedingly difficult to solve.

The Minoan labyrinth is usually depicted as being round, though the same network of passageways was sometimes presented in rectangular form. In all cases it was a very concentrated use of space, in fact a maximal use of space. Of course, building codes would prohibit the construction of a labyrinth today. Fire regulations would make that impossible. To circumvent these problems the circularity of the structure could be topographically altered into a snake-like construction spread over a wider area, perhaps even incorporating some open areas with topiary or other natural features.

The planning of any ritual space would invariably involve the magic of numbers, particularly as they might affect the volumes and shapes of the structure. There are countless studies of number mysticism as it affected the building of temples, cathedrals and shrines. The Golden Section, or some proportional series equivalent to it, has appeared repeatedly in architecture as has the Fibonacci series (1,2,3,5, etc.), which, as a matter of fact,

has been shown to be the design principle of the palace at Knossos, where it evidently extended beyond architecture to govern even the shapes of artifacts such as gaming tables.⁶ Seven is a restless number, the number of "Chance." Iamblichus calls it an "unwed virgin" because it is born neither of mother (of even number) nor of father (odd number). Nevertheless, seven has always had special significance in both Eastern and Western cultures because of its relationship with many natural phenomena. There are seven days of the week, seven colours in the spectrum, and seven tones in the scale. There are seven vowels (alpha, epsilon, eta, iota, omicron, upsilon and omega) and seven alterations in pronouncing them: with an acute, grave or circumflex accent; aspirated or unaspirated; short or long.⁷ Ancient Hindu, Persian, Caldean and Egyptian scriptures made numerous references to "seven worlds." The Phoenix was thought to have been reborn seven times.

Seven is said to be the number of primary concord (4:3) when presented as four numbers connected by three intervals. Multiples of seven are also significant. Four times seven is the duration of the lunar cycle. The conjunction of seven with four is particularly significant since it unites energetic instability with balance and order. Starting with the monad and doubling (1,2,4,8,16,32,64), the seventh number, sixty-four, brings us to the double quaternity of eight squared, a number of rich significance. Seven multiplied by itself (forty-nine) is the number of days the soul must remain in the *Bardo* state after death in Tibetan Buddhism. The audacity of constructing or reconstructing with mathematical precision such an experience as I have been describing is obvious; and yet such an attempt has been made, perhaps an impossible attempt, but an attempt nevertheless. The formula, in so far as we can understand it, is based on the square of the numeral 7: 49, divided in the following manner: 4 is

⁶ Donald A. Preziosi, "Harmonic Design in Minoan Architecture," *Fibonacci Quarterly*, VI, vi (1968), pp. 370-85.

⁷ Iamblichus, *The Theory of Arithmetic*, trans. Robin Waterhouse (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1988), p. 87ff.

the number of preparatory episodes before the labyrinth can be entered, of which this lecture, with all its faults and omissions, is evidently the first, to be followed by three others. Then it would appear that the labyrinth itself consists of a diminishing cycle of events as follows: an Emnead of Encounters, an Ogdoad of Trials, a Heptad of Experiences, a Hexad of Perceptions, a Pentad of Contemplations, a Tetrad of Arcana, a Trio of Deceptions, a Duet of Divinities and a Finale. In what order these vents manifest themselves we cannot be certain. In fact the entire arrangement is conjectural since no one knows the actual makeup of the labyrinth except Daedalus, who built it, and Asterion, who inhabits it. But if we are correct in our assumptions, the following pattern emerges:

7 times 7 equals 49

4 plus 45 equals 49

4 plus 5 equals 9

9 plus 4 equals 13

1 plus 3 equals 4 (the Quaternity)

4 minus 3 equals 1 (the Monad: Asterion)

To those who think our calculations immoderately simple we will respectfully take comfort in Plato's comment that "Daedalus would look a fool if he were to be born now and produce the kind of works that gave him his reputation."⁸ Despite changes of circumstance or fashion, each artificer labours with his futile genius. And that is all that is possible in this imperfect world.

In conclusion, I apologize if these opening remarks have seemed confusing or mystifying. As Plutarch has said: "What lies beyond is full of marvels and unrealities..." For those wishing to undertake the journey from darkness to light, application forms have been left on the table.

2. Minotaur-Asterion

⁸ Plato, *Greater Hippias*, trans. B. Jowett (Oxford, 1953), p. 282a.

The lecturer packs up his notes. Suddenly there is darkness. Then slowly, in a dull spotlight, the contours of a head appear. Who can say what it looks like? There is nothing frightening in its demeanor. No mask. A neutral face, mature, sexless, but strange, owing to the protuberance of three small horns on the brow.

Asterion: ONE OF US IS A PHANTOM. WE DO NOT BOTH EXIST. FOR US BOTH TO EXIST, THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE TWO WORLDS, YOURS AND MINE, WHICH IS IMPOSSIBLE. SO WE ARE MERELY EMBODIMENTS OF ONE ANOTHER ON DIFFERENT PLANES, GIVING US EACH AN ILLUSION OF INDEPENDENCE. IN REALITY WE ARE THE SAME, HEARING TOGETHER, SEEING TOGETHER, MOVING TOGETHER, KNOWING TOGETHER.

ALL YOUR LIFE YOU HAVE FEARED FACING ME. SUDDENLY I AM HERE, YOUR DELIVERER. WOULD YOU KILL ME THEN? CUT ME IN HALF AND I AM TWO: MINOTAUR AND ASTERION. BUT THE KILLER AND THE KILLED ARE ONE, AND THE KNIFE THAT KILLS IS ALSO THAT WHICH IS KILLED. IS THIS FOLLY? AM I A DECEPTION?

MINOTAUR:ASTERION — DARKNESS AND LIGHT. TWO FORCES UNITED IN ONE GOD. TO KNOW THE LIGHT YOU MUST SEEK THE DARKNESS; FOR A KNOWN GOD IS NO GOD. I AM THE LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS. I AM THE DARKNESS IN THE LIGHT. NEITHER IS VANQUISHED BY FORCE; ONLY BY ACCEPTANCE AND SUBMISSION.

THE DEATH OF THE GOD IS ALSO THE BIRTH OF GOD. AND KNOW

THIS ALSO: THERE ARE NO GODS ON EARTH IF YOU ARE NOT YOURSELF A GOD.

I AM THE THOUGHT YOU ARE THINKING. IF YOU WOULD KNOW YOURSELF, DIE BEFORE YOU DIE; DARE TO ENTER THE DARKNESS BEFORE YOU AND WITHIN YOU. TRACE THE LABYRINTH OF YOUR DAYS.

I WILL BE WITH YOU EVEN UNTO DEATH, POURING LIGHT INTO YOUR LIFE UNTIL THE GREAT EXTINGUISHER FRACTURES YOUR SPIRIT AND SENDS IT HURLING THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE.

The figure withdraws. Eventually the light returns. Those who wish may pick up copies of the application form for a visit to the labyrinth, mentioned by the professor.

The person at the back of the hall picks up a copy and departs.

3. Application

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Date of birth _____

Sex _____

Education _____

Religious affiliation _____

Allergies or medical problems _____

Answer the following questions in as much detail as possible.

1. WHY DO I WISH TO EXPERIENCE ASTERION?
2. WHAT DO I BRING TO OFFER TO THE EXPERIENCE?
3. WHAT DOES FEAR MEAN TO ME?

4. WHAT DOES COURAGE MEAN TO ME?
5. WHAT DOES PAIN MEAN TO ME? WHAT ARE ITS POSITIVE AND WHAT ARE ITS NEGATIVE QUALITIES?
6. WHAT AM I PREPARED TO SACRIFICE IN MY LIFE?
7. HOW DOES THE THOUGHT OF DEATH AFFECT MY LIFE?

The questions are answered, and the application is mailed to an address provided.

4. THE MEETING

Those whose applications are accepted (which does not mean everyone) are informed by return mail. A date, time, and meeting place are given. Applicants are also provided with a general outline of what to expect and how to prepare themselves.

At the appointed time, the participants are met, blindfolded and transported to the site of the labyrinth, the exact location of which they should never know. Arriving there the blindfold is removed, and also the shoes. Perhaps there is also an appropriate change of clothing. The entrance is indicated without speech and each neophyte enters the labyrinth alone.

Patria 8: ASTERION

First Series: THE ENNEAD OF ENCOUNTERS

The Entrance: SINA
Encounter 1: HELIM
 Passage: SCRIPTA MINOA
Encounter 2: THETIS
 Passage: MEM
Encounter 3: PHAEDRA
 Passage: RAMESE
Encounter 4: ARIA
Encounter 5: SHADOW
Encounter 6: HARUT-MARUT (The Gallery of the Deceived)
Encounter 7: ICARUS
 Passage: MASEROTH (Loops)
Encounter 8: THESEUS
 Passage: HYMN TO NIGHT
Encounter 9: DAEDALUS

Second Series: THE OGDOAD OF TRIALS

Trial 1: FIR'AUN (The Old Man)
Trial 2: MIGDOL (The Tower)
Trial 3: RAPHAKA (The Sword)
Trial 4: AZEROTH (The Magnetic Currents)
Trial 5: THE GOLDEN GOBLETS
Trial 6: IROTH (Isolation)
Trial 7: OPHION (The Lizard)
 Passage: CHOIR OF WORMS

Trial 8: NASÚN

Third Series: THE HEPTAD OF EXPERIENCES

Experience 1: BUTHON (The Palace of Mythical Beings)

Experience 2: CASA DEL LABYRINTHO

Experience 3: SOCHOTH (The Headless Wonder)

Experience 4: FIR BALOOM (Feet of Baal)

Experience 5: KIBROTH (Tombs of Lust)

Passage: KA-BRAK

Experience 6: HERACLITE

Experience 7: THE PALACE OF GREATEST CLARITY

Fourth Series: THE HEXAD OF PERCEPTIONS

Perception 1: RATHMA-RAPHADON (The Education of the Hands & Feet)

Perception 2: EOS

Perception 3: BELLUM (Forest of Brass)

Perception 4: QUADRIX (The Spice Garden)

Perception 5: MATHARA (Education of the Mouth)

Perception 6: MYTHOS (The Immaculate Perception)

Fifth Series: THE PENTAD OF CONTEMPLATIONS

Contemplation 1: MANDALA

Contemplation 2: OKEANOS

Contemplation 3: LAPIS (The Jewelstone Circle)

Contemplation 4: ALUSH (Sap of the Moon Plant)

Contemplation 5: PAI-K'O HSIANG-YIN (The Incense Clock)

Passage: PALINDROME

Sixth Series: THE TETRAD OF ARCANA

Arcanum 1: KHIDR (The Verdant One)

Arcanum 2: BANAIM (Balance)

Arcanum 3: THESEUS'S BOAT

Arcanum 4: THE SPHERE OF SELFHOOD

Seventh Series: THE TRIO OF DECEPTIONS

Deception 1: ANPU

Deception 2: THE THREE HORNS

Deception 3: THE TRIALOGUE OF LOVERS

Eighth Series: THE DUET OF DEITIES

Revelation: ASTERION

Preparation: AQUASTER

Finale: O NOBLY-BORN



1. ANPU HELIM

2. THETIS

MEM

3. PHAEDRA

RAMESE

4. ARIADNE

7. ICARUS

5. SHADOW

8. THESEUS

6. HARUT-MARUT

9. DAEDALUS

HYMN TO NIGHT

TECHNE

First Series: THE ENNEAD OF ENCOUNTERS

The Entrance: SINA.

The neophyte enters the labyrinth through the jaws of a black wolf, set between the inclined legs of a white woman.

Crawling through the entrance the neophyte descends down a corridor, wide enough for only one person to move through at a time. It is dark, but not totally. In a niche where the passage turns, stands the jackal-headed god Anubis, slightly illuminated by the light from without.

Encounter 1: HELIM

Anubis: I AM ANPU, GUARDIAN OF THE ANDROGYNOUS ENTRANCE THROUGH WHICH YOU HAVE JUST PASSED. YOU HAVE BEEN SELECTED TO ATTEMPT TO SOLVE THE RIDDLE OF THE LABYRINTH. IT IS AN HONOUR TO BE ALLOWED TO PASS UNMOLESTED THROUGH THE FANGS OF WOLF AND THE *VAGINA DENTATA* OF THE MOTHER.

EVERY SITE OF INITIATION, EVERY SANCTUM OR TEMPLE, IS SO GUARDED, BY DRAGONS, BEASTS, DEVIL-SLAYERS AND GRAGOYLES, TO PREVENT THE UNINVITED FROM ENTERING.⁹ WE ARE THE THRESHOLD PROTECTORS OF THE HIGHER SILENCES WITHIN.

Anubis turns and calls into the darkness, his voice echoing seven

⁹ Reference: Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Princeton University Press, 1972, pp.91-92.

times into the distant darkness.

Anubis: O BEINGS OF THE CORRIDORS OF THE DEAD. IT IS I, ANPU,
WHO CALLS TO YOU. I HAVE WITH ME A NEOPHYTE, NOBY BORN,
WHO WOULD BE INSTRUCTED IN THE WAYS OF DEATH AND LIFE.

KNOWING THE RISKS, KNOWING THE PENALTY, KNOWING THE
REWARD, FEARING NOT DEATH IN THE JAWS OF MINOTAUR OR
SUFFOCATION FROM NEGLECT, KNOWING THAT HAVING ENTERED
THERE CAN BE NO EXIT BY THIS ENTRANCE, THE BEING I SEND
TO YOU WOULD ATTEMPT TO PASS THE FORTY-NINE STAGES INTO
THE CLEAR LIGHT OF KNOWING THAT OPENS BEYOND DARKNESS.
RECEIVE THEM AS YOU WILL.¹⁰

Anubis turns to face the neophyte.

YOU HAVE COME VOLUNTARILY AS OTHER HAVE COME BEFORE YOU.
WHAT YOU EXPERIENCE WILL DEPEND ON YOUR PREPAREDNESS AND
THE TRUST YOU PLACE IN YOUR OWN ABILITIES. YOU WILL BE
HINDERED, BUT YOU WILL ALSO RECEIVE HELP. THE REMAINDER
IS UP TO YOU. PASS NOW INTO THE DARKNESS.

Passage: SCRIPTA MINOA

The passage descends between rough walls of stone, terminating in
a narrow entrance to a chamber which is ten feet long and six feet
wide, through which the light of a lamp can be seen burning. The

¹⁰ Compare Editing Unit 13 of RA.

walls of the chamber are completely covered by the nineteen tablets of the Ectocretan script describing the story of Theseus and Aridne. At the far end of the room there is a low doorway with a heavy stone lintel above it. The raised arms of a woman are painted on either side. Before the doorway stands Thetis.

Encounter 2: THETIS

Thetis wears a loose-fitting gown of pale blue and green. Her hair is adorned by a delicate crown of coral. As she speaks she moves about the chamber drawing the neophyte's attention to the inscriptions of the story she is narrating. (The inscriptions in Ectocretan are those from *Dicamus et Labyrinthos*.)

Thetis: YOU HAVE BEGUN YOUR JOURNEY TOWARDS ASTERION. AS MOTHER OF THE SEA AND DISTANT COUSIN OF THESEUS,¹¹ I KNOW THE STORY, WRITTEN ON THE WALLS AROUND YOU.

LONG AGO, ON THE ISLAND OF CRETE, PASIPHAE, THE MOON QUEEN, RULED A MIGHTY EMPIRE TOGETHER WITH HER CONSORT, MINOS. MINOS WAS A CRUEL AND RUTHLESS DESPOT. SAILING THE AEGEAN SEA FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER HE HELD MANY LANDS IN SUBJECTION. BUT HE SAILED CARELESSLY, FAILING TO MAKE THE NECESSARY OBLATIONS TO THE SEA GOD, POSEIDON. IN REVENGE, POSEIDON SENT A GREAT WHITE BULL OUT OF THE WAVES AND AFFLICTED PASIPHAE WITH A DESIRE TO MATE WITH IT. IN HER LUST THE QUEEN PERSUADED THE COURT

¹¹ Robert Graves points out that both Thetis and Theseus derive their names from *tithenai*, the Greek verb meaning "to dispose" or "to order."

ARCHITECT, DAEDALUS, TO CONSTRUCT A COW IN WHICH SHE MIGHT HIDE TO ATTRACT THE ANIMAL, FOR IT IS WELL-KNOWN THAT IN ORDER TO MATE WITH A GOD ONE MUST FIRST BECOME AN ANIMAL. AT LENGTH PASIPHAE GAVE BIRTH TO A HYBRID CREATURE, HALF MAN, HALF BULL, CALLED MINOTAUR. SOME CALLED IT ASTERION BECAUSE IT WAS THE OFFSPRING OF THE MOON QUEEN AND THE SEA GOD. BUT MINOS WAS JEALOUS AND HAD DAEDALUS CREATE A LABYRINTH IN WHICH TO HIDE IT. SOMEWHERE IN THIS MAZE OF DARK PASSAGES AND DEAD ENDS THE MINOTAUR LIVED. TO FEED IT MINOS SENT IN YOUTHS AND MAIDENS, HUMAN SACRIFICES TAKEN FROM THE LANDS UNDER HIS RULE.

ONE OF THESE INTENDED VICTIMS WAS THESEUS, SON OF AEGEUS, KING OF ATHENS. BUT WHEN THESEUS ARRIVED ON CRETE, MINOS'S DAUGHTER, ARIADNE, FELL IN LOVE WITH HIM. SHE GAVE HIM A THREAD BY WHICH, HAVING MADE HIS WAY TO THE HEART OF THE LABYRINTH AND HAVING KILLED MINOTAUR-ASTERION, HE MIGHT MAKE HIS ESCAPE BY RETRACING HIS STEPS. SOME SAY ARIADNE ENTERED THE LABYRINTH TO ASSIST HIM; OTHERS SAY IT WAS THE SOUND OF HER VOICE AS SHE SANG TO HIM THAT SECURED HIS SAFETY, BUT EPIMENIDES SAYS IT WAS THE LIGHT OF ARIADNE'S EIGHT-STAR DIADEM THAT LED HIM OUT.

THAT IS THE STORY AS FAR AS IT IS KNOWN. THERE IS MUCH THAT IS NOT KNOWN. LOOK HOW THE INSCRIPTIONS ARE

FRACTURED AND BROKEN AWAY, ENDING IN OBSCURITY AND
CONFUSION.

AND NOW YOU HAVE ARRIVED AND I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER YOU
BELONG TO THIS STORY OR HOW YOU CAME HERE. WE FIND
OURSELVES IN A FABLE OF IMAGINATION STRUGGLING WITH
TRUTH AND IT IS NOT FOR ME TO SORT THEM OUT. ALL I KNOW
IS THAT RETURNING TO THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY IS
IMPOSSIBLE. THEREFORE YOU MUST PROCEED.

Passage: MEM

Thetis motions the neophyte to pass through a low doorway embraced
by the painted arms of a Nereid. The sound of water. The walls of
the tunnel grow wet. The lapping of light waves, as if on pebbles,
can be heard. Gradually it will grow stronger, as if a
subterranean ocean lies in the distance. Soon the neophyte is
standing in water which seems to be rising with each step.

Encounter 3: PHAEDRA

Suddenly a shaft of light appears above, illuminating a young
girl.

Phaedra: YOU'LL DROWN IF YOU GO THAT WAY. QUICK, UP HERE!

The neophyte sees by the light that it is possible to climb out of
the canal.

Phaedra: THAT DIRECTION LEADS NOWHERE. HERE, LET ME DRY YOUR FEET. PHAEDRA IS MY NAME. CAN YOU PRONOUNCE THAT? I KNOW MY SISTER IS MORE FAMOUS, BUT I'M MORE BEAUTIFUL. ANYWAY, THE ORACLES HAVE PREDICTED THAT I, NOT ARIADNE, WILL MARRY TEHSEUS, EVEN THOUGH SHE LOVES HIM AND I DO NOT.

HE THINKS OF HIMSELF AS THE COMPLETE MAN, CAPABLE OF ANYTHING. HE SEES THE LABYRINTH AS A PLOT AGAINST HIM AND HE WANTS TO SMASH IT. BUT THAT'S NOT THE WAY.

THE LABYRINTH NEEDS TO BE FONDLED LIKE A LIVING CREATURE, LIKE A BODY. CURVES FOLDING IN ANTICIPATION, MUSCLES TREMBLING WHEN TOUCHED, BLOOD AND SALIVA IN MOTION, OPENINGS TO BE ENTERED, CORRIDORS TO BE CARESSED, SENSATIONS TO BE AROUSED ... COOL ... RESPONSIVE, JOYFUL ...

WILL THEY EVER COME AGAIN,
THE LONG NIGHTS, THE LONG WHITE NIGHTS,
FULL OF DANCING UNDER THE CLOUD OF STARS?

WHEN SHALL I FEEL THE DEW ON MY THROAT,
AND THE WIND STREAM IN MY HAIR?

WHEN SHALL MY FEET DANCE
IN THE DIM EXPANSES,

LIKE THE HOOVES OF FAUNS,
ALONE IN THE GRASS AND LOVELINESS?

LEAPING FOR JOY,
FREE OF THE HUNT,
FREE OF THE BEATERS,
FREE OF THE NETS AND HOUNDS,
FREE OF ALL CONFINEMENTS
WHERE MEN ARE.¹²

LISTEN TO ME. I CAME TO WARN YOU. ARIADNE AND I USED TO
PLAY HERE BEFORE DAEDALUS TURNED THE PLACE INTO A PRISON
FOR THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS. I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A LAST
CHANCE. THIS LITTLE OPENING IN THE WALL — IT'S WHERE I
ENTERED. YOU CAN LEAVE WITH ME NOW IF YOU WISH. THERE'S
NO OTHER WAY OUT. DAEDALUS HAS SEEN TO THAT. I COULD
SHOW YOU AROUND THE COURT. I'M A PRINCESS TOO, YOU KNOW.
AND I COULD SHOW YOU A FEW OTHER THINGS BESIDES. ARE YOU
COMING? YOU HESITATE...MAKE UP YOUR MIND. I'M
LEAVING...I'M LEAVING...I'M LEAVING...

Phaedra crawls out through the hole in the wall slowly and
seductively. Then carefully replaces the stone while still
enticing the neophyte.

Passage: RAMESE

Darkness. In the distance the voice of a woman is heard singing.

¹² Paraphrase of Euripedes *Bacchae* 862 by R.M.S.

To locate the source, the neophyte must pass down a corridor of brick walls arranged very close together in a zig-zag fashion. Gradually they fan out into a largish room, illuminated with a bluish light.

Encounter 4: ARIA

At the far end of this space stands a figure, backlit so that it throws a shadow on the floor before the neophyte. It is impossible to see any features clearly. The light radiates with changing colours which seem to suggest the eight-star crown of Ariadne. Simultaneously the voice of a soprano is heard singing the opening aria from *Hymn to Night*,¹³ accompanied by chamber orchestra.

Ariadne: DAS ALLERFREULICHE LICHT -
(Heartwarming Light -
STRAHLEN - WOGEN - FARBEN.
beams - waves - colours.
ATMET ES DIE RIESENWELT -
The whole world breathes it -
ATMET ES DIE RASTLOSEN GESTIRNE
the restless stars, floating
DIE IN SEINEM MEERE SCHWIMMEN -
in their azure flood, breathe it -
ATMET ES DER FUNKELNDE STEIN -
the glittering stone breathes it,
ATMET ES DIE SINGENDE PFLANZE
the sensuous plants breathe it,

¹³ The text is by Novalis.

UND DAS TIER -
and the animals.
UND VOR ALEM
But above all,
DIE HERLICHEN FREMDLINGE
the glorious stranger
MIT DEN SINNVOLLEN AUGEN
with the thoughtful eyes,
DEM SCHWEBENDEN GANGE
the hesitant walk,
UND DEM TÖNENDEN MUNDE -
and the singing voice,
WIE EIN KÖNIG.
breathes it like a king.)

(5'00")

The light on Ariadne begins to become more intensely blue and to fade out.

ABWÄRTS WENDE ICH MICH,
(I turn aside
ZU DER HEILIGEN, UNAUSSPRECHLICHEN,
to the holy, ineffable,
GEHEIMNISSVOLLEN NACHT.
mysterious night.)

(1'00")

The voice fades out, leaving only the sound of an Aeolian harp in the darkness.

Encounter 5: SHADOW

From the opposite side of the room, the voice of a woman is heard, speaking. A light behind her casts a long shadow across the floor, almost to the place where the neophyte is standing. The figure is now seen to be wearing a black tuxedo with a top hat. The voice echoes as if the space behind it consisted of limitless empty chambers and corridors.

Shadow: YOU HAVE BEEN ATTRACTED BY THE SINGING. YES, HERE NEAR THE ENTRANCE, IN THE LAST FLICKERING OF LIGHT BEFORE THE BLACKNESS, HERE WHERE ARIADNE AND THESEUS PARTED, WE MEET. YOU MAY CALL ME SHADOW.

YOU HAVE A BODY WHICH CASTS A SHADOW. NOW OUR SHADOWS BLEND. I AM YOUR SHADOW AS WELL AS MY OWN, AND THEREFORE I AM YOURSELF, OR RATHER, THE SHADOWY SIDE OF YOURSELF, THE BLACK SIDE YOU RARELY RECOGNIZE, THE REPRESSED, GUILT-RIDDEN SIDE. (Shadow laughs sardonically and the laughter echoes into the distance.) WHERE DOES SHADOW LIVE? IN THE LABAYRINTH OF COURSE. (Laughter.) AND WHAT IS THIS LABYRINTH: IT IS YOU TURNED INSIDE OUT.

EVERYONE HERE CAN BE FOUND IN YOUR OWN MIND AND BODY. ARIADNE, WHOSE VOICE ENCHANTS AND BEGUILES, COQUETISH PHAEDRA, FULL OF MISCHIEF, FEARLESS THESEUS, WHO LUSTS AFTER EVERYTHING, AND DAEDALUS, WHOSE INTRICATE MIND IS ALWAYS TICKING WITH SOME NEW INTRIGUE OR DECEPTION.

ME? I COME FROM THE DEEPEST REALM OF NIGHT, AS YOU WILL EVENTUALLY LEARN. TO MOVE THROUGH THE LABYRINTH YOU OUGHT TO NEED NO GUIDE, BUT YOU ARE SO INEXPERIENCED IN THIS DELICATE OPERATION THAT I FORESEE YOU WILL NEED MANY KINDS OF ASSISTANCE. THIS HAS ALL BEEN ARRANGED. BUT ABOVE ALL, REMEMBER ONE THING: ONLY A FOOL CARRIES A LIGHT INTO DARKNESS. THE WISE PERSON STANDS IN THE DARKNESS AND LEARNS.

ON EITHER SIDE OF ME IS A DOOR. PASS THROUGH ONE AND MOVE INTO A REALM OF NIGHTMARES. TAKE THE OTHER AND PASS INTO A STATE OF BLISS. WHICH DO YOU CHOOSE? CHOOSE NOW, QUICKLY - MY PATIENCE IS SHORT.

Shadow laughs derisively as the light fades and two doorways are illuminated, one glowing red, the other glowing green.

Encounter 6: HARUT-MARUT¹⁴ (The Gallery of the Deceived)

Both doors lead to the same place. Entering by either, the neophyte finds a space filled with pastel colours and subdued lights. Sheaves of flowers shine with supernatural luminescence in tall vases decorated with serpentine whorls. Low couches are scattered on rich carpets and above hang burners filled with spiced incense, the fumes of which clog the vision as well as the nostrils. On the carpets and couches figures recline, their bodies drooping and sometimes touching one another with erotic

¹⁴ Harut and Marut, angels of Babylon sent to deceive, mentioned in the *Koran* 2:102.

suggestiveness. They seem drugged; their eyelids are heavy. The experienced observer will notice many characters here from earlier *Patria* works: Primavera Nicolson, Hieronymous Knicker, Eddie le Chasseur, Nellie Frencheater, Cecil Blish, Massimo Quigg, Sam Galuppi, Zip the Idiot, Hermann Geiger-Torel, Little Bobby Cooper and other victims of the artificier's feverish imagination. Some are eating from silver dishes or drinking from crystal glasses. A few, who seem to be children, smoke water-pipes. Many of the figures are anatomically distorted, with bulbous or atrophied limbs, perhaps even with eyes in their stomachs or with two heads. Still, the atmosphere is one of tranquil relaxation, and soft electronic music mixes with the incense, luring one to remain. Passing through the Gallery of the Deceived the neophyte finds in one corner a tray of glasses filled with green liquid, over which is an elaborately-lettered plaque reading:

WE, THE INMATES OF THE GALLERY OF THE DECEIVED, WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK TO YOU BUT WE HAVE NO TONGUES. WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO TRY A LITTLE AMBROSIA PREPARED BY INNANA? IT DEADENS THE PAIN. HERE WE ARE HAPPY, CONTENT TO LOVE AND DREAM UNTIL OUR TIME RUNS OUT. SOME OF US HAVE BEEN HERE FOR YEARS. SOME WERE BORN HERE. THERE IS NO WAY OUT, JUST USELESS GROPING UNTIL YOU DIE. BETTER TO RELAX AMONG FRIENDS. WON'T YOU REMAIN? ONE DRAFT OF DELICIOUS AMBROSIA...

Across the bottom of the plaque a childish scrawl reads:

PRESS THE SIDE OF THE MIRROR TO ESCAPE

ICARUS

Encounter 7: ICARUS

The neophyte touches the side of a large mirror beside the plaque. It swings open and some distance down a passageway behind it a young boy's voice is heard:

Icarus: QUICKLY! REPLACE THE MIRROR. THE GALLERY OF THE DECEIVED IS ONLY FOR VICTIMS. REPLACE THE MIRROR AND COME THIS WAY, DOWN HERE, UNDER THE LIGHT.

The neophyte moves down a corridor, reaching a place where two enormous pairs of wings are mounted under a cupola. A spot of light in the apex of the cupola fans down to illuminate the wings. The boy's voice seems to come from a harness somewhere in the upper pair of wings.

Icarus: BEAUTIFUL AREN'T THEY. MY FATHER BUILT THEM. MY FATHER, DAEDALUS. THIS IS HOW WE ARE GOING TO ESCAPE. DO YOU KNOW MY FATHER? HE IS THE ARCHITECT OF EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU. EVERYONE SAYS HE'S BRILLIANT. THEY'RE ALL AFRAID OF HIM; EVEN MINOTAUR DOESN'T DARE TOUCH HIM BUT ALLOWS HIM TO GO ABOUT THE LABYRINTH ADJUSTING A MECHANISM HERE OR A MIRROR THERE. AND WHEN HE IS FINISHED WE'LL ESCAPE TOGETHER AND FLY TO THE SUN, THERE, THROUGH THAT LITTLE HOLE. DON'T ASK ME HOW WE'LL DO IT, BUT FATHER KNOWS. HE CAN THREAD A STRING THROUGH THE WHORLS OF A SEA-SHELL. PERHAPS YOU'LL MEET HIM. HE'S JUST ON DOWN THE CORRIDOR FIXING A FEW MECHANICAL

TRICKS. DON'T BE AFRAID, EVEN IF HE SEEMS COLD AND
INDIFFERENT TOWARDS YOU. IT'S ONLY HIS WAY. AND IF YOU
DO SEE HIM, TELL HIM TO HURRY UP. TELL HIM I'M WAITING
FOR HIM. I WANT TO FEEL THE WIND IN MY HAIR AND THE SUN
ON MY SKIN.

LISTEN, IF YOU KEEP YOUR RIGHT HAND TOUCHING THE WALL,
YOUR LEFT HAND WILL ALWAYS REMAIN FREE. YOU SHOULD TRY
TO KEEP SOMETHING FREE HERE. LEFT-HANDED FORKS COULD
LEAD TO DISASTER. AND BEWARE OF UNLIT PASSAGES.

PERHAPS WE'LL MEET AGAIN IN THE SUNLIGHT, AND I COULD
SHOW YOU HOW TO FLY. PEOPLE SAY IT'S IMPOSSIBLE BUT
FATHER SAYS "IMPOSSIBLE" IS A WORD THAT BELONGS ONLY IN
THE VOCABULARY OF FOOLS. AND IF YOU MEET MY FATHER,
REMEMBER TO ADDRESS HIM AS "MAESTRO." HE LIKES TO BE
FLATTERED — AND HE DESERVES IT.

Passage: MASEROTH (Loops)

The neophyte again moves down the corridor, right hand on the
wall, as instructed. The corridor now forks and loops back on
itself. Various ramps and inclined surfaces may also disorient the
visitor. In the distance fragments of Ariadne's *Hymn to Night* aria
are heard.

Ariadne: ABWÄRTS WENDE ICH MICH,
(I turn aside
ZU DER HEILIGEN, UNAUSSPRECHLICHEN,

to the holy, ineffable,

GEHEIMNISSVOLLEN NACHT.

mysterious night.

FERNAB LIEGT DER WELT, IN EINE TIEFE GRUFT VERSENKT -

Far below lies the world. Sunken in a deep pit -

WIE WÜST UND EINSAM IHRE STELLE!

Waste and solitary is its state.

TIEFE WEHMUT WEHT IN DER SAITEN DER BRUST.

Deep sadness stirs the strings of the heart.

FERNEN DER ERINNERUNG, WÜNSCHE DER JUGEND,

Distance of memory, desires of youth,

DER KINDHEIT TRÄUME, KOMMEN IN GRAUEN KLEIDERN

dreams of childhood, come dressed in grey,

WIE ABENDNEBEL NACH DER SONNE UNTERGANG.

like the evening mist after sunset.)

(4'00")

Encounter 8: THESEUS

From somewhere in one of the loops of the tunnel a man's voice can be heard approaching.

Theseus: THE VOICE...THE THREAD...THIS IS THE WAY TO RISE. THIS IS THE WAY THE SUN REJECTS THE SHADOW.¹⁵ TO ACCOMPLISH THE DEED ONE NEEDS TO BE BEWITCHED. DARK DEED. WOMAN SOMEWHERE IN THE LIGHT OR HALF LIGHT, WAITING FOR IT TO BE DONE, SINGING SO SWEETLY THAT MY FINGERS ITCH TO KILL FOR HER.

¹⁵ A fragment of Michelangelo, who was actually speaking of Daedalus, not Theseus.

YES, I'LL SUCCEED. AND WHEN I'M FINISHED, I'LL BRING
FLOWERS TO ADORN YOU ... THE VOICE HAS GONE ... BUT WHERE
ARE YOU? I'VE LOST YOU. SING AGAIN TO GUIDE ME IN MY
MISSION.

Suddenly the muscular body of a man lunges past the neophyte and
rushes into the darkness.

Passage: HYMN TO NIGHT

An extended series of straight passages angling in different
directions through which the neophyte will pass listening to Ariadne
sing the concluding moments of *Hymn to Night*. One wall is decorated
in black arabesques and geometrical patterns on white backgrounds,
the other is decorated in white arabesques and patterns on black
backgrounds. The text of the song (by Novalis) may be embedded in
the patterns.

Ariadne: ZUGEMESSEN WARD DEM LIGHT SEINE ZEIT -
ABER ZEITLOS UND RAUMLOS IST DER NACHT HERRSCHAFT!
(Light had its measured time,
but timeless and spaceless is the dominion of the Night!
FÜHLT ES IN DER GOLDNEN FLUT DER TRAUBEN,
IN DES MANDELBAUMS WUNDERÖL,
UND DEM BRAUNEN SAFTE DES MOHNS.
Feel it in the golden flood of the grapes
in the almond tree's wondrous oil,
and in the brown juice of the poppy.
PREIS DER WELTKÖNIGIN,

DER HOLDE VERKÜNDIGERIN HEILIGER WELTEN.

Praise to the Queen of Night,
the high herald of sacred realms.

SIE SENDET MICH DICH - ZARTE GELIEBTE.

She sends me to thee - tender beloved.

NUN WACH ICH - DENN ICH BIN DEIN UND MEIN -

Now I awaken - for I am thine and mine -

DU HAST DIE NACHT MIR ZUM LEBEN VERKÜNDERT -

MICH ZUM MENSCHEN GEMACHT -

You have proclaimed the Night as life -

and made me human

ZEHRE MIT GEISTERFLUT MEINEM LEIB -

DASS ICH LUFTIG MIT DIR INNIGER MICH MISCHE

UND DANN EWIG DIE BRAUTNACHT WÄHRT.

Consume my body with spirit-fire

that I may fuse my inmost being with thee

in the eternal bridal night.

NUN WEISS ICH WENN DER LETZTE MORGEN SEIN WIRD -

WENN DAS LICHT NICHT MEHR DIE NACHT UND DIE LIEBE SCHEUCHT

- WENN DER SCHLUMMER EWIG EIN TRAUM SEIN WIRD.

Now I know when the final morning will be -

when the light no longer frightens away Night and Love -

when slumber shall be an eternal dream.

GELOBT SEI DIE NACHT! GELOBT DER EWIGE SCHLUMMER!

EWIG IST DER DAUER DER SCHLAF -

HEILIGER SCHLAF.

Praised be eternal Night!

Praised be eternal Slumber!

Eternal is the duration of Sleep -

Holy Sleep.

(6'15")

The singing concludes but the aeolian harp continues softly. Everything is dark now, but the panels glow in swirls of phosphorescent paint.

Encounter 9: DAEDALUS

A man is seen adjusting a mechanism of some kind. He has an enormously elongated head and his body seems to give off a faint whirring noise like that of computer peripherals. This is Daedalus:

Daedalus: FOOL! WHO DARES TO CONFRONT ME? FOR YEARS I'VE LABOURED TO CONTROL HUMAN PASSION. BEFORE I INVENTED THE SAW, AND THE COMPASS AND THE POTTER'S WHEEL, HUMANS WERE BARBARIANS. THEY'LL REMEMBER MY NAME WHEN THEY START DATING CIVILIZATION. THE MECHANICAL TOYS I MADE FOR ARIADNE AND PHAEDRA WILL WHIRL IN PERPETUAL MOTION FOREVER. ABSOLUTE PERFECTION!

AND NOW THIS, THE MOST STUPENDOUS CREATION OF MY CAREER: A MAZE IN WHICH THE HUBRIS OF HUMANITY MAY STIFLE ITSELF. A MIRROR HERE, A TRAP DOOR THERE. WALLS THAT SHIFT THEIR POSITION UNPREDICTABLY, CONFRONTING EVERY ASPIRATION WITH A COUNTER MOVEMENT, SHIFTING IT UPWARD, DOWNWARD OR IN ALL DIRECTIONS AT ONCE, TAXING THE INTELLIGENCE AND THE IMAGINATION UNTIL THE BRAIN BURSTS.

AH, ANOTHER VISITOR HAS COME TO STUMBLE THROUGH. COME
HERE. I'LL OPEN THE DOOR FOR YOU TO PASS INTO OBLIVION.

THEY SAY THERE WAS A CHINESE INVENTOR WHO CARVED A
BEAUTIFUL PAGODA AND HAD HIMSELF ENSHRINED IN IT, TO HIS
OWN EVERLASTING GLORY. I'VE CONSIDERED THAT. THE PERFECT
SYSTEM — TOTALLY INCOMPREHENSIBLE IN ITS PERFECTION. ALL
GREAT CREATIONS SHOULD KEEP THEIR SECRETS IN ORDER NOT TO
BE ABUSED. HARM ONLY COMES WHEN IDEAS INSINUATE THEMSELVES
INTO THE REAL WORLD, INTO POLITICS AND MORALS. ONE INVENTS
CRUELTIES IN ORDER TO COME INTO CONTACT WITH GREAT
PROBLEMS, BUT SUCH CRUELTIES WERE NEVER INTENDED TO BE PUT
INTO PRACTICE, OR AT LEAST MUST NEVER BE DETECTED. THUS
MINOTAUR IS THE PERFECT CRIMINAL! NO TRACE OF THE CRIME,
IN FACT, NO CRIME! NO *HABEAS CORPUS*.

WELL, THAT'S YOUR WORRY, NOT MINE. I CAN LEAVE WHENEVER I
WISH. I'M JUST STAYING ON A LITTLE LONGER TO POLISH THE
PLACE UP AND MAKE SURE ALL THE DECEPTIONS ARE WORKING.
EVERYTHING IS SET AND READY TO TRIP INTO ACTION. LOOK
HERE! SLIDE THAT PANEL TO THE LEFT AND IT LEADS TO THE
OGDOAD OF TRIALS. SLIDE IT TO THE RIGHT AND IT WILL TAKE
YOU TO THE HEPTAD OF EXPERIENCES. IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE
WHICH YOU CHOOSE.

Second Series: THE OGDOAD OF TRIALS

Trial 1: FIR'AUN (The Old Man)

The passage is narrow and dark and is evidently rising. The walls are dry and flaky but the floor is smooth stone. At a certain point the tapping of a cane is heard approaching. When it stops the voice of an old man is heard, very close.

Old Man: I SMELL YOU. (Sniffs.) YOU SMELL OF INCENSE. (Sniffs again.) THE SWEETNESS OF WOMAN IS ABOUT YOU. SO YOU'VE BEEN WITH HER. WAS IT PHAEDRA YOU KISSED? THE WAY SHE USED TO LICK WHEN SHE KISSED ... IS SHE STILL YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL? I'VE LOST TRACK OF THE YEARS. I'M BLIND NOW, BUT THAT DOESN'T MATTER. I HEAR EVERYTHING. JUST NOW I HEARD THE WHIRRING OF WINGS BEATING AGAINST THE WALLS, SEEKING RELEASE. IT FELL BACK AND WAS STILL (The voice of Minotaur is heard in the distance.) DO YOU HEAR THAT? YOU WILL DIE, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, OR WANDER AIMLESSLY WAITING FOR IT.

THERE WAS ONCE A MAN WHO LEFT A PIECE OF HIS CLOTHING AT EVERY FORK HOPING TO RETRACE HIS WAY OUT. FINALLY HE WAS NAKED AND WANDERED IN CIRCLES, PISSING LIKE A DOG ON EVERY STONE UNTIL THE MINOTAUR FOUND HIM. OTHERS THINK THEY CAN ESCAPE BY FINDING THE SECRET FORMULA OF SEVEN WORDS. THEY END UP HOWLING GIBBERISH UNTIL THEY COME TO THE SAME END. THE FIRST THING MINOTAUR EATS IS YOUR TONGUE. SOMETIMES THAT'S ALL HE TAKES AND LETS YOU

WANDER ON WITHOUT IT. THEN PERHAPS JUST A HAND OR A FOOT. SELDOM IS ANYONE KILLED OUTRIGHT. IF YOU WANT TO SURVIVE AS LONG AS POSSIBLE, LEARN TO TRUST YOUR EARS AND YOUR NOSE.

FIR'AUN¹⁶ THEY CALL ME. I AM A KING. WHAT IS THAT TO YOU? I KILLED MINOTAUR HALF A LIFETIME AGO, BUT I LOST THE THREAD AND HAVE BEEN WANDERING IN THE DARK EVERY SINCE. NOW I AM JUST A RAT WITH A VOICE. IF YOU WANT TO GO ON, YOU'LL HAVE TO WALK OVER ME. GO ON, KICK ME OUT OF THE WAY ... OTHERWISE RETURN TO THE GALLERY OF THE DECEIVED AND AWAIT YOUR FATE ... GO ON, SHOW YOUR COURAGE.

A wheezing cough follows. Since there is no room to pass in the narrow corridor, the neophyte must climb over the old man, who groans under the weight.

Trial 2: MIGDOL (The Tower)¹⁷

The tunnel continues to incline upwards. A long ramp leads up to a high platform, illuminated in pale blue light. Suddenly there is a crashing noise - something between the sound of a great slab of stone being dragged and the roar of Minotaur. The light goes off and the neophyte is again in total darkness. A voice speaks from behind.

Hierophant: STOP! REMAIN WHERE YOU ARE. YOU HAVE SHOWN COURAGE TO

¹⁶ FIR'AUN - Arabic for Pharaoh

¹⁷ This, and some of the trials to follow, are mentioned in Paul Christian's *The History and Practice of Magic*, The Citadel Press, 1969.

HAVE COME THIS FAR. MANY ARE DECEIVED BY FIR'AUN, THE OLD MAN YOU HAVE JUST TRAMPLED TO DEATH. THAT WAS THE FIRST OF THE EIGHT TRIALS YOU MUST PASS.

I AM THE HIEROPHANT. I AM TO ADMINISTER THE TRIALS OF MIGDOL, RAPHAKA AND AZEROTH, JUST AS, LONG AGO, I PREPARED THESEUS IN THE SAME WAY FOR HIS CONFRONTATION WITH MINOTAUR. YOU MAY NOT SEE ME, BUT LISTEN CAREFULLY TO MY VOICE. YOUR TOTAL CONCENTRATION IS REQUIRED. IF YOUR COURAGE FALTERS FOR ONE MOMENT, YOU WILL PENETRATE NO DEEPER INTO THE MYSTERIES OF THE LABYRINTH. DO EXACTLY AS I COMMAND.

BEGIN TO INCH YOUR WAY FORWARD, SLOWLY, CAREFULLY. STOP WHEN I TELL YOU. YOU ARE ON THE TOWER OF MIDGOL. BELOW YOU IS A TERRIBLE ABYSS. FORWARD THEN ... CAREFULLY ... CAREFULLY ... STOP! YOU ARE ON THE EDGE OF A PRECIPICE. EVEN NOW A TRAP DOOR IS BEING OPENED BEFORE YOU TO EXPOSE THE TERRIBLE PIT. (Sound effects of a metal door being opened in front of the neophyte.) IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE, DO NOT MOVE. CROSS YOUR HANDS ON YOUR BREAST AND WAIT.

Far below the neophyte there is a rushing sound of wind that howls up as through a funnel. Within the wind, shrill voices are heard shrieking.

Voices: IN THE SOUTH SCREAMS THE IBIS!
 IN THE EAST THE LION ROARS!
 IN THE WEST THE SNAKE HISSES!

IN THE NORTH HOWLS THE WOLF!

Trial 3: RAPHAKA (The Sword)

The voices subside, the wind abates.

Hierophant: YOU HAVE ENDURED THE TRIAL OF THE PRECIPICE. DO NOT TURN AROUND. MOVE SLOWLY BACK FROM THE TRAP DOOR. SLOWLY ... SLOWLY ... STOP THERE. FOR THE NEXT TRIAL YOU MUST DESCEND TO YOUR KNEES. DOWN THEN, AND WAIT ... IF YOU WOULD PROCEED, YOU MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT YOU HAVE NO FEAR OF DEATH, WHATEVER FORM IT MAY TAKE. IN MY HAND I HAVE A RAPIER. BEND YOUR NECK FORWARD TO PROVE THAT YOU HAVE NO FEAR.

A sword cuts the air above the head of the neophyte, once, twice, three times.

Trial 4: AZEROTH (The Magnetic Currents)

Hierophant: YOU HAVE PASSED THE TRIAL OF RAPHAKA, THE SWORD. YOU MAY STAND IN PREPARATION FOR THE TRIAL OF ASEROTH. ON EITHER SIDE OF YOU ARE CONDUCTORS OF MAGNETIC CURRENTS. WHEN I TOUCH THE SWITCH, THESE CURRENTS BEGIN TO FLOW. WOULD YOU DARE TO RAISE YOUR ARMS SLOWLY TOWARDS THEM. SHOULD YOU ACCIDENTALLY TOUCH ONE YOU WILL DIE INSTANTLY.

The Hierophant switches on the currents. A crackling noise is heard on either side of the neophyte.

Hierophant: I COMMAND YOU TO RAISE YOUR ARMS AND EXTEND YOUR FINGERTIPS TOWARDS THE CURRENTS OF ASEROTH.

After a few minutes the currents are switched off.

Trial 5: THE GOLDEN GOBLETS

Hierophant: YOU HAVE SHOWN GREAT COURAGE. TURN NOW AND FACE ME.

The neophyte turns to see the Hierophant for the first time. The upper part of his face is masked. He wears a long robe embroidered with strange signs. In his hands he holds two goblets.

Hierophant: TWO GOLDEN GOBLETS. THE CONTENTS OF ONE ARE POISONOUS.

THE OTHER IS FILLED WITH A MARVELLOUS ELIXIR. I COMMAND YOU TO SEIZE ONE OF THE GOBLETS WITHOUT REFLECTION AND TO EMPTY IT AT A SINGLE DRAFT.

If the dismayed neophyte hesitates, the roar of the Minotaur is heard and at once a black veil drops from above. Immediate deportation to another part of the labyrinth follows. If the neophyte drinks the contents of one of the goblets the Hierophant pours the other goblet out on the floor.

Hierophant: YOU HAVE CHOSEN FORTUNATELY. BUT THERE IS A COURAGE MORE IMPORTANT THAN QUICKNESS OF DECISION, AND THAT IS THE VOLUNTARY HUMILITY THAT TRIUMPHS OVER VANITY. ARE YOU CAPABLE OF SUCH A VICTORY OVER YOURSELF? IF SO, TURN AND DESCEND FROM THE TOWER OF MIGDOL TO IROTH, THE CHAMBER OF ISOLATION WHERE YOUR PATIENCE WILL BE TESTED. WALK STRAIGHT AHEAD, DOWN THE RAMP. DESCEND NOW... DESCEND NOW... DESCEND NOW...(voice fading).

Trial 6: IROTH (Isolation)

Moving slowly forward in the darkness, the neophyte realizes that the precipice announced by the Hierophant a few moments ago does

not exist. Instead there is a ramp sloping downwards to an open doorway. As soon as the door is passed it is closed and bolted from outside. The room in which the neophyte is imprisoned is small and perfectly round, or so it would seem to the exploring hands. The walls are smooth, seamless, and shiny. A long time passes in this darkness, perhaps an hour. Then very slowly a red light grows from within a cavity in the ceiling. Brighter and brighter it grows until the great beam of a single red eye shines out of the hole and for a long moment stares directly at the neophyte, then slowly retreats again into darkness. The isolation continues in darkness for another extended period. Then abruptly the covering of a manhole slides back in the floor, revealing a hole beneath the room, barely wide enough to crawl into. The walls of this tunnel are earth.

Trial 7: OPHION (The Lizard)

A new voice is heard from above, a rough, impatient voice.

Voice: CRAWL! CRAWL ON YOUR KNEES AND THEN ON YOUR BELLY
LIKE A BABY. CRAWL BENEATH THE MOUNTAINS OF VANITY LIKE
A CREATURE OF THE SOIL, FOR THAT IS WHAT YOU ARE, A MERE
WORM. WHEN YOU MEET OPHION, THE LIZARD, WHISTLE THEN
CLICK YOUR TNGUE LIKE A BEETLE, LIKE THIS: CLK, CLK,
CLK, CLK ... THAT WAY THE LIZARD WILL KNOW THAT YOU DO
NOT CONSIDER YOURSELF SUPERIOR TO LIZARDS. PERHAPS SHE
WILL LET YOU PASS.

The neophyte crawls through the twisting tunnel in darkness. At times the tunnel broadens so that it is possible to crawl on one's

hands and knees. At other times it is so tight that one must wriggle through. Along the way there are little openings in the wall, niches with tiny scenes in them of subterranean life, illuminated with pale green or blue light. The passage may at times reek with strong odours, and the walls may crumble. Reaching the den of Ophion, the neophyte whistles and clacks according to the instructions. The Lizard blinks but makes no move. Continuing on, the tunnel begins to grow more spacious so that finally the neophyte is able to stand up again. The walls become straight and are covered with wooden panels.

Passage: CHOIR OF WORMS

From the wooden panels on the sides and also from the floor a whole assembly of human arms and hands are projected. Some are praying, some are clenched, some caress each other, some are outstretched as if to catch the passerby – a subtle cheiromancy of limbs. From beneath the floor the rumbling of Minotaur can be heard, an infrasound that makes the floor vibrate and the arms tremble in their sockets.

Trial 8: NASÚN

A small room lit by a lamp. IN the centre is a table and a chair. On the table are arranged seven coloured strips of paper. Above

them is an inscription reading as follows:

YOU HAVE PASSED SEVEN TRIALS. THE LAST TRIAL MAY BE THE MOST DIFFICULT. ON THE SEVEN STRIPS OF COLOURED PAPER WRITE DOWN THE SEVEN MOST PRECIOUS THINGS IN YOUR LIFE — THOSE THAT MAKE IT MOST WORTH LIVING.

WHEN YOU HAVE DONE THIS, PROCEED DOWN THE PATH AND YOU WILL BE INSTRUCTED FURTHER.

After completing the assignment the neophyte rises and moves down a long circular corridor. At six different point in the corridor there are niches, inhabited by full-size statues from Egyptian mythology. Each holds a tray containing a lamp. An inscription above the first statue says:

GIVE ME THAT WHICH YOU LEAST CHERISH. HOLD IT IN THE FLAME AND IT WILL DEPART FOREVER.

Having done this the neophyte continues on to the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth statues, each of which requests that which is cherished least and requires it to be burned. The path being circular, the neophyte now returns to the same room with only one strip of paper left on which is written whatever was considered the most precious of all. Here Balsides is waiting. Balsides is dressed similarly to the Hierophant but wears no mask. He speaks gently.

Balsides: GIVE ME THE PAPER YOU HAVE KEPT WHILE RELINQUISHING ALL THE OTHERS.

Balsides takes the paper, looks at what was written on it, then looks at the neophyte for a long while, and finally burns the paper in the flame.

Balsides: YOU HAVE PAASSED THE OGDOAD OF TRIALS. YOU MAY CHOOSE
NOW TO ENCOUNTER THE HEPTAD OF EXPERIENCES OR THE HEXAD
OF PERCEPTIONS. THE CHOICE IS YOURS.

Baldides draws back two curtains revealing portals and the neophyte passes on to one or the other series of events.

Third Series: THE HEPTAD OF EXPERIENCES

Experience 1: BUTHON (The Palace of Mythical Beings)

In the dim light the neophyte enters a kind of grotto in which stalagmites and stalactites ascend and descend to limitless heights. Here and there behind the outcroppings lurk strange creatures of no known species. All are hybrids, combining wings, snouts, paws and tails in startling combinations and vivid colours. All appear to be stuffed or sculptured, but each is constructed so that some small part occasionally moves or twitches: an eye blinks, a head tilts slightly, a tail swishes, a claw slowly opens. The movements are very widely spaced (separated by many minutes) so that the observer may doubt whether any motion has been seen at all.¹⁸ Soft electronic music accompanies the neophyte's passage through the Palace of Mythical Beings. Embedded within the music a gentle voice is occasionally heard speaking.

Recorded

Voice: IN THE PALACE OF MYTHICAL BEINGS, THE FORSAKEN MYSTERIES
 CELEBRATE THEMSELVES.

Experience 2: CASA DEL LABYRINTHO

In a grotto there is a crevice before which is a stone bench. If seated on the bench, one might hear a whispering voice coming from a small hole in the crevice:

Voice: CAN YOU HEAR ME? I DARE ONLY WHISPER SO AS NOT TO AROUSE

¹⁸ An inventory of some possible creatures is given in *Patria 3: The Greatest Show*, editing unit E5.

MINOTAUR. WHO AM I? A VICTIM JUST LIKE YOU. ISN'T IT
AMAZING TO THINK THAT FREEDOM MAY BE ONLY A WALL AWAY? ON
ONE SIDE THE VICTIM; ON THE OTHER SIDE GOD ... ASTERION
... OR ... AND THIS IS HIS PALACE. PRISON CELLS AND GRAND
BALLROOMS — BOTH NECESSARY TO SUSTAIN THE ILLUSION.

DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU'VE BEEN WATCHED CONSTANTLY, EVEN IN
THE DARKEST PLACES? I DON'T MEAN BY CAMERAS, I MEAN BY
EYES, REAL EYES, EITHER THE BEADY EYES OF INSECTS, OR THE
SOFT EYES OF ... BUT DON'T BE FOOLED BY THE DECEPTION.

I'M TRYING TO SOLVE THE RIDDLE, JUST LIKE YOU. I CALCULATE
IT LIKE THIS: TO GET FROM A TO B, YOU FIRST HAVE TO GO
THROUGH C, WHICH LIES BETWEEN THEM; BUT BEFORE THAT YOU
MUST PASS D, BETWEEN A AND C. AND SO ON IN INFINITE
SUBDIVISIONS SO THAT GETTING ANYWHERE IS ACTUALLY
IMPOSSIBLE.

THAT'S THE MONSTROUS ATTRACTION OF THE LABYRINTH, THE
CROOKED LINE BREAKING THE STRAIGHT, EVERY ADVANCE A
RETREAT, MORE QUESTIONS AFTER EVERY ANSWER. AND THE MORE
THE SEEKERS, THE FEWER THE FINDERS. SEEK NOTHING ...
YOU'LL LIVE LONGER. THAT'S THE ONLY —

A monstrous roar interrupts the voice. Slowly the cavity in the rock
is filled with a red light. It grows stronger, then suddenly the
great beam of a single red eye shines out of the hole and for a long

moment stares directly at the neophyte, then slowly retracts again into darkness.

Experience 3: SOCHOTH (The Headless Wonder)¹⁹

The neophyte now hears the mumbling of another voice from behind, and turning is startled to see a headless man in a shabby coat, his hand thrust out as if asking for alms. It is impossible to discern what the voice is saying. It just mumbles incoherently, though perhaps with a slight pleading quality. The hand plucks at the neophyte, gesturing down a dark corridor.

Passage: KA-BRAK

The passage forks. One corridor leads past the Egyptian *Ka* statue, lit with a blue-orange light. The other passage leads past the eye-goddess *Brak*, lit with a yellow-green light. Both lights are very pale so that the neophyte has to strain to make out their features. The two passageways converge and the headless creature is waiting there to lead, or rather tug, the neophyte to the next experience, mumbling incoherently as before. At last they arrive at a rather large well-lit room over which there is an inscription.

THE WAY UP IS THE SAME AS THE WAY DOWN.

¹⁹ The image of the headless beggar comes from a dream I had on October 6, 1994. My first thought was that it must have been an apparition from *Asterion*, which I had been working on for several days. It then occurred to me that it was my body crying out against the exertions of the head and its consequent neglect.

Experience 4: FIR BALOOM (Feet of Baal)

The corridor leads to two enormous cloven hooves of a creature who, if projected in scale, would be fifty meters high. From somewhere a recorded voice hurls out the following words, accompanied by a rumbling noise.

Recorded

Voice: THE MASTER OF DARKNESS DWELLS ALONE,
 AT THE CENTRE OF THE FOUNDATION HE DWELLS,
 AT THE CENTRE OF THE GREAT QUAKING HE DWELLS, PIVOTING,
 MOVING, SLIDING UNSEEN, RISING UP TO HEAVEN,
 STRETCHING DOWN TO HELL,
 THE AVENGER AND EXTINGUISHER,
 THE FIRST AND THE LAST,
 INFORMING ALL SPACE WITH HIS GLORIOUS PRESENCE.
 YOU MAY ADVANCE RESPECTFULLY THROUGH HIS EXCREMENT.

A deep vibrating roar accompanies the neophyte's passage between the feet through a mushy bed of mud and manure.

Experience 5: KIBROTH (Tombs of Lust)

A dark passage, twisting and turning back on itself. At different points a series of quick, almost subliminal images light up one after another. The images are three-dimensional models of well known *Patria* characters as follows:

1. Melusina, from whose mouth the head of a snake is slowly emerging.
2. Beast is seen copulating *coitus a tergo* (animal fashion) with the child, Beauty.

3. A mummified Osiris rises slowly out of a coffin.
4. The very fat Queen Pasiphae sits with a fan before her face. Slowly it slides aside to reveal, instead of a head, the large erect penis of a bull.

Experience 6: HERACLITE

The room consists entirely of ladders and stairways, both descending and ascending in all directions, sometimes to blind walls, sometimes to doors or openings that seem to exit but merely lead back into the same space.

Despite its contradictions, the room does contain one exit, and, finding it, the neophyte enters another room.

Experience 7: THE PALACE OF GREATEST CLARITY

This room is illuminated by a lamp in the centre of a carpet. On a

tray before it stand two cups of tea. One cup bears the inscription: "The Water of Forgetfulness." The other cup bears the inscription, "The Water of Memory." The first tea is salty, the second sweet. The tray also contains a book or register in which the neophyte is asked to record answers to the following questions:

1. What has been the strongest experience in the labyrinth up to now?
2. What would I like most to forget?
3. Which of my senses do I trust the most? Why?
4. What have I learned within the labyrinth?
5. What advice would I leave for those who may come after me?

The neophyte may linger here reading the comments left in the book by other visitors, including comments from Theseus, Ariadne, Daedalus or unknown visitors to the labyrinth who have long since perished.²⁰

A line at the end of the register will direct the neophyte either to the Hexad of Perceptions or, if this has already been experienced, to the Pentad of Contemplations.

²⁰ In his *Guide to Greece* (vol. 1, p.395) Pausanias relates that after visiting the oracle of Trophonios at Lebadeia (Boiotia), the initiand was required to write down all his experiences in a secret book or register.

Fourth Series: THE HEXAD OF PERCEPTIONS

Perception 1: RATHMA-RAPHADON (The Education of the Hands & Feet)

An entrance revealing a rope, stretched along the wall and leading into blackness. The neophyte takes it and follows it down a winding tunnel. The rope is a tactile experience: at times it is as soft as fur, at times prickly or barbed; the materials from which it is made are limitless: seaweed, grass, wool, wire, skin, bark, beads, etc. The tunnel through which it passes is totally dark but contains many twists and turns.

From the beginning of *Asterion* the neophyte has been barefoot. The reason now becomes evident as he or she passes down a corridor in which each footstep brings a different sensation of temperature or texture, now warm, now ice-cold, now flaky, now moist, now rough, now soft, now slimy, now sandy.²¹

Perception 2: EOS

A maze of full-length mirrors is encountered. The neophyte must

²¹ Note from Rabindranath Tagore, "My School," in *Lectures and Addresses*, London 1955, pp. 23-24.

"Naturally the soles of our feet are so made that they become the best instruments for us to stand upon the earth and to walk with. From the day we commenced to wear shoes we minimized the purpose of our feet. With the lessening of their responsibility they have lost their dignity, and now they lend themselves to be pampered with socks, slippers and shoes of all prices and shapes and misproportions. For us

carefully move through it distinguishing reflections from openings. Occasionally another image may fleetingly be seen: of Theseus? of Ariadne? of Minotaur or Asterion?²²

Perception 3: BELLUM (Forest of Brass)

The maze of mirrors ends abruptly before a forest of brass and stainless steel rods of varying lengths through which the neophyte must pass. A recorded male voice cries out:

Voice: BELLS! BELLUM! BELLA! BELLOW! BELLS TO COVER THE
SACRIFICE! TRAGIC BELLS WITH BLOODY MOUTHES! TRIUMPHANT
BELLS WITH GOLDEN TONGUES! BELLS THAT DANCE! BELLS THAT
PRAY! COLOURED BELLS - BLUE, GREEN, GOLD AND SILVER
BELLS FOR THE SACRED RITUAL! BELLS TO PROTECT AND BELLS
TO WARN, RIPPED FROM THE DARKNESS OF THE EARTH, BELLS OF
STARS AND BELLS OF MOONS, DIVINE BELLS, QUIVERING, AND
HOLDING... QUIVERING...HOLDING...²³

it amounts to a grievance against God for not giving us hooves instead of beautifully sensitive feet."

²² "Mirrors face to face, or placed in large numbers in every conceivable place, break up and pulverise each image of the real world, launch those who live and move among them into a world of fiction, and express the strange passion for self-escape that is at the heart of the baroque period." Germain Barzun, *Loom of Art*.

²³ Pythagoras called the sound caused by striking on brass "the voice of a daimon enclosed in the brass." Porphyry, "Life of Pythagoras," *Pythagorean Sourcebook*, Phanes Press, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1987, p.131. There is a relationship between the words spoken here and Magister's speech in *Patria 4: The Black Theatre of Hermes Trismegistos* (E.U.1). The word bell derives from the Anglo-Saxon *bellam*, meaning to bellow, and is probably also related to the Latin *bellum*, meaning war. Hence the play on words.

The neophyte enters the forest of bells and they resound with a glittering tintinnabulation under a bright silver light. Even after the forest has been passed through, the bells will continue to vibrate as the neophyte passes through a series of billowing gauze curtains that lead into a softly-illuminated star-shaped room.

Perception 4: QUADRIX (The Spice Garden)

The star-shaped room has eight points. Each point contains a bank of a particularly redolent spice, as follows:

1. Cumin
2. Coriander
3. Cardamom
4. Dill
5. Anise
6. Ginger
7. Nutmeg
8. Cinnamon

Although it would appear that the room may have many exits, this is a deception, so that after visiting the eight points of the star, it is by the entrance that the room is left.

The visit to Quadrix is accompanied by a recording of the third movement of Schafer's Third String Quartet.

Perception 5: MATHARA (Education of the Mouth)

The billowing curtains this time lead the neophyte to a small alcove lit by candlelight. On a table a long tray has been

arranged with seven morsels of food, and behind each is a small glass of liquid. Each pair has been selected to illustrate a particular contrast or complement of tastes: sweet, sour, salty, bitter. A notice above the tray requests the neophyte to cleanse the mouth by tasting each of the combinations of food and drink in turn.

FOR YOUR JOURNEY BEYOND, ALL YOUR SENSES MUST BE ALERT. THUS YOUR MOUTH NEEDS TO BE CLEANSED AND RENEWED. EACH MORSEL OF FOOD HAS BEEN CHOSEN TO STIMULATE YOUR SENSATION OF TASTE, AND EACH LIQUID WILL COMPLEMENT OR COUNTERPOINT IT. EAT AND DRINK AT YOUR LEISURE. WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED YOU MAY RETIRE TO THE COUCH WHERE THE ENTIRE STORY OF THESEUS, ARIADNE AND MINOTAUR-ASTERION WILL BE REVEALED TO YOU AS AN IMMACULATE PERCEPTION.

Perception 6: MYTHOS (The Immaculate Perception)

The resensitized neophyte now lies down on a couch. The candle that had illuminated the alcove is extinguished. In total darkness the neophyte now experiences the story of Theseus and Ariadne as a sequence of aural, tactile, olfactory and gustative sensations. Perhaps the sensations are introduced with a few paratactic phrases or single words, as follows:

<u>WORD</u>	<u>SOUND</u>	<u>TOUCH</u>	<u>SCENT</u>	<u>TASTE</u>
OCEAN	waves	water spray	seaweed	-
SAND	distant waves	sand; wind	seaweed	-
SUN	-	heat lamp	geraniol	-
FEAST	dance music	?	? cake; sweet wine	

SLAVE	-	chains	musk	-
PRINCESS	jewelry	fabric	jasmine	-
	(ankle bells)	(silk)		
MOON	-	coolness; moonstone	-	-
LOVE	whispering voices	-	jasmine & musk	-
LABYRINTH	-	a miniature labyrinth	-	-
		through which the		
		fingers may pass		

The labyrinth is taken from the hands of the neophyte by a hand that feels furry. Perhaps there is a strong animal smell accompanying the touch of the hand. Suddenly there is a roar and a bright light. Hovering above the neophyte is a face – but what face? Perhaps it is the strange, neutral face seen at the end of the lecture beginning the drama. Perhaps it is the face belonging to the red eye that peered at the neophyte earlier. Perhaps it is the face of Shadow, now thick-lipped and leering. Perhaps it is the face of Ariadne. It could be any of these or even a faceless face, never seen before, never to be seen again, the face of a mummy, a corpse. The face hovers over the couch, then slowly descends to kiss the neophyte on the brow. The face withdraws. Darkness.

After a considerable period of time, Septhura approaches with a candle.

Septhura: IF YOU WILL ALLOW ME, I WILL WASH YOUR FACE IN

PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT STAGE OF YOUR JOURNEY.

Septura washes the neophyte's face with warm rose water and dries it, then leads the neophyte by hand either to the point where the Heptad of Experiences begins or to the beginning of the Pentad of Contemplations.

Fifth Series: THE PENTAD OF CONTEMPLATIONS

Note: The passages connecting the Pentad of Contemplations, by contrast with those in previous series, are on a single level. They may be narrow but are not cramped. Some of them have high ceilings, and a few may be decorated with arabesques or geometrical patterns in colour or in black and white. They tend to be long and straight with right angles, so that illuminated paintings or art objects can be seen at the intersections from some distance as the neophyte approaches them. Chairs, sofas or cushions are also placed before these so that the neophyte may linger and meditate on them. The neophyte feels safe here. It is a time for thought and reflection.

Contemplation 1: MANDALA

Septhyra leaves the neophyte at the end of a long, straight corridor, at the other end of which is a well-illuminated and richly-coloured mandala, slowly revolving counter clockwise. Around the mandala, among elaborate patterns is the following text:

SEEKER OF THE TRUTH, VISITOR OF THE MYSTERIES OF ASTERION,
YOU HAVE PASSED THROUGH THE ENNEAD OF ENCOUNTERS, YOU HAVE
SURVIVED THE OGDOAD OF TRIALS, THE HEPTAD OF EXPERIENCES AND
THE HEXAD OF SENSATIONS. YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE PENTAD OF
CONTEMPLATIONS. HERE, IF YOU ALLOW IT, YOUR SPIRIT WILL GROW
IN PREPARATION FOR WHAT LIES BEYOND. YOU MAY LINGER AS LONG
AS YOU WISH. YOU WILL NOT BE DISTURBED, FOR MINOTAUR IS

PREVENTED FROM ENTERING HERE. LET THE CIRCLE OF THE MANDALA
PROTECT YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS FROM THE CHAOTIC BURSTS OF THE
UNCONSCIOUS. BE CALM AND CENTERED. LET YOUR REFLECTIONS
ROTATE AT LEISURE AS YOU PASS THROUGH THESE CHAMBERS,
CONTEMPLATING THE CIRCLES WHICH INCLUDE YOU AND THE ONES FROM
WHICH YOU MAY AS YET BE EXCLUDED.

From loud speakers around the Mandala a children's choir is gently
intoning a text from *The Bhagavad-Gita*.

Choir: NOW YOU HAVE PUT AWAY ALL DESIRES.
YOUR SPIRIT IS STABLE IN ITSELF.
YOU HAVE REMOVED ALL CRAVINGS OF THE HEART.
YOU ARE ILLUMINATED.

YOU ARE NOT SHAKEN BY ADVERSITY.
YOU ARE NOT TOUCHED BY SORROW.
YOU ARE FREE FROM FEAR, FREE FROM ANGER,
FREE FROM DESIRE FOR PLEASURE,
YOU ARE ILLUMINATED.

WHEN YOU ARE LUCKY YOU DO NOT REJOICE,
WHEN YOU ARE UNLUCKY YOU DO NOT WEEP,
THE BONDS OF THE FLESH ARE BROKEN.
YOU ARE ILLUMINATED.

AS THE TORTOISE DRAWS IN ITS LEGS,
YOU DRAW IN YOUR SENSES

TO BECOME ILLUMINATED.

RESTRAIN YOURSELF,
REMAIN DISCIPLINED,
THINK ON THE HIGHEST,
REMAIN ILLUMINATED.

BUT EVEN ONE WHO KNOWS THE PATH
CAN BE DRAGGED FROM THE PATH
BY UNRULY SENSES,
THE MIND CAN BE CARRIED TO DESIRE.
FROM DESIRE ARISES WRATH,
FROM WRATH ARISES INFATUATION,
FROM INFATUATION, LOSS OF MEMORY,
FROM LOSS OF MEMORY, LOSS OF MIND.
THEN YOU WILL PERISH.

BUT WHEN YOUR MIND IS DISCIPLINED,
YOU MOVE AMONG THE OBJECTS OF SENSE
WITH THE SENSES FREE OF ATTACHMENT.
SORROWS MELT INTO CLEAR PEACE.
YOU REMAIN ILLUMINATED.²⁴

Contemplation 2: OKEANOS

²⁴ Source: *The Bhagavad-Gita* II:55-64, paraphrased. This is the same text that accompanied Editing Unit 33 of *Patria 1, Wolfman*, though there it was set in the original Sanskrit.

A chamber containing a sofa on which the neophyte may lie and listen to Okeanos, a collage of the sounds of the ocean mixed with electronic sounds and human voices reciting various texts relating to the sea, at times originating from under the water, at times from the crests of waves, and at time from the shores of deserted beaches. Duration: ca. 1 hour, 15 minutes.

Contemplation 3: LAPIS (The Jewelstone Circle)

A dimly-lit circular chamber with a floor of fine sand. In a circle around the neophyte are twelve jewel-stones, each illuminated by a point of light from the ceiling. The twelve stones are laid out as follows:

1

Jasper

12

Amethyst

2

Sapphire

11

Jacinth

3

Agate

10

4

Chrysoprasus

Emerald

9

Topaz

5

Onyx

8

Beryl

6

Sardius

7

Chrysolite

The recorded voice of the Magus Philosophus is heard as if arising from the stones themselves, very calm and reassuring.

Magus Philosophus:

YOU ARE SURROUNDED BY THE TWELVE STONES OF THE NEW
JERUSALEM. EACH EXUDES A UNIQUE ENERGY. KNEEL DOWN
BEFORE THE ONE OF YOUR CHOICE AND TAKE IT IN YOUR HANDS.

CLOSE YOUR EYES AND HOLD YOUR STONE, LETTING THE STONE
AND YOUR HANDS GROW WARM TOGETHER ... FEEL THE STONE
ENERGY PENETRATING THROUGH YOUR PALMS AND COURSING UP
YOUR ARMS. ALLOW YOUR BODY ENERGY TO PENETRATE THE STONE
...

FEEL THE TEXTURE OF YOUR STONE. LIKE YOUR BODY, IT IS BOTH ROUGH AND SMOOTH. LIKE YOU, IT HAS BUMPS AND CAVITIES ...

NOW OPEN YOUR EYES AND STUDY THE CHANGING COLOURS OF THE STONE AS IT IS SLOWLY TURNED IN YOUR HAND. LIKE YOU, THE STONE HAS MANY PERSONALITIES, MANY MOODS AND CHANGES OF DISPOSITION. TURN IT ONE WAY AND IT IS DAZZLING, EXCITED; TURN IT ANOTHER WAY AND IT IS DARK AND BROODING.

MOVE THE STONE TO YOUR BROW AND HOLD IT THERE. LET THE STONE-ENERGY MIX WITH YOUR MIND-ENERGY. SEND MIND-MESSAGES INTO THE STONE AND SENSE THE MIND-MESSAGES OF THE STONE RETURNING TO YOU. YOU ARE THE CRUCIBLE; THE STONE IS THE LAPIS.

STILL IT REMAINS A STONE NO MATTER HOW MANY ENERGIES IT ABSORBS OR REFLECTIONS THAT ILLUMINATE ITS SURFACES.

IN THIS WAY ALSO YOU MUST REMAIN TRUE TO YOURSELF. LIKE THE STONE YOU MUST SEEK TO REMAIN SELF-CONTAINED, ROUND, PERFECT, JUST SO.

KISS THE STONE AND WHISPER THANKS FOR THE SECRETS IT HAS IMPARTED TO YOU. TAKE IT WITH YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY, FOR YOU HAVE BECOME ONE TOGETHER. WHEREVER YOU GO THE STONE

WILL ALWAYS REMAIN YOUR FAITHFUL COMPANION.²⁵

Contemplation 4: ALUSH (Sap of the Moon Plant)

A solarium filled with exotic plants bathed in moonlight. From the leaves of the plants whispering voices are heard, not loud, or even intelligible, although the voices do make sense and are softly disclosing secrets of plant life, in particular that of the Rose-Gem Flower, which, by its beauty, has prevented human civilization from sinking into barbarism.

At the back of the garden a single rose stands out. It is moving very slowly and mysteriously back and forth across the scene.

Contemplation 5: PAI-K'O HSIANG-YIN (The Incense Clock)

A small circular chamber in the centre of which is an incense clock. This is a horizontal dial of very hard wood (mountain pear) or stone, inscribed with lines or pathways, rather like those of a unicursal labyrinth.

²⁵ Sources: Arabian Alchemist's speech from *Patria 2: Requiems for the Party Girl*, *Patria 4: The Black Theatre of Hermes Trismegistos* and the *Isha-Upanishad*.

The clock itself may be 15 inches or 2 feet in diameter and sits flat on a low stand in the centre of the room. The pathways inscribed on the clock's surface are just deep enough to take powdered or caked incense, which has been lit and slowly burns down the channels. Various kinds of incense are used so that the aroma changes from hour to hour. The points at which the incense changes are decorated with astrological or mythological signs or images. The dial, or the stand on which it rests, contains the following inscription:

Is it here or there, your soul?

Here, in this patterned room burning secretly,

Or there with the flowers and breezes

Evoked by the Hundred Hour Incense Clock?²⁶

²⁶ "Another aspect of the incense clocks in Japan is the possible use of several incense recipes for indicating the time intervals. It is entirely possible that the pegs or tablets marked with the zodiacal characters inserted along the incense trail to denote time intervals could in actuality be tablets of hard-paste incense, each made from a different recipe. When the progressive burning of the path reached one of the markers, the marker too would be consumed and the resulting variance in aroma would be detected by the priest in attendance, so that he could tell the particular hour which had elapsed from the scent." ("The Scent of Time," Silvio A. Bedini, *Translations of the American Philosophical Society, New Series, Vol.53, part 5* (Philadelphia, 1963), p.37.

The incenses in the clock's pathways are arranged to burn as follows:

12 o'clock: clove
1 o'clock: lotus
2 o'clock: sandlewood
3 o'clock: cade
4 o'clock: civit
5 o'clock: cinnamon
6 o'clock: geraniol
7 o'clock: cedarwood
8 o'clock: jasmine
9 o'clock: opopanax
10 o'clock: turpentine
11 o'clock: musk

The minutes of the hour are subdivided by means of a set of five monochords with movable bridges, arranged around the Incense Clock. Beginning on the hour, the deepest monochord plays the fundamental. Then each minute the bridge moves automatically to a new position and the mallet falls again to sound each of the intervals in turn 1:2 (octave) 2:3 (perfect fifth) 3:4 (perfect fourth) etc. This sequence is then taken up in the same manner by the second-lowest monochord during the next twelve minutes, and so on, with the other higher monochords each sounding in turn until the hour is reached when the incense will change and the lowest

monochord begins the sequence again.²⁷

Simultaneously on a screen above the Incense Clock the text of The Chaldean Inscription is projected.

I AM ALL THAT IS
ALL THAT HAS BEEN
ALL THAT SHALL BE
AND NONE MAY LIFT MY VEIL

One by one, over the course of five minutes, the Roman letters dissolve into strange shapes until gradually the entire text becomes a veil of arabesques in an unidentifiable script. The process then slowly reverses itself to intelligibility and begins again.²⁸

Passage: PALINDROME

A long descending corridor with abrupt 90 degree turns, the painted walls of which are covered with geometrical mirror patterns in black and white. At the end of it is the following shadowgraph printed so that it reverses on itself, as does the text.

APPROACHING THE CENTRE OF THE LABYRINTH WITH
ARIADNE,
I SAW HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME,

²⁷ See: *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library*, ed. Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie, Phanex Press, 1987, pp.327-28.

²⁸ R.M. Schafer, *The Chaldean Inscription*, Arcana Editions, 1978. Julianus, *The Chaldean Oracles*, Heptangle Books, 1989.

White on PEERING FROM BEHIND A WALL,
black A SHAPE AMID SHADOWS,
back- GLEAMING EYES...
ground THREE HORNS...
A CLOSER LOOK -
I KNEW ITS SECRET.

YES, AT LAST

I KNEW ITS SECRET.
A CLOSER LOOK -
Black on THREE HORNS...
white GLEAMING EYES...
back- A SHAPE AMID SHADOWS,
ground PEERING FROM BEHIND A WALL,
I SAW HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME,
APPROACHING THE CENTRE OF THE LABYRINTH WITH
ARIADNE.

Sixth Series: THE TETRAD OF ARCANA

Introduction

A flight of steps descends into a stone sanctum constructed in the form of a cross. Each point of the cross is illuminated with a different coloured light and each contains a different arcane symbol. The neophyte descends the steps to find Hermes Trismegistos, dressed in a long robe, waiting at the centre. Hermes appears to be androgynous, but there is something in the voice or mannerisms that is reminiscent of Shadow from the Encounter series.

Hermes: SO YOU HAVE PENETRATED SAFELY AS FAR AS THE TETRAD OF ARCANA. THE ARCANA ARE LIMITLESS IN NUMBER BUT FOUR HAVE BEEN SELECTED BY THE MATHEMATICAL METHOD FAVOURED HERE AS MOST SUITABLE FOR YOUR REQUIREMENTS.

FOUR ARE THE CARDINAL POINTS: EAST, WEST, NORTH AND SOUTH. AND FOUR ARE THE DIRECTIONS OF YOUR WANDERINGS: RIGHT, LEFT, BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS. FOUR ARE THE SEASONS OF THE YEAR AND FOUR ARE THE SEASONS OF YOUR LIFE: CHILDHOOD, YOUTH, ADULTHOOD AND OLD AGE.

FOUR ARE THE PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS: FIRE, AIR, WATER AND EARTH, AND FOUR ARE THEIR POWERS: HEAT, COLD, WETNESS AND DRYNESS. ENDLESSLY THEY CROSS, RENEWING AND EXTINGUISHING ONE ANOTHER. FIRE CONSUMES EARTH AND AIR AND IS EXTINGUISHED BY WATER. AIR FEEDS FIRE, EVAPORATES

WATER AND IS STABILIZED BY EARTH. WATER FEEDS EARTH,
EVAPORATES IN AIR AND IS ARRESTED BY FIRE. EARTH IS
NOURISHED BY WATER, CONSUMED BY FIRE AND RESISTS AIR.
THE CREATIVE DESTRUCTION OF THE ELEMENTS IS ENDLESS AND
UNQUENCHABLE.

Arcanum 1: KHIDR (The Verdant One)

Hermes Trismegistos advances down the southern corridor. The light here is green and the symbol is the Fish.

Hermes: SOUTH, EARTH, SPRING, KHIDR. THE WANDERER HAD REACHED A PLACE WHERE THE SEAS MEET AND HAD CAUGHT A FISH, INTENDING TO EAT IT FOR HIS DINNER. BUT HE WAS TIRED AND LAY DOWN TO SLEEP. WHEN HE AWOKE HE SAW A MAN STANDING IN THE PLACE WHERE HE HAD LEFT THE FISH. REALIZING THAT THIS MUST BE SOME KIND OF MIRACLE, HE ASKED THE MAN IF HE MIGHT ACCOMPANY HIM AND LEARN FROM HIM. BUT THE MAN SAID: "YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO BEAR WITH ME. MY ACTIONS WILL BE BEYOND YOUR COMPREHENSION." "YOU WILL FIND ME PATIENT," SAID THE WANDERER, "AND I WILL NOT DISOBEY YOU IN ANYTHING." "IF YOU WOULD FOLLOW ME, ASK NOTHING UNTIL I SPEAK OF IT TO YOU MYSELF," REPLIED THE MAN.

SO THEY SET OUT ON A BOAT TOGETHER, BUT BEFORE THEY HAD GONE FAR, THE MAN DRILLED A HOLE IN THE BOTTOM OF IT. "YOU HAVE MADE A HOLE IN THE BOAT," SAID THE WANDERER, "WOULD YOU DROWN THE PASSENGERS?" "I TOLD YOU YOU

WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO COMPREHEND," REPLIED THE MAN.

"PLEASE DON'T HOLD IT AGAINST ME FOR HAVING FORGOTTEN," SAID THE WANDERER, AND HE FELL SILENT.

THE TWO WENT ON UNTIL THEY CAME TO A CHILD, WHICH THE MAN KILLED. "YOU HAVE KILLED AN INNOCENT CHILD," SAID THE WANDERER. "THIS IS A TERRIBLE CRIME." THE MAN REPLIED, "DID I NOT TELL YOU YOU WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO BEAR WITH ME?" "IF I ASK YOU ANYTHING FURTHER THEN DO NOT KEEP ME WITH YOU," RESPONDED THE WANDERER. "I APOLOGIZE AGAIN."

THE TWO WENT ON UNTIL THEY CAME TO A VILLAGE. THEY ASKED THE VILLAGERS FOR FOOD BUT THEY REFUSED. ONE OF THE WALLS OF THE VILLAGE WAS CRUMBLING AND THE MAN SET ABOUT REPAIRING IT. "BUT WHY DO YOU REPAIR THE WALL OF A VILLAGE WHERE THE VILLAGERS ARE SO MEAN?" ASKED THE WANDERER. "IF YOU WORK FOR THEM, THEY SHOULD HAVE AT LEAST GIVEN US FOOD."

"THIS IS THE PARTING OF OUR WAYS," REPLIED THE MAN, "BUT FIRST I WILL EXPLAIN THE THINGS YOU COULDN'T UNDERSTAND. THAT BOAT BELONGED TO A POOR FISHERMAN. I DAMAGED IT BECAUSE A TYRANT WAS ABOUT TO SEIZE IT FOR HIS EVIL PURPOSES.

"AS FOR THE CHILD, HE WAS PLAGUED BY AN INCURABLE

ILLNESS AND WOULD HAVE BROUGHT YEARS OF GRIEF TO HIS PARENTS HAD HE LIVED. I KILLED HIM TO ENCOURAGE HIS PARENTS TO HAVE ANOTHER CHILD, STRONGER AND HEALTHIER.

"BENEATH THAT WALL A TREASURE IS BURIED, BELONGING TO TWO ORPHAN BOYS. I REPAIRED IT IN ORDER THAT THE WRONG PEOPLE WOULD NOT DISCOVER IT. WHEN THEY REACH MATURITY, THE BOYS WILL DISCOVER IT, FOR THEIR GOOD FATHER LEFT THEM A MAP DESCRIBING ITS EXACT LOCATION."

HAVING SAID THIS, THE MAN WENT AWAY, LEAVING THE WANDERER TO PONDER THE MEANING OF HIS EXPLANATIONS.

AND YOU, WHO HAVE BORNE WITH THE STORY IN PATIENCE AND WITHOUT INTERRUPTION — DO I INFER THAT YOU HAVE UNDERSTOOD IT? ITS MEANING IS VERY SIMPLE: THERE ARE TRUTHS THAT TRANSCEND REASON. TO COMPREHEND THEM YOU MERELY HAVE TO ACCEPT THEM.

Arcanum 2: BANAIM (Balance)

Hermes Trismegistos moves down the eastern corridor into a red light. A figure, smaller in size but identical to Hermes, is seen here. Approaching it, Hermes pushes the head and it begins to swing back and forth, free of the body. It is hanging from a long pendulum.

Hermes: EAST, SUMMER, AIR, SOLSTICE.

EVERYTHING RUNS TO ITS OPPOSITE,

SUMMER TO WINTER, WINTER TO SUMMER.
BENEVOLENCE RUNS TO WEAKNESS,
DISCERNMENT RUNS TO CRAFTINESS,
FAITH RUNS TO OBSTINACY,
GENEROSITY RUNS TO EXTRAVAGANCE,
HONESTY RUNS TO AWKWARDNESS,
COURTESY RUNS TO SOPHISTICATED,
FRUGALITY RUNS TO MEANNESS,
COURAGE RUNS TO BESTIALITY,
AND EVERYTHING RUNS BACK AGAIN.
THAT WHICH IS BELOW IS THE SAME AS THAT WHICH IS ABOVE,
THAT WHICH IS RIGHT IS THE SAME AS THAT WHICH IS LEFT,
TO ACCOMPLISH THE SAME MIRACLE.²⁹
TO ASCEND WITHOUT DESCENDING,
TO FLEX WITHOUT RETRACTING,
TO GRATIFY WITHOUT SURRENDERING
IS STERILE, AND LEADS TO DEATH.
HURRY SLOWLY – THE DOLPHIN AND THE ANCHOR,
THE BUTTERFLY AND THE CRAB,
THE BODY AND THE HEAD,
OPPOSING ONE ANOTHER; UNITED IN CONTRADICTION.
SUCH IS THE SECRET OF THE SECOND ARCANUM.

Arcanum 3: THESEUS'S BOAT

²⁹ See The Smaragdine Tablet of Hermes Trismegistos, and compare Editing Unit 3 of *Patria 4: The Black Theatre of Hermes Trismegistos*.

A blue light in the north corridor illuminates the ribs of a boat sunk in sand. Hermes leads the neophyte to it and speaks.

Hermes: HE TRAVELLED OVER WATER TO ACHIEVE FAME. HE WAS A STRONG YOUTH AND BOLD. HE COULD HAVE AVOIDED GOING, FOR THE VICTIMS WERE SELECTED BY LOT, BUT HE VOLUNTEERED. HE WAS FILLED WITH DESIRE TO RID THE AEGEAN OF THE CURSE OF THE MINOTAUR. WITH THE HELP OF ARIADNE HE SUCCEEDED — BUT YOU KNOW ALL THIS.

HE RETURNED TO ATHENS, WHERE HE RULED AS KING UNTIL HIS DEATH. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS DEATH ARE UNCERTAIN. SOME SAY HE WAS PUSHED FROM A CLIFF BY A TRAITOR WHILE HE WAS SURVEYING THE CITY. OTHERS SAY HE MERELY SLIPPED AND FELL. ALL ATHENS MOURNED HIS DEATH. HE WAS BURIED IN THE CENTRE OF THE CITY AND HIS BOAT WAS PRESERVED AS A MONUMENT TO HIS TRIUMPH IN CRETE.

AND THAT IS THE SUBJECT OF THE THIRD ARCANUM: THESEUS'S BOAT. THE MATTER HAS BEEN DISCUSSED BY ALL THE PHILOSOPHERS: XENOPHENES, HERACLITUS, PARAMANIDES, EMPHEDOCLES; EVERYONE OF NOTE. I HAVE MYSELF PARTICIPATED IN SUCH DISCUSSIONS.

WELL THEN, AT FIRST THE BOAT WAS EXHIBITED AS A PRECIOUS RELIC OF THE SUCCESS IN CRETE. BUT WITH TIME IT BECAME NECESSARY TO DO SOME RESTORATION WORK ON IT. FIRST ONE

BEAM AND THEN ANOTHER ROTTED AWAY AND HAD TO BE REPLACED, SO THAT IN THE END EVERYTHING OF THE ORIGINAL HAD BEEN RECREATED, INTRODUCING THE FAMOUS PHILOSOPHICAL DEBATE AS TO WHETHER THE VESSEL WAS STILL THESEUS'S BOAT. CAN SOMETHING BE PERFECTLY TRANSFORMED INTO SOMETHING ELSE? CAN ANYTHING OUTLIVE ITS ORIGINAL FORM, AND STILL BE TRUE TO ITSELF? IS SOMETHING LESS VALUABLE WHEN IT IS COPIED, OR DOES IT RETAIN ITS VALUE?

YOU LIVE IN AN AGE THAT ADORES REPRODUCTIONS. YOUR WHOLE LIFE IS SURROUNDED WITH DUBS AND FACSIMILES. SO I IMAGINE THAT FOR YOU THE DEBATE IS SETTLED IN FAVOUR OF THE COPY, PROVIDED IT IS ENGINEERED WITH ABSOLUTE PERFECTION. BUT YOUR FAITH IN THE MECHANICAL COPY WOULD DIMINISH IF WE APPLIED IT TO YOU YOURSELF. CAN THERE BE ANOTHER PERSON EXACTLY LIKE YOU? CAN THERE BE ANOTHER PERSON LIKE THESEUS, AND ANOTHER, AND ANOTHER, PENETRATING THE LABYRINTH JUST AS HE DID TO CONFRONT AN IDENTICAL MINOTAUR WITH THE IDENTICAL CONSEQUENCES? IS THIS A PERFECT REPLICATION OF THE LABYRINTH? ARE YOU THESEUS? IF ALL THIS IS TRUE, THEN I AM HERMES TRISMEGISTOS AND THE THIRD ARCANUM IS ALSO TRUE.

IF YOU BELIEVE OTHERWISE THEN ALL IS FALSE. THE BOAT IS FALSE, THE LABYRINTH IS FALSE, HERMES IS NOT HERE AND YOU ARE NOT HERE EITHER.

YOU WOULD LIKE TO BELIEVE THERE IS TRUTH ON BOTH SIDES.
YES, WHY NOT? TWO TRUTHS RE BETTER THAN ONE. TWO TRUTHS
AND TWO FALSEHOODS, TO ALLOW EACH TRUTH OR FALSITY ITS
OWN TIME OF ACCURACY AND OF INACCURACY – ANOTHER
QUATERNITY.

Arcanum 4: THE SPHERE OF SELFHOOD

Hermes Trismegistos moves down the western corridor. At the end of
the corridor is a large egg-shaped sculpture illuminated in warm,
yellow light.

Hermes: THE SELF IS ONE.

UNMOVING, IT MOVES FASTER THAN THE MIND.

THE SENSES LAG, BUT SELF RUNS AHEAD.

UNMOVING IT OUTFRONS PURSUIT.

OUT OF SELF COMES THE BREATH THAT IS THE LIFE OF ALL
THINGS.

UNMOVING IT MOVES,

IS FAR AWAY, YET NEAR,

WITHIN ALL, OUTSIDE ALL.

THE SELF IS EVERYWHERE,

WITHOUT BODY,

WITHOUT SHAPE,

WHOLE, PURE, WISE,

ALL KNOWING,

SELF-DEPENDING,

ALL-TRANSCENDING.

THE CENTRE OF SELF IS EVERYWHERE,
THE CIRCUMFERENCE IS NOWHERE.
IT IS EVERYTHING; IT IS NOTHING.
WHOEVER THINKS THE SELF CAN DIE OR BE KILLED IS
IGNORANT.
WHOEVER SAYS THE SELF IS UNKNOWN, KNOWS.³⁰

THE SELF CIRCLES ENDLESSLY WITHOUT CAUSE.
HOW THEN CAN IT DIE OR BE KILLED?
WHOEVER THINKS IT CAN BE KILLED,
WHOEVER THINKS IT DIES,
IS IGNORANT.
WHOEVER SAYS THE SELF IS UNKNOWN, KNOWS.³¹

Hermes Trismigistos remains for some time gazing at the egg before leading the neophyte back to the centre of the chamber.

³⁰ The essence of this Arcanum comes from the Isha-Upanishad. The reference to centre and circumference of the self being everywhere and nowhere is the well-known definition of God of the medieval Schoolmen, viz. St. Bonaventure, quoting Alan of Lille, "God is an intelligible sphere whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere." *The Soul's Journey Into God; Bonaventure*, Paulist Press, New York, 1978, p.100.

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Seventh Series: THE TRIO OF DECEPTIONS

Deception 1: ANPU

Hermes Trismegistos puts on the mask of Anubis to speak to the neophyte. The voice of Anubis is different from that of Hermes — harsher and rather cynical.

Anubis: AND SO YOU ARE NEARING THE COMPLETION OF YOUR LIFE IN
 THE LABYRINTH — OR HAVE YOU LOST TRACK OF WHERE YOU ARE?

 HERE EVERYTHING IS PERFECTLY ORDERLY. A DESCENDING
 SERIES BEGINNING WITH FORTY-NINE AND ENDING WITH ONE —
 OR ZERO PERHAPS, ALL MEASURED OUT AND ARRANGED AS AN
 INITIATION AND AN EDUCATION FOR YOUR BENEFIT.

 YOU ALONE KNOW TO WHAT EXTENT THE EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN
 SUCCESSFUL. WE ARE MERE INSTRUMENTS IN THE PROCESS —
 ACTORS WITH MASKS AND DISGUISES, WARPING OUR IDENTITIES,
 MOUTHING LINES BEQUEATHED TO US BY HISTORY AND
 TRADITION.

 I SUPPOSE WE MIGHT CALL THIS THE FINAL COUNTDOWN: A
 TRIAD OF PROTAGONISTS, A DUET OF COMBATANTS AND A
 WINNER. ISN'T THAT THE WAY THE STORY ENDS? THESEUS,
 ARIADNE, MINOTAUR-ASTERION. TWO WILL BE ELIMINATED; ONE
 WILL SURVIVE.

 THEN WHO ARE YOU? AND HOW DO YOU FIT IN HERE? WELL,

THAT'S NOT MY CONCERN. I RETURN NOW TO THE ENTRANCE
WHERE WE FIRST MET TO WAIT FOR ANOTHER HERO OR HEROINE
SEEKING ENLIGHTENMENT THROUGH DARKNESS. THE PROCESS IS
CONTINUOUS.

WE WILL NOT MEET AGAIN.

OH, THE DENOUEMENT IS IN THAT DIRECTION. FAREWELL.

Deception 2: THE THREE HORNS

A dark passage sloping upwards. Three horns glimmer at the end of
the passage. could this be Minotaur? Suspended above them on a
sort of catwalk is the figure of Daedalus.

Daedalus: PRECISELY ON TIME! OF COURSE IT WAS ALL ARRANGED. YOU
REALIZE THAT, DON'T YOU? YOUR SUPERIOR INTELLIGENCE MUST
HAVE INFORMED YOU THAT EVERYTHING WORKS WITH CLOCKLIKE
EFFICIENCY HERE.

A MAGNIFICENT EFFIGY, DON'T YOU THINK? JUST POLISHING
THE HORNS. OH YOU THOUGHT THEY'D BE ON MINOTAUR. THAT'S
ONLY WHEN HE GOES PROWLING IN YOUR IMAGINATION. NOT IN
THE LABYRINTH. DOESN'T NEED THEM. VICTIMS SUCCUMB AS
VICTIMS WILL WITHOUT ANY NEED TO KILL THEM. WHY THREE
HORNS, YOU WONDER? OTHERS HAVE ASKED THE SAME QUESTION
EVER SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE AFFAIR. I'VE PUZZLED
OVER IT MYSELF AND I THINK I'VE FIGURED IT OUT AT LAST.

BUT FIRST LET ME POINT OUT THE OBVIOUS. THE INTERIOR OF THE HORN HAS TWO CONTRASTING CHARACTERISTICS: EITHER IT CAN BE FILLED WITH SOMETHING OR IT CAN BE EMPTIED OF SOMETHING. EITHER IT IS A RECEPTICAL OR A CORNUCOPIA. IT EITHER GIVES OR RECEIVES. THE POINTED EXTERIOR, HOWEVER, HAS ONLY ONE FUNCTION AND THAT IS TO PENETRATE SOMETHING MORE PLIABLE THAN ITSELF. THESE THREE CONTRASTING CHARACTERISTICS MAKE IT A VERY DECEPTIVE TOOL, SUITABLE FOR A LARGE NUMBER OF DIVERGENT ACTIVITIES, AND THEREFORE APPROPRIATE FOR THE PROTEAN CREATURE POSSESSING THEM.

BUT WHY THREE HORNS, WHEN ONE OR TWO WOULD DO? AFTER YEARS OF BURNISHING THEM, I'VE COME TO SOME CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THAT.

THE FIRST HORN HAS A POSITIVE SYMBOLISM: CREATION. IT SPILLS OUT ITS TREASURES WITH THE DAWNING OF EACH NEW DAY. BUT CREATION IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT DESTRUCTION, AND THAT'S THE MEANING OF THE SECOND HORN. FOR EACH NEW THING TO LIVE, SOMETHING MUST DIE, ITS ENERGY MUST BE TRANSFIGURED INTO SOME NEW FORM. I AM AN OLD MAN, AND I HAVE CREATED MANY THINGS, TECHNOLOGIES OF ALL KINDS FOR MANY PURPOSES, BUT IN EVERY CASE THE FIRST NECESSITY OF ACHIEVEMENT HAS BEEN THE SACRIFICE OF A LIVING CREATURE.

AND WHAT THEN DOES THE THIRD HORN SIGNIFY? YOU WILL

RECALL THAT PASIPHAE IMPERSONATED A COW IN ORDER TO ENTICE THE BULL. IT IS THEREFORE THROUGH PASSIVITY RATHER THAN DIRECT PROVOCATION THAT SHE ATTRACTED THE WILLFUL CREATURE, AND YOU KNOW THE OUTCOME. WHAT THEN DOES MINOTAUR-ASTERION SYMBOLIZE? SLOTH PLUS WILL: TECHNOLOGY, BUT MORE THAN THAT, THE FAITH THAT EACH NEW CREATION IS AN IMPROVEMENT OVER THE SLAUGHTERED INGREDIENTS THAT MADE IT POSSIBLE. BLIND HOPE THAT IT REALLY AMOUNTS TO AN IMPROVEMENT. AND BLIND HOPE WAS THE LAST TREASURE OF PANDORA'S BOX AFTER ALL THE OTHER BLESSINGS AND MISERIES HAD BEEN SCATTERED ABOUT THE EARTH.

MOUNT THESE HORNS TOGETHER AND WHAT DO YOU GET? THE GREAT HETEROCLITE OF LIFE IN ALL ITS DECLINATIONS, ROMPING, GRAPPLING, HURLING, DRAGGING ITSELF TO ITS OWN INELUCTABLE DESTINY. IT'S THE LAW THAT RULES THE UNIVERSE, FROM THE INVISIBLE ATOM TO THE PLANETS AND THE STARS, FROM THE INFUSORIA TO THE HIGHEST GODS OF THE CELESTIAL HIERARCHY, FROM YOUR PUNY LIFE TO THAT OF ASTERION. ALL POSSIBLE SITUATIONS ARE IMPLICIT IN THE HORNS OF CREATION, DESTRUCTION AND BLIND HOPE. THE LABYRINTH ITSELF IS A CREATION TO BE DESTROYED BY THE HERO OR HEROINE MOST BLINDED BY HOPE. THAT IS THE DRAMA INTO WHICH YOU HAVE WILLED YOURSELF. GO ON NOW, INTO THE DARKNESS, INTO THE BLINDNESS, HOPEFULLY.

Daedalus waves the neophyte on down the corridor, but when he switches off the light on the horns, the neophyte is left in darkness.

Deception 3: THE TRIALOGUE OF LOVERS

In the darkness two voices close on each side of the neophyte are heard whispering intensely.

Ariadne: SHSHSH! SOMEONE'S HERE. I HEARD THEM.

Theseus: I HEARD NOTHING.

Ariadne: I CAN SMELL THEM.

(Pause)

Theseus: IT'S YOUR IMAGINATION. YOU SHOULDN'T BE HERE YOURSELF.

Ariadne: YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO KILL A GOD.

Theseus: OR A MONSTER.

Ariadne: CUT IT IN HALF AND YOU DOUBLE IT, THEN IT'S DOUBLE TROUBLE.

Theseus: I KNOW MY JOB.

Ariadne: YOU NEEDED ME TO GUIDE YOU.

Theseus: MY GUIDE... MY THREAD...

Ariadne: I AM NAKED.

Theseus: MY SONG...

Ariadne: THERE! DON'T YOU HEAR IT? SOMEONE'S BREATHING.

Theseus: IT'S JUST THE KNIFE; IT BRUSHED AGAINST MY COAT.

(Pause)

Theseus: WOMEN ARE SO DECEITFUL. SINGING LIKE A VIRGIN WHILE
BENEATH YOUR ROBE YOU WERE AN ANIMAL.

Ariadne: WHO AM I TO FAULT THE BULL'S PASSION, OR THE QUEEN'S?
ANYWAY, WHO FAVOURS VIRGINITY? NO WOMAN I KNOW.

Theseus: THE WOMEN MEN ADORE AND THE WOMEN OF OUR LUST ARE NEVER
THE SAME. YOU WERE MY INSPIRATION.

Ariadne: MANY SACRED FIRES ARE PROFANE. DON'T DISMISS THE PROFANE
THAT REVEALS THE SACRED.

NIGHTS I'VE SPENT ON SATIN PILLOWS AFTER LOVERS

DEPARTED, AND I'VE THOUGHT: GODS AND HEROES CAN'T RELAX.

Theseus: WHEN YOU CAME TO ME IN THE MOONLIGHT THAT FIRST TIME,
YOU WANTED ME TO TRIUMPH.

Ariadne: YOU WERE SO FAIR, WITH GOLDEN HAIR AND EYES BLACK AS A
RAVEN'S.

Theseus: BUT YOU KNEW I NEEDED TO TRIUMPH OVER THE MONSTER. OFTEN
I'VE WILLED THE VICTORY FOR MYSELF ALONE, BUT WITH YOU
IT'S DIFFERENT. I WANT YOU TO WASH THE BLOOD FROM MY
BODY BEFORE OUR LOVE-MAKING.

Ariadne: THE VICTORY WILL BELONG TO US BOTH, DARLING. HERE, TAKE
MY HAND.

The figures approach and each takes one hand of the neophyte.
Together they move forward cautiously.

Suddenly, a clatter of hooves and a roar. The neophyte is pushed
to the ground. Perhaps there is a subliminal flash of light
revealing a raised sword. Then darkness and the flapping of wings
down the long corridor. Silence.

Eighth Series: THE DUET OF DEITIES

Revelation: ASTERION

A pale white light. A figure dressed in white approaches the neophyte. It is the same figure that was encountered in the lecture hall at the beginning – a neutral face, mature, sexless, with three small horns on the brow.

Asterion: YOU RECOGNIZE CORRECTLY. WE MEET AGAIN. WE ARE ALONE NOW. THE OTHERS ARE NOT HERE. THEY HAVE RETURNED TO THE PLACES IN THE STORY WHERE THEY BELONG TO ACT OUT THEIR PARTS AGAIN. FOR THEM EVOLUTION OR ACHIEVEMENT ARE IMPOSSIBLE. THEY CANNOT BREAK FREE FROM THE PAST. THESEUS WAS CONTENT TO KILL THE MINOTAUR. HE NEGLECTED ASTERION. HE UNDERSTOOD NOTHING. ARIADNE WILL GO ON SINGING BEAUTIFUL SONGS TO INSPIRE HEROES AND ENCHANT GODS.

YOU ALONE HAVE PASSED THROUGH THE DARKNESS. YOU HAVE UNDERSTOOD. COME, TAKE MY HAND AND I WILL PREPARE YOU TO ENTER THE LIGHT.

Preparation: AQUASTER³²

The neophyte is led to a couch and made to lie down face up on it. Asterion washes the face and hands gently. The hands are then

³² *Aquaster*, from *aqua* and *astrum*. Hence, "star water," a term from Paracelsus.

folded across the breast. Asterion next perfumes the throat and temples. Some strips of cool, soothing fabric are laid across the hands, the brow and on the throat. Soft music accompanies the process. When complete the light will slowly fade, and Asterion will take a seat at the side of the couch.

Finale: O NOBLY-BORN

The music continues. Asterion recites or chants the following texts from the *Bardo Thödol*.

Asterion: O NOBLY-BORN, THE TIME HAS COME FOR YOU TO SEEK THE
PATH. YOUR BREATHING IS ABOUT TO CEASE. I HAVE SET YOU
FACE TO FACE.