



The Devil is Pravda

A Catherine Mulberry Book
by James F. Whitehead

Pravda – “Truth” in Russian. The names of the main communist newspapers Pravda and Izvestia meant “the truth” and “the news” respectively, a popular saying was “there’s no news in Pravda and no truth in Izvestia”.

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I have been at pains to point out my unsuitability for the task of writing these records. This is an account of the Catherine Mulberry, a professor of comparative religion, not her doppelgänger. This book derives again from when a series of cassette tapes was sent to me with the opening sentence,

‘Please publish these, notwithstanding your terrible English!’

True my English is not good, in grammar especially. The detailed explanations are necessary, and I try to simplify as much as possible, but C.M.’s work is complex and at times arcane (if that is the right word).

Moreover, I have not the facilities for professional proof reading and editing. All this C.M. knows. So here it is, I hope the reader can understand and my poor abilities not prevent these stories from being read. Thank you in anticipation for your understanding. JFW.

And once again a ‘tip of the hat’ to Wikipedia & “Myths & Legends” Dorling Kingsbury.

CHAPTER 1: BEGINNING.

Catherine Mulberry lived alone in a large house and garden on Cumberland Street in the town of Woodbridge in Suffolk which lies on the Deben estuary opposite the famous Saxon burial site of Sutton Hoo. This particular Catherine Mulberry was the retired professor of comparative religion, a post she held at the University of Birmingham. The house in Woodbridge she had originally shared with her platonic friend Billy Taylor, as well as more recently with Emily Clarke, also retired, being once the head of the Universities' Advanced Pathology Lab (APL). These others had left the house. Gone into other worlds in previous adventures, "adventures" for want of a better word. And one in which an extrovert avatar of Catherine Mulberry had lived, only lived in the Essex town of Witham. This avatar too was like Emily Clarke and Billy Taylor no longer a resident in any "normal" world.

Catherine Mulberry since retiring had taken a different tack to her academic interest in comparative religions. Following BT's example of active participation in these religions this included in some cases her being initiated into them, and taking part in their ceremonies, and in the course of doing so she had travelled the world. This had brought her a little recognition, more than she had as an academic, to the extent of having an article published about her travels in a Sunday magazine supplement and appearing on Woman's Hour on BBC Radio 4. These featured her visit to Siberia where she was initiated into several shamanistic sects. She had also visited Africa and like BT, took part in a Dinka initiation. Dinka being a traditional religion of the people of South Sudan whose symbol is a puff adder. She had studied the churches of the Santo Daime. A syncretic religion founded in the 1930s by Raimundo Irineu

Serra in the Brazilian Amazonian state of Acre, whose sigil is a six-pointed star with eagle and crescent. She studied this first in Holland then went on a trip to the Amazon. This involved the use of ayahuasca, a plant used to brew a “tea” whose active ingredient is DMT, N-dimethyltryptamine, a hallucinogenic tryptamine drug that naturally occurs in many plant species. She had become deeply involved in religious practices as opposed to just the theory, even going on a walkabout in Australia.

Recently she had become more interested in Christianity, and in particular the Roman Catholic Church. This began by accident; she had been invited by her old school at the university to give a talk on her change of direction from the academic to her actual involvement in world religions. She had taken the train to Birmingham, stayed at the Holiday Inn in the city centre and so thought it only proper to visit The Basilica of St Chad. She had visited the cathedral before, it being of special interest, built in 1841 making it the first Catholic Cathedral to be built in Great Britain following the Reformation of the 16th Century, some 300 years before. It was designed by the great Gothic revivalist Augustus Welby Pugin who was also responsible for some of the designs of the houses of parliament. All this she knew, but this time she had a very strange experience, one that was impossible to put into words, but it involved the presence of her other avatar. And wrapped in that presence was some deep secret. On returning to Woodbridge she couldn't find any peace, a general sense of unease in the day and strange dreams at night.

So, it was these feelings that prompted her to write to an old colleague, a Thomas O'Malley, who she had worked with at

the University of Birmingham. Wrote using pen and paper, and a fountain pen at that, as was a tradition they had formed, “AntiTechs” they called themselves. The letter concerned her visit to the Basilica, and that it had ‘woken’ something in her, just what she knew not. Though Thomas O’Malley had worked in The University he was also an ordained Catholic priest, or was, since that time Father Thomas O’Malley had become a Bishop and then a Cardinal. His work now involved the Vatican archives in Rome. She was very surprised three days later after she had posted the letter that the Cardinal telephoned her, and after some unusually brief pleasantries asked her to come to the Vatican on some very important matters.

CHAPTER 2: THE CALL.

‘Catherine, at last you made contact.’ this was Cardinal O’Malley’s strange telephone call. ‘I’ve been waiting for two years unable to contact you, you see you had to approach me, it could not be any other way. Now we both I hope can all move on. I’ve booked a flight for you from Stanstead for tomorrow, and we, that is the Holy See will provide accommodation. Short notice, we can delay, but the ramifications of your visit to the Basilica are profound, please say you will come, it is vital.’

The Cardinal waited, Catherine Mulberry thought, her strange feelings from the visit to St Chads was still very present, so she replied,

‘Yes, of course I will come tomorrow.’

With which the Cardinal sent an email with the travel details, gave her a blessing and ended the call.

The following day she took a taxi to Stanstead Airport, and an uneventful flight to Rome.

When she arrived and passed through customs there was a priest at the arrivals exit holding a card with her name on it. He took her bag and drove her to the Vatican, here she was greeted by Cardinal O’Malley with a hug. He showed her to a room; it was like a suite in a hotel. Then said if she would like to freshen up or whatever he would call back in half an hour and take her to lunch. She said this would be fine. Lunch was in a refectory, obviously one for visitors. After lunch the Cardinal led the way to St Peters.

Now deep underneath St Peters in Rome a group of three approached a large door of what looked like, but was certainly not, oak. The three being Catherine Mulberry, the Cardinal and an unnamed scientist, who introduced himself as 'The Scientist.' And he continued.

'This is the door that leads to what we have been told is the "interchange", it looks like wood, but it isn't. What it is we do not know, we cannot take a sample of the material, it is impervious to all our attempts. It appeared two years ago, the Cardinal has visited it a number of times, as also myself and two others who will remain unknown.

The "interchange" is from one world to another, or I should say from our universe or from our dimension. Well, this is our speculation.'

The door had been opened by the Cardinal, and the three walked through the doorway.

They were in a long white corridor with Latin texts on the walls.

Cardinal O'Malley spoke, 'The texts speak of different worlds yet one Christ, which was some comfort, even so these facts it was decided were to be kept secret from all save the inner circle, even from the Holy Father. Because...'

He began to answer the unasked question,

'there are other Holy Fathers we have been told, and Holy Mothers. We have not seen these, but have been told by your avatar, who also told us to keep all a secret even from you. Especially from you until you make contact. And now you have so here we are after two years of waiting. And how do

we know all this, we have been given documents, and evidence in the forms of ciphers which have unlocked ancient texts, and the science...’

The scientist now spoke, ‘It can be established by various means that this corridor is not in our universe. That the laws of our universe do not apply here. For one, we can spend days here, without hunger, sleep or any bodily functions, and on return no time has passed. Our scientific instruments do not work, or computers, we assume this corridor and whatever it connects to lies outside of our laws and possibly outside of our known elements and atomic structures. And so, time also runs strangely, or not at all.’

He looked at his watch, as did Catherine Mulberry and the Cardinal. The digital numbers on the scientist’s watch were running backwards; the analogue watches of Catherine Mulberry and the Cardinal were running anticlockwise.

‘This we can’t verify because our instruments do not function. But that in itself is sufficient proof of this not being in our world.’

‘And amazingly those ancient texts we can now decipher tell that this will be the case. Texts written over a thousand years ago.’ added the Cardinal.

At that moment a door at the other end of the corridor opened and in stepped the “other” Catherine Mulberry, dressed in her typical vivid primary colours, she spoke,

‘Cardinal, would you like to say why we are here?’

She waited.

‘The Cardinal knows but it seems does not want to say, you are here to be taken to a place where you will be ordained. And where you will be shown many things including the proper methods of exorcism. And I’m afraid you must come alone.’

Catherine Mulberry looked at the Cardinal and the scientist, they gave no response, the “other” Catherine Mulberry, her avatar or doppelgänger, took her hand and led her through the door and closed it behind them. They were in a vast domed room.

‘I cannot tell you everything, it would be too much but here is a Holy Mother.’

Some time passed or maybe not, Catherine Mulberry returned to the corridor, the Cardinal said nothing, the scientist couldn’t resist asking,

‘You are ordained?’

Catherine Mulberry just said a low ‘Yes.’

Strangely Cardinal O’Malley didn’t wish to talk of old times or anything else, just seemed relieved, so the group left St Peters and went their different ways.

Later that evening Catherine Mulberry was walking and found herself in a taverna. She noticed the “other” Catherine Mulberry sat at a table, who beckoned her. She sat, the “other” Catherine Mulberry had two glasses and a bottle of red wine, she filled the two glasses and took a drink, putting down the glass she spoke.

‘The whole Vatican thing was not real in the sense of meaning, by which I mean your experience in the Basilica was the real

event. Something of my experiences, overflowed, for want of a better term, and flowed into you. And so you are my opposite, you are anyway. The rituals mean nothing, or the words, words are just signs lacking any supernatural power. Why? Then you might think, well the Catholic Church can be quick to condemn, even now. What it has witnessed here will prevent this. Whatever your actions are it will be met by a silence from the Holy See. Now drink your wine and let's enjoy this strange meeting.'

She paused then added,

'You can use any words to express the power you now have.'

And saying this she touched Catherine Mulberry on the lips.

Catherine Mulberry gave her avatar a look, or was she the avatar she thought?

The "other" Catherine Mulberry launched into what seemed like a prepared speech,

'In another world I became a God and I guess this overflowing is what is occurring. And Gods, those who do not interfere and make others mere objects do no harm. I spend all of my time in a summer's field writing poetry with other Gods, one paints, others fish or create vast mathematical structures.

Now it will make two attempts, not a third, a third would be fatal, fatal though for it not you.'

'It?'

'The Devil, there is only one Devil, there are many Gods, after all we are supposed to be good, but a Devil, the Devil couldn't tolerate competition, so there is only one.

And now I will make my adieu.’ with which this, this other Catherine Mulberry left.

Catherine Mulberry thought about the Devil, then put it from her mind, finished her wine and left the taverna.

The first attempt was as she walked back to her lodgings in the Vatican. The narrow street was deserted, two young men approached, one twirling a knife in his left hand and smiling, the other just had a grin or smirk on his face. She looked around behind her, to see the third, also with a knife. They approached closer, strange she had absolutely no fear, which she thought that might have caused a glimpse of doubt in the eyes of the two young men in front of her. It all happened very fast, the knife meant for Catherine Mulberry was thrust into the chest of the other of the two men, then plunged into the assailant’s own chest, who looked at the knife handle with an astonished look, as was his companion showing a similar look, they both then collapsed to the ground. The sound from behind Catherine Mulberry was the other young man collapsing to the ground with blood bubbling from a deep slash across his throat. Catherine Mulberry didn’t look back, just stepped around the two dead figures who were now lying in a pool of their own blood.

The next morning Cardinal O’Malley didn’t join Catherine Mulberry for breakfast. She said nothing about the previous evening and was on the aircraft flying her back to England before the strange events of the previous night became public. A murder and double suicide which would never be solved.

The aircraft was flying over the Alps at over 20,000 feet when the second attempt was made. To the passengers it was a

sound like a soft thud and then the cabin lights went out, after a second or two dim emergency lights came on, and all of the passengers save one began to panic. On the flight deck far more was occurring. Both engines had shut down, as had all power, and the emergency generator also was not functioning, so all the flight controls were ineffective. The emergency battery kept the displays showing altitude and speed, all others were showing zero. The pilot looked at the co-pilot, both trying to operate controls as a standard procedure they had trained for in many simulations, though never with no readouts from most of the instruments, and always with the robot voice saying “Warning, warning...” but not this time. Things were eerily silent on the flight deck except they could hear some of the passengers were sobbing loudly and some screaming. Catherine Mulberry was looking passively out of the window and wondering to herself,

‘Will I be the sole survivor, or one of a few?’

The flight crew were now giving the somewhat pointless ‘Brace for impact, head down, brace for impact.’ And then again in Italian, French and German. At the speed, altitude and height of the terrain they would be able only to repeat this twice or three times. The pilots had stopped any attempt to do anything, as in simulation such a systems failure is unrecoverable. Strange even the radio was not functioning. They both mentally had estimated around just over half a minute to the inevitable impact.

At an altitude of under 1,000 feet all the aircraft’s systems flicked on, both engines burst into life, all instruments and controls became live, immediately the pilot took control and the co-pilot responded also to which the plane began to rise.

It was only later reviewing the events that the anomaly that caused the situation arrived or rather failed to arrive at two conclusions. First what caused such a failure, and second, for both pilots the response on gaining control, power and ascent was well outside the aircraft's parameters. For some it was solved as being "The Hand of God", only Catherine Mulberry thought she knew another reason though as yet couldn't name it. The plane made an emergency landing at Zurich airport. Some passengers were treated for shock, those who could took a flight on to Stanstead, the original destination. Catherine Mulberry took a first-class train to Paris and from there the same to London, and so on to Woodbridge via Ipswich. The motivation being not a fear of flying but the food available on the Zurich to Paris Express.

The Zurich to Paris, TGV Lyria takes just over four hours with stops at Basel, Mulhouse, and also at Belfort-Montbéliard TGV and Dijon.

The Première Signature: a unique travel experience, included a personal welcome with a drink and towlette, "La Table" menu prepared by starred chefs Michel Roth and Danny Khezzar, served at your seat, complimentary drinks, Wi-Fi and Wi-Fi portal with a large entertainment library, express access to the TGV at Paris Gare de Lyon, access to the SNCF Grand Voyageur lounge at Paris Gare de Lyon station.

Catherine Mulberry had,

Starter - Green chickpea salad, peas, broad beans, white onions and goat's cheese crumble.

Main Course - Cassolette of king prawns, aniseed shellfish coulis, oregano piperade, potato gratin.

Cheese - Camembert, ash goat cheese, blueberry confit with lemon thyme and butter.

Dessert - Apricot and orange blossom cheesecake.

CHAPTER 3: THE RABBIT HOLE.

Now at home, restored and pleased with the journey Catherine Mulberry had a problem.

The problem was simple, she had studied world religions in detail as an academic, and as an anthropologist might, by involvement. She knew of the many devils, the rise of dualism...

“Among ancient Middle Eastern beliefs, Zoroastrianism was the first institutionalized belief-system which developed a clear demonology headed by a supreme spirit of Evil, Angra Mainyu, i.e. The Devil, and Ahura Mazda, the supreme God who will at the end of time overcome Angra Mainyu.

Around 600 BC, Zarathustra urged his followers to turn away from the devas, intermediaries between Ahura Mazda and humans. However elsewhere a daeva has disagreeable characteristics. In the Gathas, the oldest texts of the Zoroastrian canon, the daevas are gods that are to be rejected. However, the term Daeva shares the same origin of “Deva” of Hinduism, which is a cognate with Latin deus, god, and Greek Zeus.

So, Zarathustra urged his followers to turn away from the devas to dedicating worship to Ahura Mazda alone. Unique to Zarathustra’s revelation was that he claimed that evil is not part of the Godhead or ultimate reality, but a separate principle independent from God. For the formulation of Good and Evil as entirely separate principles, Zarathustra argued that God, Ahura Mazda, freely chooses goodness, while Angra Mainyu freely chooses evil. By doing so, he established the first known dualistic cosmological system such also found in

Manichaeism. This to some extent would later influence other religions, including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, however not to the extent of a dualism of the goodness of God, and the evil of the Devil.

Thus, the originally monistic Canaanite form of Judaism absorbs parts of Persian dualistic tendencies during the post-exilic period when the Jews returned from forced exile. The Jews of the Kingdom of Judah having been subjugated by the Neo-Babylonian Empire, were freed from the Babylonian captivity following the Persian conquest of Babylon in 539 BCE. The Persian king Cyrus the Great issued the Edict of Cyrus allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and the Land of Judah, which was made a self-governing Jewish province under the new Persian Empire.

So, the Second Temple Judaism, and Christianity, differ from Persian dualism in some regards: the proposed omnipotence of God of the former does not allow for a radical dualism as proposed by Zoroastrianism, the separate God and separate Devil.

Judeo-Christian tradition differs from earlier monistic beliefs by limiting the power of their Godhead through an evil principle or force, introduced by Zoroastrianism. Christianity in particular, struggled with reconciling God's omnipresence with God's benevolence. While Zoroastrianism sacrificed God's omnipotence for God's benevolence, thus giving rise to a principal Devil as independent from God. Christianity mostly insisted on the Devil being created and typically a fallen angel, Satan, opposed to its creator."

This she read in a book whose title was, "The Devil, A biography." And the author was Catherine Mulberry. So, what

to do. She was familiar also with exorcisms, plural, had she somehow subconsciously exorcised the Devil herself.

And what of the attempts on her life, and why only two? Her mind was confused, so she resorted to her normal act, a walk along the estuary. Catherine Mulberry left the house and walked down Cumberland Street, at the crossroads she turned right down Quay Street, crossing Quayside and over the railway line to the quay and the houseboats. It was mid-September, hints of Autumn. She turned right and took the path following the River Deben Estuary past the boat yard and yacht club and walked towards Kyston point. Not going all the way to the point, she found a bench and sat looking out across the river. Opposite was Sutton Hoo and the place of the famous Saxon burial site. This was hidden by the trees, a mix of larch and beech. The tide was retreating so a line of godwits was feeding on the worms in the silt along the water's edge. She saw a single egret and a family of swans. Further down on a mud bank were the rooks which nested in the woods above Sutton Hoo. The birds, moving water and clouds passed and Catherine Mulberry was slow to realise evening was coming on, maybe the calls of the waders, or rooks returning from the fields to their trees broke the dream. She rose and walked slowly back to her house, she would spend the night with her books on wild birds, particularly of estuaries. In the morning after her usual breakfast of coffee, scrambled eggs and smoked salmon she went to her study. But nothing. She took books down from shelves and put them back, getting ever more frustrated.

So, she closed her books and drove her Wolseley to Aldeburgh.

CHAPTER 4: ALDEBURGH.

The Journey was through part of East Suffolk which is known as the Sandlings. The A12 road marks the divide, to the west the land is boulder clays, to the east the Sandlings and heaths and then the North Sea. Once this was sheep country whose wool gave the wealth to the area as seen in the fine medieval churches. Irrigation improved the land which was put over to crops, sugar-beet, potatoes, and carrots. Because of the lightness of the soil a dry spell in the spring of 1968 caused a dust bowl with 4-foot drifts of sand and soil covering the lanes. As a result, windbreaks of lines of conifers were planted, and now are a feature of the landscape, as are the more recent free-range pigs. The heaths were also planted with Scots and Corsican pines together with birch by the Forestry Commission to create the forests of Rendlesham and Tunstall. Rendlesham being famous for the alleged UFO landings of 1980. At the time units of The United States Airforce were based at RAF Woodbridge, an airfield surrounded by the forest, and part of the cold war in which there were numerous US bases in the UK and Europe.

Catherine Mulberry avoided the A12, driving first through the village of Melton, across the railway level crossing and on towards Snape, on the lanes which often are lined with old oaks. The land opens up at Snape, then there is a long straight drive along the road through the fields of pigs. At Aldeburgh she parked the Wolseley and found a bench on which to sit and gaze out over the pebbled beach to the vastness of the North Sea and skies.

Though by some thought too touristy Catherine Mulberry liked Aldeburgh. It being unspoilt by the more obvious tourist

paraphernalia of car parks, amusement arcades and such, It still resembled an old sea-side town with the narrow path, Crag Path, separating rows of Victorian and Edwardian houses from the beach and sea. Much of this as it would have looked back when these houses were built. The only “blot” being the totally out of keeping carbuncle of the “modernist” lifeboat station.

Time passed, measured in the breaking waves, then as if waking from a dream it was her stomach that told her it was lunch time.

Lunch time, and the choice was varied, from driving home, maybe lunch on the way home at Snape, or lunch in the town. The town won, so she walked down to the Wentworth Hotel for lunch, but on an unforeseen whim booked a single room for the evening. She would have a late lunch, short walk and afternoon sleep. The red wine would be a force majeure, but not an act of God. The evening would be focused on an Indian meal in Sea Spice, a separate entity but part of the nearby White Lion Hotel.

Lunch was for start; Duck ragu, egg tagliatelle and shaved parmesan.

For a main; Game pie, served with mash potatoes & seasonal vegetables.

And finally; Iced mango parfait with raspberry sorbet.

And of course, two large glasses of a “good red” as her old friend BT would say, only in his case probably three glasses. As she thought of him, she wondered what he would do in such a case. He had taught her dowsing, but that wouldn’t work, it’s

best for yes, no questions. She needed a better tactic to find out what was puzzling her.

‘So now a short walk then an afternoon nap.’ she spoke silently to herself.

Catherine Mulberry walked from the hotel crossing the road and onto Crag Path so she could walk along the sea shore. The sky was blue streaked with thin cloud, she felt less worried, and surprised herself by deciding to walk back to the hotel via the High Street. So, at the southern lookout she found her way down Neptune Alley and onto the High Street. Walking slowly and absent mindedly looking in the shop windows. A few women’s clothes shops she wasn’t interested in, Joules, Sea Salt, too “modern” for her tastes.

She did go into L’Occitane for some perfume, opposite was O&C Butcher, a ladies and gentlemen’s outfitters where she did sometimes shop, but not this time. Continuing down the street past the various shops interspersed with small cottages, now mostly holiday lets, which was a shame, but things move on. Eventually was the cinema opposite, and The Aldeburgh Bookshop. Catherine Mulberry could resist clothes shops, but not a bookshop, so in she went. Spent a good fifteen minutes wandering, it had a children’s section, naturally, and sold art materials and various board games. Leaving the shop she took a right down Dial Lane and was back facing the North Sea and the Aldeburgh model yacht pond, it had two small boats on it, then on past the Moot Hall and finally was the Hotel. By now she was sleepy and did sleep soundly until 7 o’clock. Not having brought a change of clothes didn’t bother her too much, she justified her stay as being helpful, it was a feeling, but had no good reason, but

maybe there was something. She pressed on with the plan, a shower, short walk and an uneventful Indian meal, then bed.

She woke from a dream, not a nightmare, odd, she was a child walking round the bookshop, not interested in the grown up's books, but very interested in the children's puzzles. She liked puzzles as a child, which may be accounted for her academic interests. And one puzzle or game in particular, a wooden Ouija Board game! Such that she sat up in bed and exclaimed, 'A Ouija Board!'

She had an early usual breakfast, coffee, scrambled eggs and smoked salmon. By 9 o'clock she was outside the bookshop, but it opened at 9.30 however not annoyed more excited. So, she walked to the path, found a bench and once again watched the waves, and her wrist watch every five minutes. At 9.30 she was outside the bookshop as the young boy unlocked the door. She made straight for the children's toys, and there it was, a Victorian styled Ouija board.

By 9.40 she was back in her hotel room, and though it would be sensible to wait, she couldn't. Placing it on the table and a finger on the planchette the Ouija board worked immediately,

B _ O _ M _ B

This was shattering, before the planchette could move anymore she removed her finger, realising she needed pencil and paper, so went to fetch some from her bag.

She returned to the Ouija board, now using her left hand on the Planchette she could write with her right.

B _ O _ M _ B _ _ 5 _ 1 _ . _ 0 _ 5 _ 6 _ 4 _ 8 _ 1 _ , _ _ 1 _ . _ 3 _
6 _ 5 _ 0 _ 9 _ 3 _ _ _ 5 _ 0 _ . _ 9 _ 7 _ 0 _ 9 _ 4 _ 7 _ , _ _ 1 _ . _
6 _ 2 _ 4 _ 6 _ 4 _ 6

Bomb 51.056481, 1.365093, 50.970947, 1.624646

It stopped and she stared at what she had written. The numbers looked strange, but the message was clear. From all her previous experiences she knew the seriousness, and that she must act.

Now sitting on the corner of the bed in the hotel room from where she could see the sea and thinking hard. From previous situations and yes, adventures with her friend Billy and others, she had met people from the police, in the West Midlands Force, and also the security services. Even some from MI5, possibly MI6 and other security services which were unnamed. She had some of these in her contacts list on her smart phone. She now fetched the phone and scrolled down and found a number under the name “JANE SMITH”.

She dialled the number and after three rings a voice answered,

‘Hello, you are speaking to Jane Smith...’

‘It doesn’t sound like I remember you?’ Catherine Mulberry replied.

‘Can you give your name please...’

‘Oh, Catherine Mulberry, no wait, Circe as in Greek mythology, C I R C E...’

‘Just one moment please...’ was the reply.

A few seconds passed, then the voice returned,

‘So, Circe...’

‘I prefer Catherine Mulberry. And your name?’ Catherine Mulberry asked.

‘The name, Jane Smith is more of a job description than a proper noun, so how may I help?’

‘Oh, I have by some means received a message and was worried.’

‘Yes, and what is the message?’

‘Bomb 51.056481, 1.365093, 50.970947, 1.624646’

‘I see, Bomb 51.056481, 1.365093, 50.970947, 1.624646?’

said the Jane Smith.

‘Yes.’ confirmed Catherine Mulberry.

‘Thank you, Circe, we will be in touch in due course.’ the line went dead.

Catherine Mulberry placed the Ouija board back in its box, and in the bag from the bookshop, took her own bag, put on her coat and checked out of the hotel. She then drove back to her house in Woodbridge.

CHAPTER 5: BOMB.

Jane Smith was now being driven in a fast car with police escort, all blue lights, and sirens when needed, up the A12 to Woodbridge. She had telephoned ahead to Catherine Mulberry; she would be with her in about an hour or so, and with her colleague. She didn't mention both would be armed.

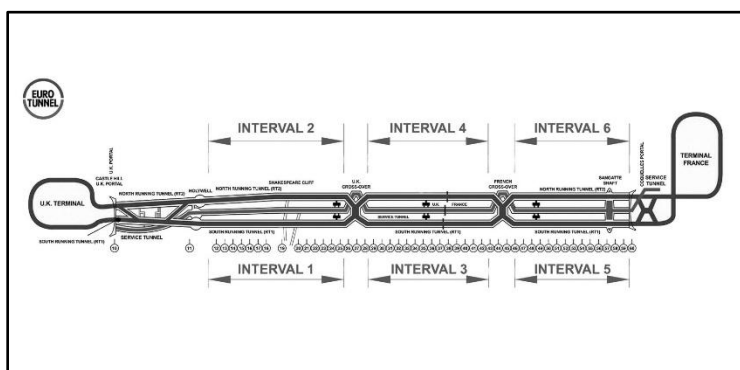
In Thames House and elsewhere Circe's status was "Gold". And so, in Thames House amongst other things this meant immediate action, also an automatic notification to other departments, to several special work groups, some in the basement of Thames house, others in GCHQ in Cheltenham. The message was clear, and passed on, meetings were arranged. Bomb followed by two latitude and longitude references, which in turn raised the activity to maximum, and other agencies became involved. This included now MI6 and COBR.

Why? the coordinates were the two crossover caverns in the Channel Tunnel.

The longest underwater section of any tunnel in the world, at 37.9 km, 23.5 miles. Passes from the Kent coast near Folkestone to Coquelles on the French coast near Calais. It features two significant crossover caverns that allow trains to switch tracks, facilitating maintenance and operational efficiency. The caverns were constructed approximately 8 kilometres each from both the UK and French coasts. They are the largest undersea caverns ever built, measuring 156 meters long, 18.1 meters wide, and 10.5 meters high.

Obviously, bombs placed here could be catastrophic. This conclusion was reached almost immediately, in the UK the

Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR) and once contacted, in the French equivalent. Yet even before these meetings were finished a pre-planned set of actions took place. Those trains in the tunnel cleared, and all services stopped. Even before the trains in transit cleared the tunnel bomb disposal units were using the service tunnels to access the caverns. This drill had been rehearsed many times. In under an hour teams were in the caverns.



The security monitoring of these key areas as well as the rest of the tunnel was tight, so no one actually believed any bomb could be placed, but a “gold” source is one which in no circumstances can be ignored. The tunnels were now cleared of all trains. It would take time to check, but parallel to this this CCTV was being reviewed manually and automatically. No traces of explosives were found in the caverns, no sign of unauthorised access on the CCTV or on close inspections.

The alternative methods in the brain storming sessions held in various groups was bombs in passenger or freight trains timed to explode in the caverns as the train or trains passed through. As no explosions had occurred, those trains now

held up would be searched, which would take some time. No trains would be allowed to run until some high-level decisions were made.

As a matter of course Jane Smith was contacted and was asked to contact Circe for any more information, and was permitted to reveal the meaning of the numbers,

‘If they hadn’t already worked this out.’

Catherine Mulberry’s phone rang, and it was obvious it was the same Jane Smith and now talking from a car.

‘This is Jane, the numbers are longitude and latitude of the two crossover caverns in the Channel Tunnel, could you possibly give any more information?’

There was a delay of several seconds then came a reply,

‘Sorry, but could you repeat what you just said?’

Jane Smith repeated the information, again this time there was a delay of a minute.

‘The tunnel, gosh, oh, sorry, OK, can you hold...’

Catherine Mulberry missed the ‘Yes.’ and Jane’s thinking, ‘She apologised by saying gosh, who is this person?’

The person in question had placed her phone in her pocket, and then was finding the Ouija board and taking it into the study. She arranged the board, note book pen and phone. Sitting she placed her finger on the Planchette, it moved.

D _ R _ I _ L _ L _ I _ N _ G

She picked up her phone, ‘Drilling, I guess is there any drilling going on nearby?’

‘No idea, but please I must end this call, I must let others know.’ was Jane’s reply.

The call ended, Catherine Mulberry was thinking,

‘So, it was the Devil who tried to kill me twice, I wonder... who is the Devil?’

She placed her finger on the Planchette, it moved.

Y _ O _ U

‘Oh, I need coffee.’

She went to the kitchen with her phone to make some strong coffee.

Meanwhile Jane Smith had contacted the room in which the technical teams worked, called the “Bear Pit”, as it could get quite heated. A relative junior was handling the incoming calls from lower ranks, others coming from higher sources heads at MI5, MI6, GCHQ, COBR, were handled by more senior staff.

She, the junior shouted,

‘Message from Jane, Drilling, Circe says drilling.’

Another junior immediately wrote drilling in large letters on a whiteboard; there was a brief silence then pandemonium.

A shouting match.

‘Drilling how the fuck?’

‘A rig?’

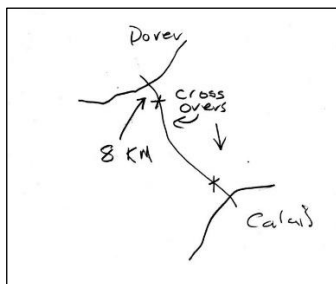
‘Near the caverns, over the caverns, no fucking way!’

‘Maybe then near.’

‘Oh please, you think no one would notice a drilling rig in the channel near the tunnel?’

A quieter figure was working on a laptop, suddenly rose and drew on the board, talking as he did,

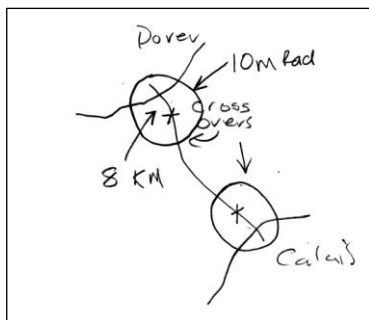
‘OK, here is the Tunnel, and at 8 kilometres from the coast the two crossovers.’



‘Well,’ now he picked up his laptop and read aloud for more effect, ‘Techniques such as multilateral, horizontal and extended reach drilling (ERD) are enhanced oil recovery (EOR) methods that can increase the yield of a downhole dramatically. It’s possible for ERD specialists to drill for more than 10 kilometres or 6.2 miles, horizontally from the well head.’

He repeated “horizontally”.

Then added to his drawing.



‘So, the rig could be 10 kilometres away, it would still be noticed.’ someone said.

The Boss man, who was actually a woman gave a look, then to the guy with the pen, looking at his drawing, said,

‘Or a hidden structure inland!’

‘Good work Ken, so now the downside is sure they, whoever they are can drill from inland it seems, and reach the caverns. And inland from a farm or some buildings out of site. Which raises the problem, how the hell do we find them.’

Someone else now spoke, ‘And can we check to see if drilling is going on somehow?’

‘Sonar, or such, can we get some ship to listen around the area for any sounds.’

Now a guy in uniform joined the conversation, he too looking at a laptop,

‘It so happens that HMS Ambush is in the vicinity, she’s an Astute class nuclear-powered fleet boat, sorry I mean a submarine.’

The Boss picked up her phone and made the call, now the guy with the pen and the whiteboard tapped his pen on the drawing,

‘Do these caverns have CCTV which records sounds, if so, we might use the Underwater acoustics guys at Newcastle Uni. I know one.’

Yet another now joined in

‘We have them here,’

He was projecting an image of the UK cavern in night vision, and it had sound. Within a minute he was working with his colleague, who was now phoning and getting in touch with Roy, he was at home. Roy was an Underwater acoustics guy or rather an expert, a professor at Newcastle University. The sound files were emailed, and they had to disclose it was a recording from an undersea cavern. He would no doubt guess where, but the Royal Navy amongst others had used his services, so he had signed the official secret act.

Roy beat the Navy, though at home, he could and often did work from home. His software could remove much of the tunnel background noise, he was now playing what sounded like a grinding noise, he was speaking,

‘It’s almost certainly a drill’

He was on speaker phone in the “Bear Pit”.

Someone was explaining how Roy worked in close collaboration with the North Sea oil and gas rigs, diagnosing problems and such.

‘Wait, hear that echo?’ this was Roy.

No one could.

‘And that I think it is another drill, maybe the other side of the cavern, and what’s all this about?’

Roy, not his actual name, would not be told, and he would be told he had signed the official secrets act. Meanwhile in the UK the Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR) was in session as was the French counterpart.

In the “Bear Pit” someone said, ‘Shit, two sets of drilling...’ then, ‘Oh god, and what at the French side?’

And others were saying,

‘And two bombs or more, here and possibly in the French cavern. Double shit!’

CHAPTER 6: BOMBS.

In the UK COBR was being updated, no bombs found in the caverns, and from some in the meeting doubts were being raised. How could such security be breached? The PM looked questioning at the head of MI5, she passed him over a sheet saying,

‘A list, not all, of Circe’s input of security issues they have raised in the past...’

The PM perused the list, they knew of some of these events, or rather events that didn’t occur, the lives saved, and was sure the list was not complete, as there were gaps.

An aid watched, the PM looked up,

The aid guessed the question about the gaps,

‘The gaps Prime Minister, it would be best if you knew not.’
With that the PM spoke,

‘We wait for more information; no trains will run until we know more...’

A similar process took place in Paris, likewise doubts were raised, the President past a similar sheet, not being that impressed until he saw the last item,

“Tentative d’assignation du président ...” his eyebrows raised and he spoke, ‘Nous attendons.’

The wait was short; both were now video linked to the “Bear Pit” in MI5. The Boss now presenting a much better diagram.

She talked through the progress, both in English and French, and the sounds from the CCTV were played. Also, now the Navy Commander could confirm that HMS Ambush had also detected noise which was almost certainly drilling, but it had now stopped.

In Paris the French would try with one of their Mine Sweepers and analyse their CCTV in their sound labs.

It too picked up drilling sounds and confirmed two sources, then confirmed now stopped.

In the “Bear Pit” the ‘Why stopped?’ question was asked.

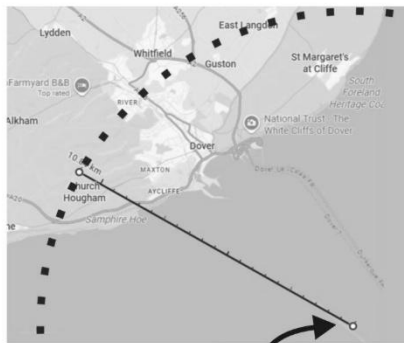
The navy guy spoke,

‘Well, they have either reached their target area, which is bad news, or they didn’t see HMS Ambush, but then if they had lookouts did see the French minesweeper.’

‘So,’ said the Boss, ‘in total 4 drilling sites and two lookouts.’

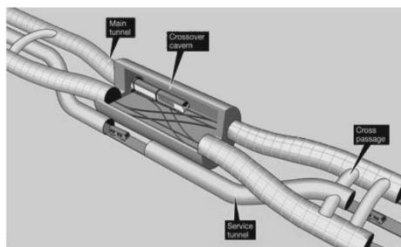
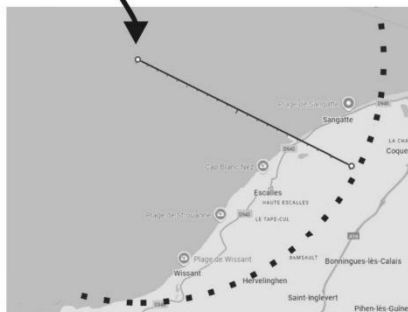
‘A lookout on each coast at minimum.’ said the Navy guy.

The “Bear Pit” Boss confirmed a potential six sites.



UK crossover cavern

French crossover cavern



Finally, the “Bear Pit” Boss said an agent was in transit to liaise with source Circe, potentially to help find the drilling sites.

The situation was now critical, within an hour on both sides of the channel special forces were standing by at Dover and Calais.

Meanwhile Jane Smith and her driver had arrived in Woodbridge.

Jane had spoken first,

‘Introductions later, I will cover the back, my friend here the front, we think there are six locations.’

Catherine Mulberry entered the study, five minutes later she found Jane in the garden room, she was wearing a holster holding a Glock.

Which made Catherine Mulberry think, ‘No use here.’

She passed a note to Jane with the locations who was immediately on her phone.

‘51.131420, 1.283345’ ‘51.158377, 1.384497’ ‘51.124363, 1.317830’

‘50.965116, 1.877518’ ‘50.914954, 1.763028’ ‘50.964742, 1.842025’

These were passed on and resolved by the “Bear Pit”, and now in the various situation rooms planning was taking place.

‘I’ll make some coffee.’ said Catherine Mulberry, then ‘Actually the guns aren’t really necessary, but I doubt you will believe me, yet.’

The “Bear Pit” and French equivalent resolved the coordinates.

In the UK, a large building on a trading estate, Barwick Road, Dover, Woods near St Margret’s Bay and flats in The Gateway, Dover. In Calais and its environs, a large Enersol warehouse, Rue des Garennnes, Calais, possibly farm buildings, Rte d'Escalles, Peuplingues and apartments at Digue Gaston Berthe, Plage de Calais.

The sites in the apartments were obviously lookouts, both having sea views, the others must be the drilling sites. Teams moved in to begin in unison. UK, SAS, French 1st Marine Infantry Parachute Regiment (1er RPIMa).

CHAPTER 7: SHOWDOWN.

Set to go at synchronised times in the UK and France. This did not occur, at all six sites similar events unfolded. At around 5 minutes to zero smoke and then flames were seen at all the sites. At the windows of the two apartments this was first spotted by the team members outside, quickly those at the doors rammed them open only to be met with a ball of fire. Their only action then was to pull the door back, which was a fire door, and use hand held extinguishers and their bullet proof shield until the fire brigades arrived. They had to hold back while what was the sound of exploding munitions ceased, even then entering behind the bullet proof shield held by an officer.

The teams who were to abseil to the balconies were obviously told to stand down, soon the windows had burst, and flames leapt upwards. Being on the top floors those living below and either side of the targets could escape unharmed. The only injuries being minor burns on the hands to those forcing the doors closed. The walls being reinforced concrete the small arms munitions exploding caused no injuries.

At the drilling sites similar occurred, smoke and flames, then on entry a ball of fire. The crews hung back whilst munitions exploded, some of obvious heavy calibre. The woods near St Margret's Bay hid the workings, they had been behind a security fence which the SAS had cut, the fire however quickly spread into the trees and dry bracken driving back the team.

Fire crews again had to wait, now all backing off as these sites obviously had more serious weapons. SAS and French forces waited behind their shields. Road blocks made the areas safe.

After half an hour the small explosions had stopped, another half hour and the same tactics. Armoured vehicles broke down doors; shields were used as in the apartments.

The fires were all extinguished in two hours, except the copse of woods near St Margret's Bay. It was evening before access to the large workshop could be gained, but it revealed the same. At all four sites drilling equipment was found, and that was all, the terrorists or whomever had gone. The two apartments contained remains of radio equipment, and what was probably night vision gear and telescopes. Also, handguns and an Uzi at each location. The drilling sites had similar radios and an array of weapons including assault rifles. The firemen who had volunteered to follow the officers using the shields all received gallantry awards. Unlike the SAS / 1er RPIMa, it was their job after all. No explosives were found.

Subsequent investigations showed for all sites that there were several bore holes that went the 10 kilometres then snaked around the caverns. The pattern suggesting only a few more remained to be drilled. The idea it seems was that when all was completed that would be when the charges would be placed and detonated. The effect killing any passengers on trains in the tunnel and making recovery of bodies and repair a long and messy process.

Questions were why the drilling stopped then briefly restarted. The drilling had, it was thought, halted when the initial search of the caverns was made, resumed afterwards then told to stop from a higher source or maybe because of the French minesweeper.

The politicians were pleased, news had to be released that there was no loss of life, but the failure to find any of those

involved, that was very much played down. DNA samples could not be taken, either the sites were well cleaned, and or the intense heat and explosions made this impossible. Or did anything come from the interviews of neighbours at the apartments and workers at the industrial sites.

On receiving the news Jane Smith introduced herself and her partner to Catherine Mulberry. Her colleague looked like he was probably in his mid 20s, wore jeans, trainers t-shirt, a baseball cap and hoody. He had dark medium length hair and looked like he was trying to grow a goatee beard.

Catherine Mulberry thought ‘Very good, absolutely non-descript, you would not remember him, perhaps not even see him, and he is probably, late 20s, and fitter and stronger than he looks’

Jane had shoulder length brown hair, with a fringe, t-shirt and Levi jacket, brown worn shoulder bag, no earrings, or jewellery except a thin silver chain necklace. Dark trousers with deck shoes. She wore slight makeup and a trace of lipstick. Her voice was nondescript, no trace of an accent, she was probably late 20s of average build, certainly not fat, again a female version of her colleague so possibly very fit. But certainly not the attractive Surrey girl that the previous Jane Smith had been, but again Catherine Mulberry thought, ‘All fake’.

Jane’s colleague, also called “Ken” had a holdall, out of which he got some gear, this he linked to a screen, and they were then in some sort of Zoom conference with those in the “Bear Pit”. Introductions made, and then they watched recordings

of the events. The Boss had chance to thank Catherine Mulberry.

Catherine Mulberry left the proceedings briefly, but by early evening the basic details were known, gear but no personal from the six sites. That was when Catherine Mulberry spoke to the Boss,

‘I’ve had more information, it simply is “6 now 5”.’

‘What does that mean?’ was the question.

‘Absolutely no idea.’ was the reply, then, ‘No excuse me that was an old friend speaking, 6 planned events, now only 5 perhaps.’

This changed things,

‘So,’ said the Boss ‘I think in that case Jane should stay, Ken you can drive back, Jane, we’ll get you booked into a hotel.’

‘No need,’ said Catherine Mulberry, ‘she can stay here, there are three spare bedrooms and a guest cottage, I insist. And Ken before you leave let’s all three share a late meal. Chicken salad, OK?’

So that is what happened. After Ken left Catherine Mulberry opened a bottle of red,

‘Let’s go into the garden room, watch the stars and you can avoid telling me anything.’

‘I’d like to know your source?’ replied Jane.

‘All in good time.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

CHAPTER 8: INDIA.

At breakfast the next day, Jane had the same as Catherine Mulberry, scrambled eggs, smoked salmon and coffee, Jane remarking as she finished on the quality of the salmon, Catherine Mulberry explaining,

‘It’s from Pinneys of Orford.’ she continued, ‘And I suppose I should show my source. Follow me.’

Catherine Mulberry led the way to the study and the table where the Ouija board and planchette were on.

‘A Ouija board, you are not serious?’ said Jane.

Catherine Mulberry had a slight frown, she picked up the planchette and stroked it a few times, placed it back on the board and said,

‘Try, it should work for you now this time, sit, place your hand on the planchette and ask a question.’

Jane sat, placed her hand and said, ‘Who is behind these terrorists?’

The planchette moved, Jane was spellbound then said,

‘... but I’m not moving it.’ But as she did the letters were,

S _ A _ T _ A _ N.

‘Satan!’ said Jane, ‘the devil, they are devil worshipers?’

‘Maybe,’ said Catherine Mulberry, continuing, ‘but there is something in your tone, is there maybe in your organisation another use of either of these terms?’

There was a long pause as if Jane was considering, then she spoke,

‘Well, there is, but firstly I can’t see how there could possibly be a connection, and I certainly can’t divulge what or who uses these terms and to what or who they apply.’

Catherine Mulberry replied,

‘Well, maybe propose that the 6 relates to 666 and devil worship, a radical cult who see western technology as evil and the Devil as not. A group who sees themselves wanting to summon it up, hence six, they could hardly manage the full 666, which incidentally is wrong anyway. A very early fragment of papyrus has the number of the beast as 616, but I guess they use 6 and it covers both. But why then did the board first identify me as the Devil?’

‘I wasn’t aware of this, and no I’m very confused, so possibly five more attempts at bombing?’

Then she asked,

‘Is the board magic?’

‘No, it’s the user, and I’m afraid it was me stroking the planchette that made it work for you. So, I might now know what they are after, I think a walk would be good and maybe try to use the board this afternoon.’

Jane gave a ‘Sure?’ thinking how on earth could she report this. As if reading her mind Catherine Mulberry said,

‘Best to say I’ve not revealed my source.’

They walked to the estuary, it was a high tide, and some of the path along the estuary was under water,

‘A spring tide, might be a good omen, let’s get back and see.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

Back in the house in Cumberland Street Catherine Mulberry placed another chair in the study next to hers near the Ouija board.

‘You can note down what the planchette points to, it will make things much quicker and easier.’

Catherine Mulberry placed her hand on the planchette, and it began to move...

2_7_._1_7_5_4_5_0_,__7_8_._0_4_2_5_8_
9

2_7_._1_7_4_6_1_5_,__7_8_._0_4_2_5_8_9

2_7_._1_7_4_5_8_6_,__7_8_._0_4_1_6_2_
8

2_7_._1_7_5_4_3_6_,__7_8_._0_4_1_6_3_9

2_7_._1_7_5_0_2_1_,__7_8_._0_4_2_1_3_1

Jane wrote them down.

27.175450, 78.042589 27.174615, 78.042589 27.174586,
78.041628 27.175436, 78.041639 27.175021, 78.042131

‘Five coordinates, latitude and longitude, I can use Google Maps and my laptop to locate these.’ she said.

‘Study or kitchen?’ asked Catherine Mulberry.

‘Kitchen, and coffee.’ came the answer.

They went down to the kitchen and Jane opened her laptop; Catherine Mulberry put the kettle on the Aga and ground some beans.

‘Put the last of the set in first, I think that will be the most significant.’

The map opened as expected showing Woodbridge, Jane typed in 27.175021, 78.042131.

‘Wow! It’s the Taj Mahal, India.’

She typed in the other 4,

‘And the four nearby towers, do you think...’

‘Yes, I’d expect tunnels and explosives.’ interrupted Catherine Mulberry.

‘Can I have some privacy I need to touch base and things might need to be confidential?’ Jane asked.

‘Of course, use the study.’

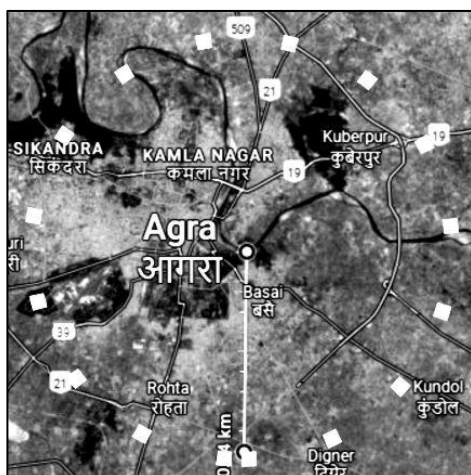
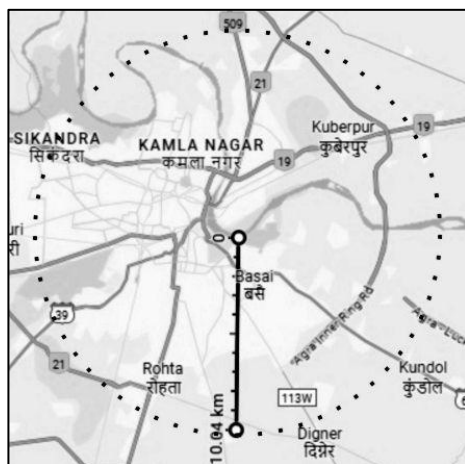
A few minutes later Jane returned to the kitchen and her coffee.

‘All done, so we, or I wait, the UK government will let the Indian Government know, but I suspect we will also have more informal channels of communication.’

Which was the case. When the Indian secret services asked unofficially for more details, the reply was “Horizontal drilling, possible more than one site, and a radius of 10 kilometres.”

Meanwhile in Thames house and also Jane on the kitchen table in the house in Cumberland Street using her laptop had produced maps marking the radii. And no doubt these had also be made in India.

CHAPTER 9: THE TAJ.



From Jane's own version it was obvious the land area and in places population density, made finding any sites far more difficult.

Meanwhile the Indian Government were reluctant to ask for help for political reasons so tasked its secret service with finding the drilling sites. This was filtered back to Jane Smith and Catherine Mulberry who then used the Ouija Board. Jane was still in the kitchen, deep in thought but not about anything specific when Catherine Mulberry entered and simply said,

'Five sites, five drilling sites around the Taj and they will be completed in seven days time, now I'll go to try and find the locations.'

So, Jane Smith passed on the message to Thames House who then passed it probably to MI6. The SIS Building, also called the MI6 Building, a piece of typical Post-Modern architecture at Vauxhall Cross houses the headquarters of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), also known as Military Intelligence, Section 6 (MI6). From here the Indian government were informed and almost certainly the CIA in the sharing of information agreements.

Catherine Mulberry returned with the locations.

27.155725, 78.058897

27.171556, 78.026857

27.169394, 78.019601

27.192855, 78.034139

27.159134, 78.058606

These were sent to MI5 by Jane Smith. All communication using “quantum encryption”, and then the data forwarded on to MI6 and other security services.

In India 27.155725, 78.058897 was The Grand Palms Hotel, so it was rejected, and others given cursory observations, no action being taken. The seven-day deadline was also questioned given that no source of the information with details could be given, just that the source was “gold”.

Despite best efforts from covert observation and enquiries no evidence of activity was found by the Indian authorities, so at day six police raids on the sites with the exception of the hotel were ordered. These took place using well-armed police units. However, they met with fierce resistance from well-armed terrorists at all four sites, including heavy machinegun fire. The “terrorist’s” fire power far exceeded that of the police. The areas were evacuated and army units in armoured cars deployed. The armoured cars moved in; there was no resistance. At the first site to be investigated a booby trap detonated killing two and injuring four of the Indian military. This meant a slow and careful examination of the remaining three, all had booby traps, all had been vacated.

A decision was then made finally to investigate the Hotel. Again, this met with resistance, made more difficult as several of the guests turned out to be terrorists. Some of the other guests, hotel staff and military were injured and killed in initial clashes. The fighting continued, terrorist guests using machine guns and grenades. Smoke grenades were used, probably by the terrorists all of whom managed to escape in the confusion.

In the basement the Indian authorities found some equipment which might be relevant and a sealed door to what had once been a security vault. As it was being inspected there was a dull tremor. This was the detonation of explosives underneath the south west tower of the Taja, placed so it collapsed into the main building of the temple, destroying the famous dome. Many tourists were killed and injured. When the vault door was breached and the booby trap devices rendered harmless apart from the drilling equipment the vault was empty.

The services involved, MI5, 6, and those in the USA and elsewhere were now on high alert. The truth of six events was now taken seriously. The source, Circe was now thought to be true “gold”.

The following morning at breakfast, Catherine Mulberry having her usual scrambled eggs, smoked salmon and fresh ground coffee, Jane now had one of her usual at home breakfast of berries, yoghurt and fresh juices, they were talking, sat around the large pine kitchen table.

‘So, you will use the Ouija board to find target number three?’ a question from Jane Smith which Catherine Mulberry was just about to answer but didn’t.

CHAPTER 10: THOUSANDS OF DEAD GODS.

There was a blinding flash of light, no sound or if there was of an inaudible pitch, and whiteness. Minutes passed,

‘Catherine are you there, I can’t see anything, what has happened...?’ Jane Smith was saying.

‘I don’t know what is happening, or where we are, but I’m here.’ came the reply.

‘Can you see anything, all I can see is intense white light everywhere.’ said Jane.

‘Same.’ said Catherine Mulberry, ‘No wait, I can see...’

‘Me too.’ Interrupted Jane.

Slowly out of the brilliant light a huge white Buddha appeared, growing bigger and bigger, radiating light. Then it began to tremble, and chunks of it fell off, growing faster and faster until all that was left was white rubble in the white landscape.

‘What...!’ this was Jane, ‘The collapse of the great Buddha...’ said Catherine Mulberry.

Then everything went jet black,

‘Now what?’ asked Jane.

Slowly out of the depth of darkness a great Devil appeared, growing bigger and bigger, radiating darkness... then, like the Great Buddha it began to tremble, and chunks of it fell off,

growing faster and faster until all that was left was black rubble in the black landscape.

Before either could speak they found themselves sat in ornate chairs in a large octagonal room.

‘I know this place!’ said Catherine Mulberry, ‘We call it The Hall of The Mountain King.’ she continued,

‘It’s a creation of a person I knew, and almost certainly made with some help.’

The Hall was a large room, a great hall, with heavy Rococo gold decoration, elaborate furniture, and a massive candelabra. There were bookcases, beautiful wood panelling and mirrors on the walls. It could have been from a Russian palace or something from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Windows looked onto formal gardens with a fountain, and beyond to hills, then in the distance snow-capped mountains, a very un-English landscape. A log fire burnt in a large fireplace, it was dusk, the room illuminated by candles and the huge candelabra. The two were now sitting in elaborate gold chairs with side tables which had drinks and vol-au-vents on them.

‘The hall’s name came from Nigel Summers, the famous physicist, on first seeing it.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘Drink some sherry, it’s good and will help steady the nerves.’

She sipped a drink, Jane spoke, ‘But what the hell is happening, has happened?’

‘I’ve absolutely no idea, but we are safe here to try to work this out, so drink.’

Jane sipped some sherry, then spoke, 'So, the group, who we will call for the time being Satanists, those that were behind the Tunnel failed attempt have now been responsible for the Taj Mahal's destruction. That is two of the six attacks, so four more of what?'

'Absolutely no Idea.' was the reply.

'So, the collapse of the great Buddha, great Devil?'

'Absolutely no Idea.' was the reply.

'And why are we here?'

'I think to give us time and space to work something out?'

'What?'

'Absolutely no Idea.'

Minutes passed then Catherine Mulberry said,

'The collapse of the great Buddha and great Devil, the death of God things. Gods, both good and bad, and into pieces, thousands of them.'

'So?' said Jane.

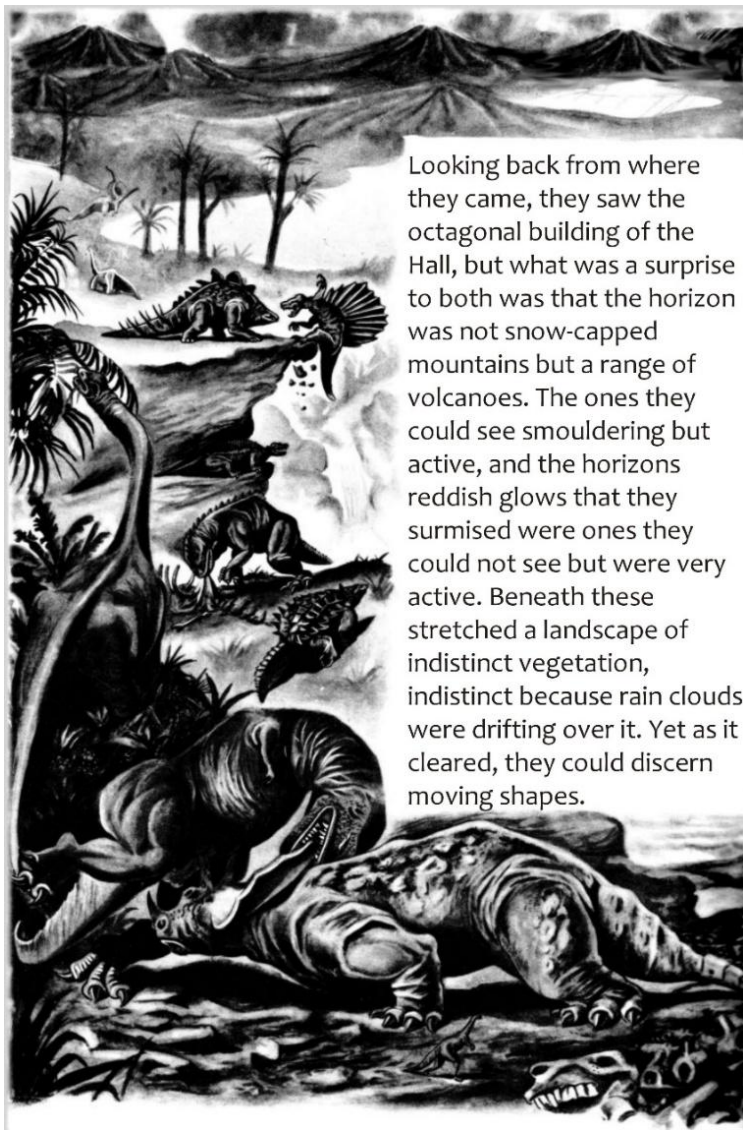
'Still absolutely no Idea.' was the answer. Minutes passed then Jane said, 'What's outside the window?'

'What you can see.' Catherine Mulberry replied.

'Then let's go and explore.' Jane said.

Catherine Mulberry thought to herself, 'All the times I've been here we never did such a thing, how very very strange.'

As she did, Jane opened a French window and stepped into the garden.



Looking back from where they came, they saw the octagonal building of the Hall, but what was a surprise to both was that the horizon was not snow-capped mountains but a range of volcanoes. The ones they could see smouldering but active, and the horizons reddish glows that they surmised were ones they could not see but were very active. Beneath these stretched a landscape of indistinct vegetation, indistinct because rain clouds were drifting over it. Yet as it cleared, they could discern moving shapes.

‘They look like creatures.’ said Jane.

‘They are brontosauri,’ Catherine Mulberry replied, ‘I remember this scene from an encyclopaedia I had as a child, soon the ceratosauri and tyrannosauri will attack. Which is nonsense of course.’

Jane was about to answer when the rain squall reached them, blinding them both briefly for a moment, and they were back in the dry and warmth of the kitchen in Woodbridge. Both were silent for minutes.

Catherine Mulberry was the first to speak,

‘Ridiculous but where’s my breakfast.’

She was looking at the table where her breakfast had been.

‘Gone,’ said Jane, ‘mine too, but what’s just happened?’

‘No idea.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘So?’ asked Jane.

‘Well, something strange is occurring, obviously...’

‘You bet...’ interrupted Jane.

‘For the moment, where were we before this thing just happened?’

‘I was asking about the Ouija board and if you would use it to find target number three?’

‘Right,’ said Catherine Mulberry, ‘then follow me, bring your laptop...’

They left the kitchen and walked down the hall and into the study. Catherine Mulberry sitting in front of the Ouija board,

Jane sitting at her side, the laptop open and the notepad app running.

‘I’ll enter any data directly to save time.’ she said.

The first message was “THE END”, then these locations,

“55.752355, 37.619935”

“35.685992, 51.429348”

“47.554231, -122.650794”

“36.936594, -76.331970”

“32.681392, -117.129833”

“35.292602, 139.659304”

After several key strokes Jane said,

‘Moscow.’ Then,

more keystrokes,

‘Tehran.’

‘Naval Base Kitsap, Bremerton, Washington.’

‘Naval Station Norfolk, Norfolk, Virginia.’

‘Naval Air Station North Island, San Diego, California.’

‘Yokosuka Naval Base, Yokosuka, Japan.’

‘Naval bases?’ asked Catherine Mulberry.

‘Just a minute...’ said Jane, then ‘... home bases of the USN’s Nimitz class nuclear aircraft carriers! And you said, “THE END” so I guess I’d better let those higher in the food chain know, can you excuse me, I need to call on that special phone of mine.’

‘Sure, use the kitchen.’ replied Catherine Mulberry.

Jane left the study but soon returned holding her satellite phone which the ministry gave its field agents, all with built in encryption,

‘Phone seems not to be working?’ she said looking at the phone.

‘Or my Samsung Flip?’

‘Try email from your laptop.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘Not secure but I can arrange a secure link.’ she said opening her laptop.

‘No internet?’

They checked the hub, and the landline to the house, nothing was working. Catherine Mulberry looked worried, back in the kitchen turned the radio on, just static.

From the garden room things looked normal, then Catherine Mulberry said,

‘Let’s take a walk outside.’

So, they walked through the house down the hallway and opened the front door onto Cumberland Street, most of the houses, even some of the grander ones having no front gardens. Everything looked much the same.

‘It’s wrong,’ said Catherine Mulberry, ‘all wrong.’

Jane gave Catherine Mulberry a look of curiosity, a “why”,

‘Look, no people, not one, lets walk to the crossroads.’

So, they did,

‘You said it’s all wrong. How so?’ asked Jane,

‘I’m not sure,’ replied Catherine Mulberry, ‘but I’ve been in other worlds before which seemed frozen in time with only a very few people, like the Hall, but no dinosaurs before this recent visit.’

‘I think you are right to say it’s all wrong, that’s not right!’ said Jane pointing at the distant estuary and the sky.



‘I know, this, it’s part of a painting called The Triumph of Death by the artist Pieter Bruegel the Elder. I’ve seen the original in the Museo del Prado in Madrid.’

‘Back to the house and some references on the painting. And maybe how it relates to the Hall and the dinosaurs...’ said Catherine Mulberry.

CHAPTER 11: THE TRIUMPH OF DEATH.

They couldn't use the internet, there was none, but the library was large and the person who Catherine Mulberry had originally shared the house with was very interested in Art.

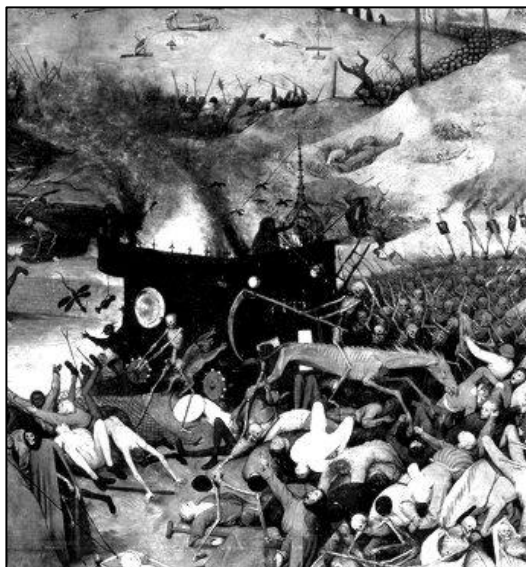
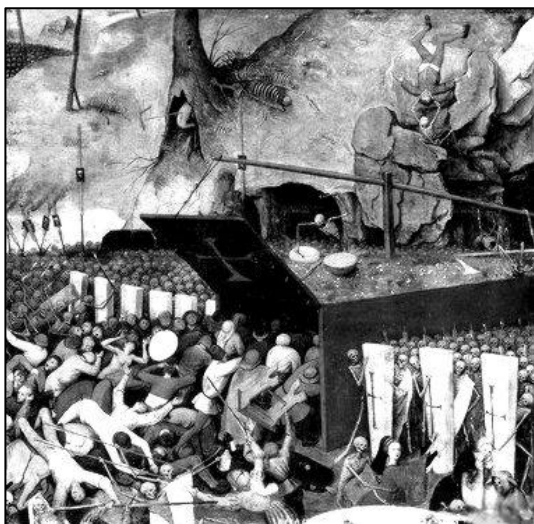
They sat round a large square mahogany table in the library with several books; one opened showing a reproduction of the Bruegel painting.

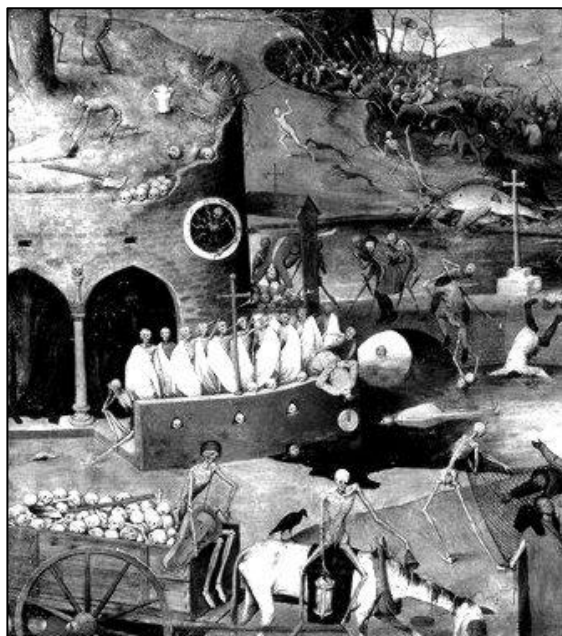


Looking closer at the detail Jane remarked,

‘Not a pleasant scene then, why?’

‘No idea?’ was the reply.





Jane found a reference and read aloud,

‘The painting shows a panorama of an army of skeletons wreaking havoc across a blackened, desolate landscape. Fires burn in the distance, and the sea is littered with shipwrecks.

A few leafless trees stud hills otherwise bare of vegetation. Fish lie rotting on the shores of a corpse-choked pond.

In this setting, legions of skeletons advance on the living, who either flee in terror or try in vain to fight back. In the foreground, skeletons haul a wagon full of skulls. In the upper left corner, others ring the bell that signifies the death knell of the world. People are herded into a coffin-shaped trap

decorated with crosses, while skeletons, some on horseback, kill people with scythes. The horse-riding skeletons probably allude to the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. The painting depicts people of different social backgrounds – from peasants and soldiers to nobles as well as a king and a cardinal – being taken by death indiscriminately.

A skeleton parodies human happiness by playing a hurdy-gurdy, while the wheels of his cart crush a man as if his life is of no importance. A woman has fallen in the path of the death cart. She has a slender thread which is about to be cut by the scissors in her other hand—Bruegel's interpretation of Atropos.

Atropos in Greek mythology was the third of the Three Fates or Moirai, goddesses of fate and destiny. Her Roman equivalent was Morta. As one of the Three Fates was known as the Inflexible One. It was Atropos who chose the manner of death and ended the life of mortals by cutting their threads. She worked along with her two sisters, Clotho, who spun the thread, and Lachesis, who measured the length.

Nearby, another woman in the path of the cart holds in her hand a spindle and distaff, classical symbols of the fragility of human life—another Bruegel interpretation of Clotho and Lachesis.

A starving dog nibbles at the face of a dead child lying still within its dead mother's embrace. Just beside her, a cardinal is helped towards his fate by a skeleton who mockingly wears the red cardinal's hat, while a dying king's barrels of gold and silver coins are looted by yet another skeleton, the king oblivious to the fact that a skeleton is warning him with an empty hourglass that his life is about to literally run out of

time. The foolish and miserly monarch's last thoughts still compel him to reach out for his useless and vain wealth, seeming unaware of the need for repentance. In the centre, an awakening religious pilgrim has his throat cut by a robber-skeleton for his money purse. Above the murder, skeleton-fishermen catch people in a net.

In the bottom right-hand corner, a dinner has been broken up and the diners are putting up a futile resistance. They have drawn their swords in order to fight the skeletons dressed in winding-sheets. No less hopelessly, the court jester takes refuge beneath the dinner table. The backgammon board and the playing cards have been scattered, while a skeleton thinly disguised with a mask empties away the wine flasks. Of the menu of the interrupted meal, all that can be seen are a few pallid rolls of bread and an appetiser apparently consisting of a pared human skull. Above the table are two women. The one on the left struggles in vain while being embraced by a skeleton, in a hideous parody of after-dinner amorousness. The woman on the right is horrified with the realisation of mortality when a skeleton in a hooded robe mockingly seems to bring another dish, also consisting of human bones, to the table.

In the bottom right-hand corner, a musician plays a lute while his lady sings. Both are oblivious to the fact that, behind both of them, the skeleton that plays along is grimly aware that the couple can not escape their inevitable doom. The painting shows objects such as musical instruments, an early mechanical clock, scenes including a funeral service, and various methods of execution, including the breaking wheel, the gallows, burning at the stake, and the headsman about to behead a victim who has just taken wine and communion. In

one scene, a human is the prey of a skeleton-hunter and his dogs.

In another scene at the left, skeletons drag victims down to be drowned in a pond. A man with a grinding stone around his neck is about to be thrown into the pond by the skeletons—an echoing of Matthew 18.6 and Luke 17.2. On the bridge just above at the right, a skeleton is about to strike a prostrate victim with a falchion, a single edged sword.

Matthew 18:6

King James Version

6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Luke 17:2

King James Version

2 It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.'

'Well, any ideas?' asked Jane.

'Lunch!' replied Catherine Mulberry.

'How could you after hearing all this?' asked Jane.

'Past experiences, and we need to eat, and think and talk.' she replied.

They left the books and the library for the kitchen and a light lunch of home-made soup, and home-baked bread.

While they were eating, they discussed the meaning of the vision of the Bruegel painting.

‘I think it’s a sign of the seriousness of the situation, it might explain the crumbling Buddha and Devil, the end of all things including the duality of good and bad. And then the specifics in the painting, notably those of the religious, maybe pointing to the Catholic Church.’ Catherine Mulberry said.

‘Oh, and there’s me thinking it was just a group of Satanists.’ Jane said with an ironic smile.

‘And those dinosaurs, in a children’s Encyclopaedia?’

‘What of them, seems irrelevant.’ said Jane.

‘Maybe, but I’ve seen that book with someone else I think, and if so quite the opposite.’

After they had finished their soup Jane loaded the dishwasher and made two mugs of strong tea, placed one in front of Catherine Mulberry, and then sat opposite.

Jane was looking at Catherine Mulberry who spoke,

‘We have electricity, the dishwasher is working,’ and she rose and switched on the radio, it was playing a Bach Fuge.

‘My phone’s on.’ said Jane, ‘oh I should make my call.’

‘Go ahead, use the study.’

Twenty minutes went by, then a puzzled looking Jane re-entered the kitchen, she spoke,

‘They knew, they knew all the locations, MI5 and everyone, these last four have already taken place. The first two were to be assassinations, attempted but failed killing only doubles, but three of the carriers were hit, sunk and over 100 lives lost.’

She looked pale, paused then sat and continued,

‘You see this all happened a day ago, we’ve lost a day somehow?’

Another pause,

‘They, security people, including the Americans, visited here, there was no one, now I’ve orders to keep you here until a special unit arrives, they think you are responsible.’

Another pause,

‘Ridiculous, and why?’ she continued.

‘We need to find out why they think I am responsible in that case.’ said Catherine Mulberry, who rose and went into the study followed by Jane.

Again, in the study with Catherine Mulberry sitting at the Ouija board held the planchette.

Jane had a notebook and pen

Catherine Mulberry asked, ‘Who did these things?’

W _ O _ R _ S _ H _ I _ P _ E _ R _ S

‘Of whom?’

T _ H _ E _ _ D _ E _ V _ I _ L

‘But you’re not the Devil.’ said Jane.

Catherine Mulberry was thinking that was not the case, but who then was the Devil now the black Devil was no more, could it be her?

‘Who am I.’

T _ H _ E _ _ R _ E _ A _ L _ _ D _ E _ V _ I _ L _

Now she thought about her visit to the crypts underneath St Peters and her Doppelgänger, who claimed she was her opposite, so if she was the Devil?

Jane was writing, the atmosphere electric. She was thinking ‘So the terrorists were working for what some call the enemy?’

The board had continued,

T _ H _ E _ _ P _ A _ I _ N _ T _ I _ N _ G

T _ H _ E _ _ H _ U _ M _ A _ N _ _ P _ O _ W _ E _ R _ S

It then stopped.

After some time, Catherine Mulberry was deep in thought, Jane spoke,

‘Catherine we must leave, this won’t be good, I know the likely procedure, and it, if it does, and it does, involve the US, then you are not safe.’

There was a silence, Catherine Mulberry was still deep in thought, so Jane shook her,

‘Catherine we must leave, it will be very bad.’

She replied, 'I'll be quite safe here, you must go otherwise be sort as an accomplice, but I'll be safe and need to work out the meaning of the painting. But you should leave no doubt.'

'I can't', Jane said, 'job or not this seems more important, if you stay I will, I'll fetch my gun.'

'OK, you can, but no gun, and last chance, I think you are at a crossroads, and one that you can't turn back.'

'My dad had that record, seems the Devil waits at crossroads, and here you are.' and Jane smiled, then continued, 'How do you know you are safe here?'

'Fetch your gun then.'

Within a few minutes Jane had returned holding the Glock.

'Now shoot at those books, books so no chance of any ricochet.'

There was a bookcase in the study with large leather-bound books on its shelves.

Jane looked confused.

'You need to do this, it's very important, and I need your trust from now on.'

Jane still looked puzzled, she raised the gun slowly and pulled the trigger.

No gunshot, a popping sound and a 9mm parabellum shell fell out of the end of the Glock's barrel.

Jane looked at it, and laughed, then said 'How?'

CHAPTER 12: THE TRIUMPH OF CATHERINE MULBERRY.

Catherine Mulberry was about to answer but the loud sound of helicopters overhead prevented her, when the noise abated slightly it was Jane who spoke.

‘That’s probably the US contingent, using Ospreys,’

At Catherine Mulberry’s puzzled look she added,

‘Tiltrotor military transport aircraft.’

Then ‘What now?’

Catherine Mulberry replied, ‘We enjoy the afternoon and I’ll cook supper, maybe a little early, but then we need to get to the Vatican.’

‘We need to get to The Vatican, and we are surrounded by crack US forces, how?’

‘Good question, will stew be OK, and red wine?’

Jane rehearsed different scenarios, the gun demonstration helped, then said, ‘I’ll peel the potatoes.’

She thought as she peeled, ‘A couple of Ospreys and M1161 Growler light strike and fast attack vehicles, maybe Blackhawks to ship out the prisoners, ugh? Me and Catherine, first probably to Mildenhall then rendition to some co-operative state in the near east. Oh well...’

There were 3 Ospreys and three Blackhawks. The UK government and its agencies were given no choice, the whole thing had to be American, American lives and billion-dollar warships and aircraft had been lost. Over 100 lives, many

billions of dollars and many more in the cleanup. If permission was not granted the capture would take place regardless, only using US air cover from Lakenheath. Any attempt at prevention would be met with deadly force. The UK government therefore had no option.

The only concession was that UK civilian police would screen off the target area and landing site from civilians. The landing site was the grounds and playing fields of Woodbridge School which backed onto Cumberland Street. The forces had assembled at the closed Woodbridge airfield from which they would fly to the playing field. A perfect drop site. Inside the police cordon the special forces blocked off Cumberland Street, but the main entry would be via the rear, from the grounds through the garden and into the house.

Inside the house Catherine Mulberry and Jane were eating, outside the six of the “go” unit were scaling the fence to the garden with four others in support. That was the first problem. Each time one of the team reached the top and tried to drop down into the garden they found themselves back outside. It made no sense. Time after time.

The order ‘Take out the fence.’ came and explosives were set, they failed to detonate. A frontal attack also failed. The windows and doors would not yield. One of the team gave what they thought would give the house a raking with machine gun fire, they used the M1161 Growler’s M2HB .50cal BMG machine gun. The gun made a weak pop pop noise; several shells fell to the earth and then the gun jammed. The two M1161s stalled and refused to start. The mission was aborted. Catherine Mulberry and Jane were now having a dessert, home-made apple crumble and custard. Back at the

playing fields where the Ospreys and Blackhawks had landed they too had shut down as well as all electronic devices in the assault team.

Without comms or transport the unit had big problems. Some senior officers tried to blame others, eventually someone suggested asking the police who were on duty to see if they had comms. Two “grunts” jogged to a waiting police car and in their best voices asked if they could patch them through to an emergency number. The police complied as they had been told to do so. One of the grunts waved and an officer approached to make the call.

The scenes in the American embassy in London, the Pentagon, Langley and the Whitehouse were now of pandemonium. Eventually the officer in charge of the attempted capture, code name “Payback” was sitting in the back of the police car using one of the police officers own smart phone to speak to the command centre in the Pentagon, with other agencies listening and joining in. Calm eventually ensued, and then someone realised the two British coppers had been sitting in the car listening to all this, the American officer asked the two British police if they might wait outside. Given the firepower around them and their orders they thought it best to comply.

An American rescue of the failed attempt, it was eventually decided, was impossible. The current administration was in a mixture of fury and despair.

‘This looks fucking a zillion times worse than Eagle Claw the Vice President was screaming.’ The president just had a bemused grin.

Operation Eagle Claw (Persian: عملیات پنجه عقاب) was a failed United States Department of Defense attempt to rescue 53 embassy staff held captive by Revolutionary Iran on 24 April 1980. It was ordered by U.S. president Jimmy Carter after the staff were seized at the Embassy of the United States in Tehran. The operation, one of Delta Force's, actually its first, encountered many obstacles and failures and was subsequently aborted. It was held to be partly responsible for President Jimmy Carter's failure in the presidential election of 1980 won by Ronald Reagan.

The troops were no problem, but the removal of the six aircraft was impossible. Recovery crews from Mildenhall could be despatched, but heavy lifting and transport would need the UK Army. Contact was made at the highest level, humble pie and of course full cooperation. The British PM being very sympathetic and understanding but this was only a superficial show of satisfaction of the mission's failure.

An Army base at Colchester had tank low-loaders and a crane which would do the job. The two Growlers on one, and each of the Blackhawks and Ospreys on its own tank low-loader. The Whitehouse wanted things clear by first light, if not the plan was to destroy the aircraft and equipment and blame it on a crash during an exercise.

The Americans were now liaising with UK intelligence and were made aware of a certain smugness. The unit's personal shipped back to Mildenhall in UK Army trucks, a humiliation, all of them including the officers, that instruction was also from the Whitehouse.

As part of a coverup a fake emergency landing of a US standard Blackhawk Helicopter was staged on the playing

field, and the training operation cover was used. It was a standard machine, unlike those of the special forces, flown in with a crew member holding a flare which looked like some kind of fire. The emergency landing a success with no fatalities or injuries, the “fire” extinguished by a crew member. The arriving fire engine flagged down by the police and told that the crew were OK and had put out the fire. And so, the return of a low-loader to account for the churning up of the playing field from the earlier evacuation. This worked well, the school understood and all the videos posted to X, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok and whatever could be explained.

And all would be put right at the expense of Uncle Sam.

In the days that followed it became obvious that the house in Cumberland Street was empty, though not from any of the attempts to gain entry. All failed.

No one from the security services saw Catherine Mulberry and Jane leave by taxi the following morning for Stanstead Airport and a flight to Rome. They went through security and boarded the plane without any problems, despite an all-ports warning, and order for their arrest. No automated systems for recognition, or security people recognised them, Jane at first, despite her training was nervous, smiled and whispered to Catherine Mulberry,

‘How is this?’

‘Magic.’ came the reply, and a smile which said it was more than that.

On the plane Jane asked about the previous meeting deep underneath St Peters in Rome.

‘There I met another me, from I guess now another world where facts and time were very different. And I guess the opposite then, or factually not me. And maybe the cause of these disruptions, we will see. I mean if they were a God does that make me a Devil and why then try to kill myself?’

‘Why assume this?’ asked Jane.

‘I used the Ouijgi board to ask who made the two attempts on my life? It said I did, so I asked who caused these to fail, it said I did, I asked who was responsible for the Vatican thing and the other Catherine Mulberry? The answer was by now not unexpected. So, then I asked is this maybe my subconscious, Id and Super Ego at work? It said YES.’

‘Sorry I don’t understand.’ said Jane.

‘You don’t!’ came the reply. ‘I certainly didn’t, only now having some clue, so back then I phoned a friend, Professor Caputo the American philosopher. He told me about Derrida in his essay on Plato’s Pharmacy which explores the notion that writing is like a drug, both good and bad, can be a remedy or a poison, as in drugs can be harmful and addictive or used as treatments and cures. So, like a pharmakon maybe the good and bad is in me.’

‘And so how did these Devil worshipers come about?’ asked Jane.

‘No idea about any of this, maybe we will find out tomorrow?’

The flight went fine crossing the Alps and down the western coast of Italy, descending towards Rome which was now clearly visible as the aircraft banked on its approach. The runway now in sight, the pilot lining up the aircraft, locking

down the undercarriage, that “bump” you hear that tells you this has occurred. Then there was a “white out”.

Jane had the window seat and had been absent minded looking out when suddenly she spoke,

‘A white out?’ Catherine Mulberry looked quizzingly then at the window, just whiteness. Some other passengers were doing the same, there was a low murmur.

Meanwhile on the flight deck the pilot and co-pilot were also seeing nothing but whiteness, and in an instant reaction attempted to abandon the landing, but the controls were unresponsive, the engines throttling down the aircraft still descending, and the contact with the Rome control tower lost. The aircraft touched down, a very smooth landing and came to a stop, the engines cutout and emergency power came on. There now was audible noise and signs of panic beginning amongst the passengers. The pilot gave a brief statement to the effect that the aircraft had safely landed and there was no need to panic, that they would be disembarking soon.

The problem for the pilots was how without some servicing equipment, steps or gantry. They decided to try opening the forward passenger door which would be out of view of most of the passengers. This they did and the emergency evacuation slide immediately inflated and deployed. Without a word the co-pilot slid down to the ground, which was white, stepped off and looked around at a vast white plain with distant pinkish hills on the horizon. Looking up at the doorway where the pilot and a stewardess was standing, he shrugged and said,

‘Seems fine?’

Inside the aircraft there was a strong smell of fuel, after some discussion it was decided to evacuate.

The pilot gave the order for the rear door also to be opened, and the passengers helped to use the slide to disembark, there was no reason to stay in the aircraft, and possibly a good one to leave.

‘We can try to sort things out then?’ he shouted back to the co-pilot.

The passengers were now all on the ground, the flat white plain, no panic, they had landed safely but where, so they were more bemused than anything else. Catherine Mulberry looked at Jane and spoke quietly,

‘Well, I’ve not a good feeling about this, but staying in the plane was not an option, let’s walk a little distance.’

So, they did, the rest of the passengers milling around not noticing.

‘See how they are moving.’ Catherine Mulberry said,

‘Why, what’s wrong...’ there was a pause... ‘oh I see, they seem to be moving aimlessly, are they getting smaller or is it me or some illusion?’

The passengers and air crew were just now seemingly moving randomly around the aircraft, occasionally bumping into one another but not talking, just moving off in another direction.

‘They are moving like insects, like ants.’ Jane said.

They watched, speechless, the people were growing smaller, their shapes changing, and insect like, their bodies turning into different brown and black shell-like cases, legs getting thinner, their bodies more rounded and shrinking until they were the size of small dogs. They moved fast, some zigzagging off into the distance, with others their shell-like cases opening to produce wings and so they took to the air. As they moved further away many more doing so, until they were all out of sight.

Catherine Mulberry and Jane were just still silent, looking at each other, Jane was the first to speak,

‘Guess the Vatican is out?’ They looked at each other briefly before laughing, having no other emotional response to these events, then saw the approaching figures.

CHAPTER 13: THE TRINITY.

The three were some distance away shimmering in a heat haze and now the two watchers noticed some kind of craft or vehicle behind these three. They approached.

It was a strange sight, not three figures, three human like forms, very pale white skin, androgynous even though seemingly naked. As they approached it was clear it was also not a they but an it for the three bodies were in fact one “thing” with three heads, three torsos, but joined, melded into one, and six legs. Despite this it, or they, had a certain beauty.

It stopped, then an arm beckoned to Catherine Mulberry and Jane, and all three heads spoke, ‘Will you come with us to our world from this the world of insects.’

It turned and began to walk back from where it had come, the strange craft.

Catherine Mulberry simply said, ‘We should follow, it seems we are exploring other worlds for some reason.’

Jane did not hesitate, thinking becoming an insect was something she would rather not, maybe Catherine Mulberry would remain herself, an outsider in the insect world, not a part, maybe then a Devil. So, following, she noticed now parts from the Airbus aircraft were falling to the ground, metal and plastic, curling into bodies with legs.

As if mind reading Catherine Mulberry said, ‘Yes it seems we are in an insect world, and yet I guess I’m outside, but anything here it seems becomes an insect. But I wouldn’t worry if you keep fairly close.’

‘Certainly will.’ replied Jane, watching an aircraft part curl up into an insect, open its carapace and take to the air.

The craft was a large metal like blob, as they approached a door opened revealing a space with two bench seats placed one in front of the other, the creature[s] sat on the front bench, Catherine Mulberry and Jane sat behind. From inside the craft the walls were completely transparent, they could see the plain all around them, there were no controls or anything other than the benches.

‘I’ve just thought, we left our bags and my laptop on the plane.’ said Jane.

‘They will probably be insects by now.’ Catherine Mulberry replied, as she did the craft took off and soon, they were in darkness, but not a darkness of space, just a dull blackness.

Looking through the transparent floor, they noticed the curved sweep of a planet, then quickly a large domed structure came into view with a central aperture. The craft slowed and entered the dome through the aperture. It landed gently and the door opened. Everything had a light grey-silver appearance, the planet itself, the craft and the figures.

The creature[s] left the craft, the two following, outside was another bench raised on a Dias with three steps, the creature[s] climbed the steps and sat on the bench looking intently at Catherine Mulberry.

Time passed.

Then to the great surprise of Jane Catherine Mulberry spoke.

‘We believe in one God,

the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.

Amen.'

At this the three persons in one slowly separated, as did the bench into three chairs. The three still had very pale white skin, were still androgynous but were now three beings from one substance.

'A trinity,' said Catherine Mulberry, 'I don't know how I knew the words, but it's definitely from the Nicene Creed.'

'So Christian.' said Jane.

The three now looking calmly at the two, Catherine Mulberry continued,

'Well, the creed is, but the archetype for all such deities can be of any form, it's the idea of both a unity of one substance yet

three or any number of persons. So, you can have all the Gods, thousands or infinite and both separate yet of one substance. Brahman and Atman are one. Brahman denotes ultimate reality, Atman denotes the individual self, and they are both separate and one. We had three beings of one substance, so I guess that the Nicene Creed was appropriate. I guess also from one source everything originates, matter, and life, the whole thing. And the many can always be treated as one, or vice versa, though I'm not sure. Actually, one should never be sure.'

Jane saw something on the floor, she bent down and picked it up, it was a seed of the horse chestnut tree, a conker. The green outer case with spines, it split open in her hand, shining glossy brown.

'Like a brain.' she thought. 'Like the origin of thought.' she thought.

And she thought and then spoke, 'We need somewhere to think, like that hall, The Hall of the Mountain King.'

CHAPTER 14: THE HALL OF THE MOUNTAIN KING.

‘Why is it always an evening sunset?’ Jane asked Catherine Mulberry as she looked out of the window across the formal gardens and fountain at the distant snow-capped mountains.

‘I don’t know.’ was the reply, ‘But this is interesting.’ Catherine Mulberry was standing looking at a painting, The Triumph of Death by Pieter Bruegel the Elder and wondering if it was a copy of the original in the Museo del Prado in Madrid or the real thing.

‘Billy so liked the Poussin that was here before, A Dance to the Music of Time, and he wondered the same, was it a copy of the original in the Wallace Collection in London or the real thing.’

Jane turned to look at the painting and asked, ‘What do you think it means?’

‘Not absolutely sure,’ was the answer, remembering, ‘but the people all have something in common, the good the bad the ugly to not coin a phrase, they are equally doomed.’

‘Surely equality is a good thing?’ asked Jane.

‘Is it, who flew the plane, who is head of MI5, who rules the country?’

‘But elected and on merit. Oh, I see what you might mean, elected and on merit or else?’

‘From above, but there is no longer any above, I think it’s called a flat ontology.’

‘You’ve lost me.’ said Jane.

‘All things are equal, there’s that philosopher Graham Harman, I saw at the ICA.’

Jane frowned.

‘The Institute of Contemporary Art in the Mall London, I attended a lecture by Graham Harman.’

‘Never heard of him.’ said Jane.

‘He said we humans shouldn’t have a privileged view, see things just from the human perspective, like there is a relation between a snow flake and a mountain, something we are not involved with. Then something about fire burns cotton.’

‘Sorry it makes no sense to me.’ said Jane, continuing, ‘And what has it to do with our problem?’

‘I’m trying to remember, fire burns cotton is a metaphor, the interaction between fire and cotton, the idea that fire does not change the essential nature of cotton. That emphasizes the independence of objects from human perception, their inherent reality.’

‘But fire does change the cotton, it destroys it, essence and all.’

said Jane who paused thinking, then continued.

‘And the cotton is grown by humans, has a very questionable history, and fire is often made by humans these days, and humans have used fire to burn other humans.’

‘I think you might be correct.’ said Catherine Mulberry,

‘And that is like the idea of the rhizome, that’s Deleuze...’

Jane gave a grimace,

‘not a hierarchy, a rhizome like the internet. And that seems now just a chaotic clamour of messages, texts, videos, gossip, games and sex. Just a noise of many voices, no authority.’

‘I can’t see where this is going,’ said Jane, ‘and we elect our leaders in democracies, the alternative is fascism, dictatorships which is far worse.’

‘Yes, the Churchill quote that democracy is the least worse form of governance, something like that and hardly Hobbes.’

‘You’ve lost me again, there’s no alternative.’ Jane said.

‘Dieu et mon droit, God and my right, The divine right of kings.’ replied Catherine Mulberry.

‘But there is no God,’ said Jane, paused, ‘or there was no such thing, have you created the trinity? The holy trinity?’

‘If I have then power and right now comes from above, but I doubt it, for Hobbes the power of the King comes from the people.’

‘If for real, not a fiction, then we, I mean you have sorted it.’ said Jane.

‘You obviously haven’t much experience of world religions and theologies, the hierarchies above of reality, above and below. Angels, Demons, Angelic forms and spirits, some evil and good jinns and spirits. All I’ve done, if I’ve done anything, is removed human authority to something higher.’

‘Removed, like removed the spirits, not the holy spirit from humans, but human power over these spirits, like a strange exorcism.’ said Jane.

A pause, Catherine Mulberry now turned away from the painting and looked out at the landscape,

‘You’re a genius,’ she said, ‘so we need to explore that which is higher.’

‘But the Holy trinity is the top.’ said Jane.

‘Reality, Malkuth, the physical Adam, Eve, Yesod the foundation, then the lowest; Hod, Splendor; then Netzach, Triumph; Tiferet, Compassion; Gevurah, Power; Chesed, Mercy; Binah, Understanding; Chokmah, Wisdom; and finally, Keter, Crown. That’s Just the standard! Kabbalah or Tree of life. Above that in the Zohar, Tzimtzum, Contraction; Ohr Ein Sof, Endless Light; Ein Sof, Limitlessness; and finally, Ayin, Nothing.’

said Catherine Mulberry.

‘Oh.’ said Jane.

‘And back on Earth?’ she added.

There was no reply, but back on earth a period that became known throughout as the return of the Kings and Queens began.

Catherine Mulberry opened the French window to step into the formal garden, Jane following.

And they were standing on a promenade of a seaside town.

CHAPTER 15: BLACKPOOL.

Jane and Catherine Mulberry looked around, there was a wind making large waves across an expanse of beach, the sea a deep grey flecked with surf, along the promenade were railway tracks and beyond then a road there with a line of shops selling souvenirs, Blackpool rock, fish and chips, candy floss and a small hut selling oysters, and amusement arcades. Further down was a larger building with the recognisable tower.

Inspired by the Eiffel Tower in Paris, it is roughly half the height, being 518 feet. Blackpool Tower is also the common name for the Tower Buildings, an entertainment complex in a red-brick three-storey block that comprises the Tower, Tower Circus, the Tower Ballroom, and roof gardens. Its foundation stone was laid on the 29th September 1891. The Tower opened on 14th May 1894.

‘Now we are in Blackpool, for some reason.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘The railway tracks?’ asked Jane.

‘Not railway, trams, and this is September, and it looks like it is because there are the illuminations.’

They looked at the unlit lights festooned along the promenade and across the street swaying in the wind. Outside the small hut selling oysters a man in a raincoat wearing glasses and a trilby hat sat at one of the tables on the pavement, he was probably in his seventies and eating from a paper plate, scooping up an oyster one at a time and swallowing it. A young boy sat next to him in an overcoat, he

was not eating. Catherine Mulberry was looking at the scene intently.

‘What is it?’ asked Jane.

‘I’m not sure, there’s something very familiar perhaps.’

They crossed the street, and it was only then they noticed their clothes. On the aircraft Catherine Mulberry was in slacks, a blouse and jacket, Jane was wearing trainers and denim, now they noticed their reflection in a shop window, they were wearing heavy skirts, knitted jumpers and tailored tweed jackets underneath overcoats. They wore neat hats and had leather shoulder bags. They didn’t speak at first, looking around, there were only a few cars, some parked, all old, or looked relatively new but were clearly from the 1950s. Then the signs on the shops seemed old fashioned, and the prices were in sterling. The oysters a shilling for a half dozen. Sticks of Blackpool rock for sixpence. Catherine Mulberry looked inside her shoulder bag and found a purse, took it out, opening it, it had some notes, pound notes, and silver, half crowns, shillings and large brown pennies. Jane watched, did the same, noticed makeup, lipstick and a powder compact then her own purse again with sterling, she looked puzzled, Catherine Mulberry explained,

‘I think this is Blackpool in the late 1950s, hence the cars and our clothes. The currency back then, or should I say now, is the old sterling, 240 pennies to the pound, or 4 half-crowns, 12 pence to a shilling, twenty shillings to a pound.’

‘Wow, that’s very confusing, and while on the subject of confusion, underwear?’

‘Oh, no pantyhose, nylon stockings and suspender belts. And we are wearing makeup and lipstick.’ replied Catherine Mulberry.

They looked at each other, smiled then laughed. Catherine Mulberry spoke,

‘I quite like these clothes.’ to Jane’s response,

‘I feel totally overdressed, and also why are we here?’

The old man had finished his oysters and was walking away with the boy.

‘We should follow.’ Catherine Mulberry said, so they followed the two, they were walking slowly, the old man looked thin and didn’t appear in the best of health, the boy perhaps oblivious. Turning down a side street, they passed a gentleman’s tailors, the man looked in the window, obviously deep in thought, then entered the shop. Across the street from the tailors was a tea shop.

‘There is something here I’m sure,’ said Catherine Mulberry. ‘let’s watch from the tea shop, I’m afraid coffee will be out of the question, other than disgusting instant stuff, but the tea should be good.’

They entered the shop, a bell on a spring attached to the door rang, and a waitress dressed in a pinafore moved towards them.

‘Can we sit here?’ asked Catherine Mulberry gesturing to a window seat, ‘Certainly madam.’ came the reply. They sat and the waitress gave them two menus. It seems they could have a pot of tea and sandwiches for 2/6, half a crown, so that is what they ordered.

After around 20 minutes the man and boy reappeared, the man carrying a large paper bag.

‘He was looking at the suits in the window,’ said Catherine Mulberry, ‘I think he might have made a purchase?’

‘A purchase?’ thought ‘Jane, is our language changing like our clothes.’

He had bought a suit, but he would never wear it.

CHAPTER 16: YARMOUTH.

Catherine Mulberry and Jane walked back to the main coast road and along the promenade,

‘We could stop here and see the illuminations or walk on.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘Let’s walk on, the illuminations seem to stretch for a distance.’ replied Jane.

‘I think it’s called the Golden Mile.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

They walked, then Jane stopped by a tall reddish terracotta building. The façade had bays with two towers and Art Nouveau reliefs of foliage patterns.

But that wasn’t the reason Jane stopped and looked, the Golden Mile was full of odd buildings, the most peculiar being the tower, which had a ballroom, large aquarium and even a zoo with lions, zebras and other such, but looking back what she could see now was obviously a sea side promenade, but not Blackpool’s.

And looking now at the terracotta building Jane exclaimed, ‘It’s called “The Hippodrome Circus” but The Hippodrome Circus in Great Yarmouth! We were in Blackpool, now where are we? Great Yarmouth?’

They both looked back from where they had walked, they were still on a promenade running along the sea with its shops and amusements, but no tower.

‘For some reason this Hippodrome, says it is a circus, but is permanent, and has some water feature, I’m guessing this

might be significant, and it still looks like the 1950s, let's get tickets.'

Inside was a circus ring, a ring master and the usual clowns, women in splendid clothes riding horses and performing acrobats whilst doing so, a high wire act, and what they thought the finale. The circus ring was lined with tall metal bars, and a man in brightly coloured clothes, a top hat and whip entered through a door. Through a tunnel opposite two lions and a tiger entered, the man cracked his whip, the animals snarled, he cracked his whip again and they ran around the ring then jumped onto stools, again snarling and growling.

The lion tamer made each animal in turn jump through a hoop then go back to its stool. He bowed, then cracked his whip again, this made the three animals run back out of the circus ring down the tunnel from which they came and so out of sight.

'I've never seen anything like this. It's terribly cruel, terribly' Jane was saying.

'I did see this sort of thing once, it was in a circus, once, I was very little and terrified.' Catherine Mulberry replied, 'And now of course certainly not allowed.'

After the two lions and tiger had left the ring via the caged entrance they had arrived in, the Lion tamer took his bows as quickly the bars around the circus ring were removed.

The ring master dressed in a red, blue and gold suit with top hat was now talking, or shouting, but neither could hear. The fence was gone. Stepping back the floor of the ring began to disappear, and from large pipes tremendous streams of water

flowed filling the ring, which had now become a large swimming pool with coloured lights playing over the surface. Now young women were plunging into the pool, and performing water aerobatics, whilst “rain” poured from above and search lights in reds, yellows, blues and purples danced over the scene. And from above came a loud scream which made Catherine Mulberry and Jane turn. It was from a young girl maybe 5 years old, screaming and screaming at the sights below, maybe expecting to be drowned. She was being comforted, or attempts were being made by what was probably her mother, another woman and a boy was sat next to these two, and a man to the right also looking concerned. The child was now sobbing, her mother holding her close. Jane was watching the scene, but it was the boy that Catherine Mulberry was looking at,

‘I know him, but from where.’ she asked herself.

The show finished and groups began to leave, the four were lost to view. Catherine Mulberry and Jane left the Hippodrome and found themselves on a path in front of a beach, no buildings, but behind them a track which crossed a railway line. The sea was a dull blue/grey, a sandy beach but with tufts of coarse grass. Without talking they turned and followed the path across the single railway track. It was rusted and looked like no trains had used it for years. They approached some low wooden buildings, one it seemed was a bar, calling itself the California Tavern, but they were certainly not in the USA. It had signs advertising Woodbine cigarettes, Smith’s crisps and Watney’s beer. It was closed. Next to it was a gift shop. They walked in, there were sticks of rock, some said Caister, others Great Yarmouth. Other gifts were on sale, all priced in sterling, model lobster pots with seagulls on

them, red and green lamps, framed examples of knots, packets of fudge, and postcards, sweets, confectionary and soft drinks. Off to the left was a small room, it had no door so they could see it was a small arcade which contained a few games. They could see a fruit machine and at the back of the room where there was a very large and strange game which caught the two women's interest. It was a tall oblong glass fronted box. It had a painted scene of what looked like some tropical beach as a backdrop. To the right and left in front of this were two tall model palm trees. Two boys were frantically playing on the game.

They watched and worked out the game, the machine had two handles that could be turned, these made a monkey climb each tree. The boys paid them no notice; they were furiously turning the handles. It seemed whichever monkey was first to the top of the tree, that player got his penny back, the other did not. Both were in short trousers, T shirts and sandals, one blonde the other had dark hair. Catherine Mulberry was staring at the blonde boy and was whispering to herself,

'Is it him?'

'What a pointless game.' said Jane.

'We should leave.' said Catherine Mulberry.

They walked back to the track, but it seemed different, and it led to a large expanse of water,

'I think it's a boating lake.' said Catherine Mulberry.

‘Yet there are no boats on it.’ said Jane, looking at the empty boats tied up next to a small shed with a sign about the cost of hiring oars, refundable if returned.

She continued,

‘Look at the water, it’s covered in a green weed, impossible to row on that lake.’

Catherine Mulberry was looking over the lake at a small figure in a boat far away, ‘Not if you very carefully skim the water it seems, I know him. He was the boy in Blackpool, and younger in Great Yarmouth, older still playing that game, and now here on this boating lake.’

Jane looked at the figure, ‘Then who is that boy out there, and how do you know?’ she asked.

‘It’s the boy in the house in Birmingham, in a strange other world like my own in Woodbridge, out of time and empty of life save the birds. I recognised him. Do you remember the scene we saw outside The Hall of the Mountain King, those creatures the brontosauri, I remembered from an encyclopaedia I had as a child?’

Jane thought for a while, ‘Yes I think so, what of it?’

‘Well, that boy had the same book, I saw it in his house, I’m guessing that scene of the dinosaurs was some way of communicating.’

Communicating what? asked Jane.

‘Not sure yet, but I’ve seen enough.’ replied Catherine Mulberry, ‘Let’s follow the path and see where we are.’

They walked a few hundred yards passed a small building labelled “Toilet Block” and found themselves between two rows of tightly packed what looked like garden sheds. Then they came on a square of green with a rectangular swimming pool, there was a large building, some other smaller ones, with one marked “Reception”, then a barrier onto a road.

‘What on earth is this place?’ asked Jane.

‘It’s a holiday camp, the sheds are called chalets, each with two bunk beds, no heating or water, the large building serves as entertainment on the evenings and as a food hall in the day, one of my tutors at university would work in such places in their summer holidays, she showed me pictures and recounted stories, this, the real thing, looks far worse.’

They walked on out of the camp in silence, then Jane spoke,

‘What is the significance of the boy, it’s the same boy each time, why.’

‘Maybe exorcism of the boy, or his transcending.’ said Catherine Mulberry, continuing, ‘Perhaps the wrong way around, the boy inhabits a world outside of this or any other, incidentally the echoes of which account for the invulnerability of the house in Woodbridge. And by witnessing to some moments when he was not in that world, we have placed ourselves beyond it.’

‘We?’

‘Yes, we.’

‘Or no, I think it is he who has placed us beyond our world, by showing us insights into his life. Placed us possibly beyond all worlds. Beyond even all possible worlds?’

CHAPTER 17: BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL.

Truth is the kind of error without which a certain species of life could not live. – Frederick Nietzsche Will to Power 493.

Admitting untruth as a condition of life: that means to resist familiar values in a dangerous way; and a philosophy that dares this has already placed itself beyond good and evil. – Frederick Nietzsche (4).

They walked down a lane,

‘So, what now?’ asked Jane.

‘I’m not sure, the boy’s world is beyond us and this one is now ours.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘More yours with me along for the journey, which is good for me.’ replied Jane, ‘Far better than being rendered to some CIA security compound in some middle eastern state.’

‘And that’s how we will make our journey.’ said Catherine Mulberry looking at a Wolseley saloon car parked on the side of the lane.

‘It looks almost new.’ said Jane.

‘If this is the late 1950s it probably is.’ replied Catherine Mulberry as she walked up to the car, opening the driver’s door,

‘You are joining me, for I doubt if there is an alternative.’

She sat in the driver’s seat, Jane took the front passenger seat, Catherine Mulberry started the car and drove off.

‘So going to where?’ asked Jane.

‘My own version of Woodbridge in the 1950s.’ was the reply.

‘You seem very familiar with this old, well new I suppose, car.’

‘I was going to say I once had one like this back before all of this took place, but I recognised the registration, it’s my own car, and it was made decades before I was born, and I’m now driving it.’

‘Decades before you and I were born.’ Jane added.

‘Well, yes and no, we are I think in another dimension and time.’ replied Catherine Mulberry.

Jane said nothing, they crossed a bridge and saw a signpost saying, “Havant 1 mile”.

‘So, we were on Hayling Island and saw a holiday camp probably in the late 50s early 60s. And now back to Woodbridge, not many if any bypasses, I think. East to London then North to Ipswich.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

Havant was a small town with a typical High Street of Southern England in the 1950s. Shops in the ground floor of half-timbered buildings, some still just houses. Some newer banks and council buildings, Victorian and after, and at its centre a medieval church.

‘No people?’ said Jane.

‘No, I don’t expect to see any signs of life it’s like the other worlds I’ve known, most like this, no animals either, maybe birds, but that is all.’ was the reply.

‘Odd.’ said Jane.

At a junction they saw a sign which read “A3 LONDON” at which they headed north east towards Petersfield. They drove

through the town with its statue of King William III in The Square and its medieval church of St Peter. A market town with a High Street with mainly Victorian buildings. The A3 continued through farmland and often woodland of tall beech trees so the road was dappled in sunlight, at times escarpments of rock and stone walls, then on to Godalming.

Godalming in Surrey has its famous Pepperpot building with a market area below and meeting rooms above. They passed terraced cottages in Deanery Place dating from the 15th century, formerly part of the Rectory Manor and a milestone showing “Hyde Park Corner 31 miles”. And then on through hills and woodland stretching down to the roadside, and then on to Guilford, the county town of Surrey. A Georgian High Street running down to the River Wey. It boasts a ruined castle built by Henry II in the 12th century. The new cathedral begun in 1936, the building was delayed by the war and post war austerity and so was still incomplete as they travelled through the city.

They crossed the river at Kingston on Thames, Jane smiling but not saying anything at the countryside and roads, the lack of development from the 1960s onwards. They traced the north bank of the Thames as much as they could, through Twickenham and Art Deco 30s houses and apartments. Through an unrecognizable Hammersmith where Jane was now laughing. At South Kensington she spoke,

‘At last, something old enough to be recognised, but no traffic.’

The City of London itself was still Edwardian and Victorian, and Stratford a barren wasteland, so much so she didn’t recognise anything. Through Romford which still had its

market and then the A12 towards Chelmsford. They drove through Witham, as yet to have a bypass, at which Catherine Mulberry remarked,

‘That’s the house where Dorothy L. Sayers lived, the author of the Lord Peter Wimsey detective stories and noted Dante scholar. And where also lived my doppelgänger, the extrovert other Catherine Mulberry, who was deeply into the occult.’

Jane was silent, unaware of Dorothy L. Sayers and the Lord Peter Wimsey detective stories.

‘Dante?’ she thought, ‘Something to do with Hell?’

The A12 continued through Colchester and then Ipswich where they passed through the centre and the buttermarket and so then onto Woodbridge. They drove down an empty Cumberland Street, parked and entered the house. They found it as it must have been in the late 1950s except the study and library contained all of Catherine Mulberry’s and Billy Taylor’s books and collections from their field work. In the garden was the lake and moored skiff. The kitchen had its pine table and Aga cooker. Exploring they discovered those parts of the house that was once Billy’s seemed to be now Jane’s, albeit containing women’s clothes of the late 1950s. Electricity worked, how they did not know. There was an electric radiogram, which couldn’t pick up any stations but could play music. There was a collection of 78 rpm records and a larger one of 33 1/3. Mostly classical and Jazz, some of English folk songs.

It was evening, they noticed in the larder fresh vegetables, what proved to be a meat pie, and a treacle tart and jar which was covered in a cloth, removing it revealed custard. Also

bottles of wine and beer. They were tired and exhausted; Catherine Mulberry having done all the driving doubly so. She drank some beer and sat at the table whilst Jane cooked some vegetables and heated the pie and made gravy. They ate with candlelight and drank the best part of two bottles of red wine before retiring to bed. In the morning after breakfast, they explored a deserted 1950s Woodbridge and the estuary. As Catherine Mulberry had thought there were no animals except birds, the familiar waders, ducks, godwits and swans on the Deben Estuary.

CHAPTER 18: RETURN TO THE INSECT PLANET.

Over mid-morning coffee Jane was absent minded talking of the previous events,

‘... but I do feel sorry for those poor people turned into insects... a pity no one can do anything about it.’

‘Just a minute.’ said Catherine Mulberry, she was gone for ten and then returned and sat, was thinking whilst she drank her coffee.

‘Well, I think we could.’ she said, ‘But first we would need a way of getting to that planet, maybe not the doorway, why didn’t it work.’

She rose from her Windsor chair and walked from the kitchen cradling her coffee mug, Jane curious, followed. In the hallway was a green door, in front of it on the floor a jar of red paint and a brush.

‘Ah, so that’s why it didn’t work, it needs to be red now, not green. I could paint it and wait for it to dry, no problem, but yes! there is another way.’ Catherine Mulberry said to herself, then to Jane, ‘Can you row?’

‘Yes, very well actually, I was in a rowing club when in London.’

‘Excellent, finish your coffee and follow me.’ was her reply.

They both finished their coffees, placing the mugs on the draining board, leaving the kitchen and taking the door to the rear garden.

Catherine Mulberry walked towards the lake, on arrival sat in the seat at the stern of the skiff which was of a Victorian design. Jane looked it over,

‘Not quite what I’m used to, and no I’ve now experienced enough to know not to ask any questions.’

She sat in the boat, untied it and taking up the oars began to row, nor was she surprised when slowly a white mist enveloped everything, the garden no longer visible, and then after a few minutes a soft grinding sound as they touched ground, the mist clearing and of course they were on the vast white plain of the insect world. Catherine Mulberry stepped out of the boat, Jane stowed the oars and followed, as she did the skiff slowly rose into the air and drifted away.

‘It will find its way home I suspect, as must we.’ Catherine Mulberry said.

Jane looked around then at Catherine Mulberry.

A grey cloud appeared, getting closer it became obvious, flying insects, but flying backwards.

‘You’re reversing time.’ said Jane, watching as the cloud slowly became the Airbus 320. ‘How are you doing this.’

‘I’ll tell you later, in the meantime we need to take our seats before the other passengers and crew arrive.’

They climbed up one of the chutes, Catherine Mulberry needing a little help from Jane. Watching from the window like a film being played in reverse the insects once again became passengers, they needed no help with the chutes, simply sliding up and walking backwards to their seats. Soon they were airborne albeit flying backwards, as were the

conversations and announcements backwards. With the reverse bump of the landing gear now being stowed away the view of Rome once again appeared, and then the bump of the landing gear being deployed again, but this time no whiteout.

Now everything moved normally forwards, the aircraft landed safely and despite the security checks looking out for the two they cleared all of these. Prompting another unasked question for Jane.

‘I’d like to visit the Vatican and see my old friend Cardinal O’Malley. So would it be OK to stay a couple of days.’ asked Catherine Mulberry. Jane said it was and as it seems they were not recognisable to security she would do the tourist thing. It was only then they realised they were now wearing contemporary 21st century clothes, had their cabin luggage, money and credit cards.

The Cardinal was both pleased and surprised to see Catherine Mulberry and said he would gladly show her the vaults underneath St Peters. This he did, there was no door to another ‘realm’ and so no meeting with the Catherine Mulberry doppelgänger. And the Cardinal it seems was unaware of the previous meeting or any such realm. They had lunch together, and in passing the Cardinal said he had noticed the politics between the King and Queen of Italy was very harmonious with the new pope. ‘Dieu et mon droit.’ thought Catherine Mulberry.

She joined Jane on the second day doing the tourist thing and travelled back to England with no hitch arriving at Cumberland Street still unrecognised. The house was obviously being watched, and when the watchers noticed two unrecognised figures entering the house immediately another

attempt at access was made. Even using a battering ram and then a mechanical digger had no impact. One strange thing was that the operator of the digger noticed some red marks, not paint, looked more like blood, but that was ridiculous.

Meanwhile inside the house Catherine Mulberry and Jane were back in the strange other world of Woodbridge of the late 50s. The next morning after breakfast Jane asked,

‘OK, how was it done, the reverse thing, the skiff, and the not being recognised?’

‘OK, follow me and bring your coffee mug.’

Back in the study Catherine Mulberry sat at the Ouija board put her finger on the planchette and it moved,

F _ I _ L _ L _ _ T _ H _ E _ _ M _ U _ G.

Jane looked at what was her empty coffee mug, now full. And looked quizzingly.

‘It should be called an Ajiuo board, it works backwards, doesn’t show things happening but by my moving the planchette I can make things happen. So, this is what I did prior to our trip to the insect planet. Now when you’ve finished that coffee would you like to help me repaint the green door red?’

The attempts to gain entry to the house in Woodbridge in the “real” world continued with more and more effort at the insistence of the Americans. Eventually the house and garden were screened off. The rear garden was now once again the main target. The fence proved impervious to all attempts to break it. Attempts were made to use a crane to place special forces into the garden, again the machine broke down. The

teams assigned grew nervous, it was as if the house had a personality and that at first it had been benign but the increasing assaults were altering its mood. Each time the house's response seemed to get stronger, more violent. Machinery didn't just break down, it caught fire. This the teams of American forces began to feel, those forces engaged on the ground, not their superiors.

It was then that Catherine Mulberry in the other world told Jane she, and she alone needed to visit the house in the "real" world. This she did and entered the rear garden from the hallway. There were now two observation towers behind the rear screen from which the house could be observed. She looked up to the towers and called out,

'You really should stop all this, the house is now very angry, I fear you will go too far, and it will come to a very bad end.'

She turned and walked back to the house with the sound of a loud hailer asking her to give herself up.

'Ms Mulberry it is in your best interests to give yourself up to the authorities.'

'It is in your best interest to stop this.' she thought, entering the house.

This incident, which had been recorded made the Americans even more determined. Now the idea was to use a tall tower placed at some distance and use hang gliders to gain entry to the garden. The first flight circled towards the garden and as it was about to cross over the fence the glider burst into flames killing the pilot. Before anyone could react to this a great wind which at its centre had a whirlwind took away the towers and all the screens. There was then a calm as if nothing had

occurred. At this the Americans ceased operations, but Catherine Mulberry and Jane Smith were very much now top of the wanted list.

Arriving back in the 1950s world in response to a questioning look from Jane Catherine Mulberry just exclaimed,

‘Not my fault, the house is its own creature.’

CHAPTER 19: KNOCK KNOCK.

Now in her own world again Catherine Mulberry, if not Jane, was looking forward to some peaceful days, the weather in this strange world was sympathetic rather than seasonal. But it was only two days later that Catherine Mulberry was asking Jane if she might not find life boring here and suggested using the skiff to explore worlds when a knock knock came at the door. Jane looked a tad apprehensive, but Catherine Mulberry said it was OK to answer as the house wouldn't allow anything harmful. So, Jane opened the front door to see a youngish man in a dark suit wearing a dog collar, a man that she recognised.

'You were one of the passengers on the plane to Rome.' she said.

'That's right, and I was wondering if I might talk to a Ms Mulberry?'

'Send him in, I'll be in the drawing room.' came Catherine Mulberry's voice from inside the house.

The drawing room was at the front of the house, a room with a wood parquet floor and large Indian rug. It had three sofas, two armchairs all in brown velvet, and some other Victorian chairs with upholstered seats. The room was panelled in light oak with paintings, some small Cotman like watercolours but mainly larger oil paintings in a genre which Catherine Mulberry called Birmingham neo romantic work. A small school of painters in the early 20th century painting still in the high Pre-Raphaelite style. There were several occasional tables.

Catherine Mulberry gestured to the man to sit on a sofa facing her, and to Jane to sit beside her.

He launched into his story immediately,

‘I was travelling to Rome in the hope of meeting someone via the catacombs...’ he paused lost for words, so Catherine Mulberry picked up the conversation.

‘You wished to meet another Catherine Mulberry, my doppelgänger but she wasn’t there, and I guess Cardinal O’Malley mentioned my name or maybe assumed it was me you wished to meet.’

‘The latter, it wasn’t difficult to find you, I’m representing...’ again the man paused lost for words, Catherine Mulberry picking up.

‘Elemental forces, hence, your ability to know the house in Cumberland Street in Woodbridge. You tried the other house in that world, I guess you were aware of the whirlwind, that was the house’s doing, did it send you here?’

‘Correct again,’ said the man, and continued, ‘You see a world now with a trinity presents a problem...’ yet again the man paused lost for words, Catherine Mulberry again picking up,

‘It looks like natural forces are directed by God, and in the cases where these cause harm to humans could be mistaken for God’s punishment of mankind. And this is not the case though suspicions were that it once was. Let me think, very significant was the Lisbon earthquake.’

There was a silence, other than the keystrokes as Jane used her laptop...

‘We seem to be able to contact the internet?’ Jane was saying as she typed, she was saying this to herself so didn’t see the odd look from Catherine Mulberry but was now reading.

“The 1755 Lisbon earthquake, also known as the Great Lisbon earthquake, hit Portugal, the Iberian Peninsula, and Northwest Africa on the morning of Saturday, 1 November, Feast of All Saints, at around 09:40 local time. In combination with subsequent fires and a tsunami, the earthquake almost completely destroyed Lisbon and adjoining areas. Seismologists estimate the Lisbon earthquake had a magnitude of 7.7. Estimates place the death toll in Lisbon around 30,000–40,000. Candles lit in homes and churches all around the city for All Saints’ Day were knocked over, starting a fire that developed into a firestorm which burned for hours in the city, asphyxiating people up to 30 metres (98 ft) from the blaze. The earthquake had struck on an important religious holiday and had destroyed almost every important church in the city, causing anxiety and confusion amongst the citizens of a staunch and devout Roman Catholic country. Theologians and philosophers focused and speculated on the religious cause and message, seeing the earthquake as a manifestation of divine judgment.

Great catastrophes such as Noah’s flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the earthquake that swallowed up Korah and his followers, the plagues of Egypt and the evil that came upon other oppressors of Israel are represented in the Bible as Divine judgments.

St Gildas interpreted the Saxon invasions of England in the 5th-6th centuries as just punishment for the sins of the Britons. The Viking attacks of the 8th-11th centuries were

widely interpreted as being divine punishment upon Christians. Plagues, earthquakes and other similar disasters were also often looked upon as punishment in much of Christian history. The Reformation was sometimes interpreted by Catholics as a divine punishment upon the Church.

In his Second Inaugural Address Abraham Lincoln cited the then on-going war as Divine Judgment visited upon the nation for the offense of slavery.”

‘And of course the alternative is to blame the Elemental forces themselves, as if the iceberg that the Titanic struck was to blame. Or in the case of tsunamis, such as that of 2004 in the Indian Ocean or the Fukushima nuclear accident were somehow malevolent acts.’ said the young man.

‘Precisely,’ said Catherine Mulberry, ‘and very anthropocentric, that philosopher, err, Graham Harman, his criticism that our ontologies are anthropocentric.’

‘Not sure what you mean?’ the young man said, meanwhile Jane was using her laptop.

‘Not important,’ said Catherine Mulberry, ‘but where say a relation with a human and a snow drift is privileged over a snowflake’s relation to a mountain. In flat ontology the former is not, the fundamental being of the relationships are the same. But no matter, you were trying to get the other Catherine Mulberry to sort it out, maybe see the trinity?’

‘Yes.’ said the young man.

‘So, Jane some rowing for you to do?’ said Catherine Mulberry to Jane who was reading an entry on Graham Harman.

‘In that case thank you.’ said the young man.

He rose as Catherine Mulberry did also, showing him out of the house.

‘We didn’t offer him tea or anything.’ said Jane.

‘I suspect he was an anthropomorphic manifestation of some elemental force; he wouldn’t want tea, but would want to return to its elemental state as soon as possible.’ replied Catherine Mulberry.

‘Like Thor the God of thunder?’ asked Jane.

‘Not quite. It is more that the human like form of the god can take responsibility, in this case take responsibility away from the elements and away from a Christian God. Which I think therefore gives us work to do.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

Then there was again a knock knock at the door.

Catherine Mulberry opened it, with Jane standing behind her. It was a man in a dark suit and wearing a dog collar of a priest that she recognised as a much older version of the former hesitant young man. He now spoke firmly,

‘Yes, I am an elemental who has had to take human form.’ his voice showing anger, ‘We are the forces that create this universe in which you live, in which it’s possible for you to live, the how, but not the why...’

As he spoke his face and body changed, it aged rapidly before their eyes.

‘Why do you curse the very forces on which you exist, feed, off which your very bones and sinews are made...’

‘We will visit the Trinity and weave stories and places, beings and gods who will be responsible and take on the curses of humans...’ said Catherine Mulberry, ‘Now you should go soon else be trapped here.’

She led the man, now hunched and old towards the door, as he entered the street he turned to dust and was gone in a whirlwind, his speech trailing off,

‘Your services will be th-a-n-k-e-d-.’

CHAPTER 20: REVELATIONS FROM THE TRINITY.

‘We need to visit the planet of the Trinity,’ said Catherine Mulberry to Jane, ‘and I think we can use the skiff, are you up for rowing us there.’ Catherine Mulberry asked, Jane was fine with rowing and so they set off.

How the skiff or Catherine Mulberry knew the way to this planet Jane no longer wondered. Soon they saw the sweep of the planet and then the large domed structure with a central aperture which they passed through. The skiff landed and they disembarked and walked towards the three seated figures.

‘They very much remind me of some of William Blake’s drawings.’ thought Catherine Mulberry, ‘Which is interesting, I wonder if this is their projection into my mind, or my mind’s projection of that which is unfathomable? Of course there is the answer, William Blake’s mythology, or should I say there is the Trinity’s answer.’

The three figures were now smiling and then began to talk in a language that Jane couldn’t understand, but which it seemed Catherine Mulberry could. Then Catherine Mulberry was also talking in this strange language, the three figures obviously listening. This is a crude translation.

Catherine Mulberry spoke.

“In the beginning before the beginning there was darkness, and the darkness was eternal darkness and the darkness was matter, and there was no light. And the matter was the Devil, also called the demiurge, and the Devil bore four sons. And

they killed and ate their father, then they divided themselves into many men and filled the universe.

There were no women or animals or any other life. They invented fire, an impure light, and lived by cannibalism. On the lowest of places, a planet called Earth the sons of the Devil multiplied and consumed themselves until one son was left, The New Devil of Earth and Iron. And this Devil again multiplied to lesser men made from its excrement, which it also fed on to prevent self-cannibalism, and it hid itself deep in the earth. And the men were all Adam, and from their ribs they made women so as to cease copulating with themselves and each other. And so, they copulated with themselves, each other and the women, and the women brought forth unnatural children. And knowing of this abomination the devils made mutant children also, and these they called apes. This was to present a false picture to these men made from a woman. And the apes begat monkeys and the monkeys begat all mammals, and the mammals begat reptiles and these begat birds and amphibians and the amphibians begat fish and the fish begat insects and the insects begat bacteria and the bacteria begat viruses and the viruses begat DNA. And the earth swarmed with these types of life. Then the primal men on Earth became aware of the universe teaming with other primal men and looking at the earth were disgusted with the ever lower forms of life it had produced, so these primal men once again formed a single devil, and this giant devil sort out all the other worlds over millennia and destroyed all life elsewhere in the universe which at this time was just men. Save three, who merged into one and so could not be defeated, yet all else on their world perished. So, the life of the universe teamed on the Earth but all else was dead save the three joined as one.

Then on the return of the Devil made from primal men became many again. And they saw that the human race had become more evil. Now these men of women now sort out each other and lower life forms for sport, for intercourse and to torture them. And those of good heart became the dogs who are always happy, and those who were wise the cats which are always cunning. And so, these befriended the men of women. And when the returning devils saw this they became one again, as a giant Devil, which was giant stone and which was called Moon. And this is the outside world, the real world. And that is why in this world, the world separate from the real world, there are none but us two women, and the birds, because they can flee the real world in the air and come here, and to other separate worlds. And in the outer world, in its universe there were none living save on that world the Earth, save the three that were joined which are now the Trinity. This is it. But now it is time to populate the universe with diverse forms we will call the forms of the elementals. And above this there are the passive Gods in their prison. But first we must become the Devil and make the lesser gods and their abodes which are called hells...”

Then Catherine Mulberry turned to Jane and repeated in English,

‘But first we must become the Devil and make the lesser gods and their abodes which are called hells...’

She walked to the skiff and sat on the seat. Jane took the oars, as she rowed, she spoke,

‘Can I have some explanation please of what went on back there.’

‘When we are back in my Woodbridge.’ was the answer.

And soon they found themselves back on the lake. Jane followed Catherine Mulberry into the house.

‘Coffee!’ said Catherine Mulberry and walked down the hallway and into the kitchen and began to make coffee, grinding fresh beans, a thoughtful Jane Smith followed and sat at the kitchen table.

‘Tell me about the idea of the Devil.’ asked Jane.

When she had finished making the coffee Catherine Mulberry placed the mugs on the table then rose and left the kitchen, returning with a book, opened it and read aloud,

‘Among ancient Middle Eastern beliefs, Zoroastrianism was the first institutionalized belief-system which developed a clear demonology headed by a supreme spirit of Evil, Angra Mainyu, i.e. The Devil, and Ahura Mazda, the supreme God who will at the end of time overcome Angra Mainyu.

Around 600 BC, Zarathustra urged his followers to turn away from the devas, intermediaries between Ahura Mazda and humans. However elsewhere a daeva has disagreeable characteristics. In the Gathas, the oldest texts of the Zoroastrian canon, the daevas are gods that are to be rejected. However, the term Daeva shares the same origin of “Deva” of Hinduism, which is a cognate with Latin deus, god, and Greek Zeus.

So, Zarathustra urged his followers to turn away from the devas to dedicating worship to Ahura Mazda alone. Unique to Zarathustra’s revelation was that he claimed that evil is not part of the Godhead or ultimate reality, but a separate

principle independent from God. For the formulation of Good and Evil as entirely separate principles, Zarathustra argued that God, Ahura Mazda, freely chooses goodness, while Angra Mainyu freely chooses evil. By doing so, he established the first known dualistic cosmological system such also found in Manichaeism. This to some extent would later influence other religions, including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, however not to the extent of a dualism of the goodness of God, and the evil of the Devil.

Thus, the originally monistic Canaanite form of Judaism absorbs parts of Persian dualistic tendencies during the post-exilic period when the Jews returned from forced exile. The Jews of the Kingdom of Judah having been subjugated by the Neo-Babylonian Empire, were freed from the Babylonian captivity following the Persian conquest of Babylon in 539 BCE. The Persian king Cyrus the Great issued the Edict of Cyrus allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and the Land of Judah, which was made a self-governing Jewish province under the new Persian Empire.

So, the Second Temple Judaism, and Christianity, differ from Persian dualism in some regards: the proposed omnipotence of God of the former does not allow for a radical dualism as proposed by Zoroastrianism, the separate God and separate Devil.

Judeo-Christian tradition differs from earlier monistic beliefs by limiting the power of their Godhead through an evil principle or force, introduced by Zoroastrianism. Christianity in particular, struggled with reconciling God's omnipresence with God's benevolence. While Zoroastrianism sacrificed God's omnipotence for God's benevolence, thus giving rise to

a principal Devil as independent from God. Christianity mostly insisted on the Devil being created and typically a fallen angel, Satan, opposed to its creator.'

'Very interesting, so in Christianity and Judaism I suppose the Devil is a creation of God?' asked Jane.

'Yes, evil in the world is a problem in both Judaism and Christianity, and Satan appears in both the old and new testaments.' replied Catherine Mulberry.

'What is the book?' asked Jane, sipping her coffee,

'The Devil, A biography.' was the reply,

'And who is the author?'

'Catherine Mulberry.' replied Catherine Mulberry, 'And it's completely wrong, my bad, how was I to know.'

'Know what?'

'The need for creativity, we must make the devils and angels so the elementals can be free of them. And so, humans can relate to these beings and not blame the elements of nature. And humans can be free of the laws of God and free of the laws of mathematics, that should be left in its own world. But I suppose mathematics escaped. Or someone or thing let it out, maybe Pythagoras, or Plato, even Aristotle?'

'I really can't follow this.' said Jane.

'You will, not yet now drink your coffee and for now put all this on one side, tell me about your thoughts.'

CHAPTER 21: JANE'S EPIPHANY.

In Jane's mind came the thought of the six terrorist attacks that had caused her to journey on this adventure with Catherine Mulberry. That she and her were now wanted by the American military and leadership to pay no doubt with their lives for being responsible for the attacks on the US Aircraft Carriers. Something which obviously was not the case.

'I'm thinking about the six terrorist attacks that it seems the powers that be think you are responsible for and that I'm collaborating with you. And I suppose we can never go back to the real world.'

And then a Jack Reacher movie came into her mind, the first one made starring Tom Cruise, and then in her mind The ABC Murders. That rang a bell,

'Of course I saw John Malkovich as Hercule Poirot in the BBC series.'

'Sorry now you have lost me, what are you talking about?' asked Catherine Mulberry.

'I'm not sure how it makes any sense. I have this Jack Reacher movie starring Tom Cruise, and John Malkovich in The ABC Murders series in my head. But do they relate to my thoughts of the six attacks.'

'I'm not familiar with the Jack Reacher film, and I missed the John Malkovich version of the Agatha Christie.' said Catherine Mulberry.

‘Well in the Jack Reacher movie there are a series of seeming random shootings, but one target is not, oh, that’s the link, same as in the ABC murders.’

There was a silence, then Jane’s epiphany,

‘The six terrorist attacks, 5 random terrorist attacks but the last one was not, to take out the US carriers. And of course, by some nation or nations wanting to degrade the US’s military capability overseas.’

There was a long silence broken by Jane’s question.

‘Can we, sorry you, use the Ouija board and see if my idea has legs?’

‘Sure.’ Both rose from the table and went into the study, there they sat, Catherine Mulberry put her finger on the planchette and looked at Jane who repeated,

‘The six terrorist attacks, 5 random terrorist attacks but the last one was not, it was to take out the US carriers. And by some nation or nations wanting to degrade the US’s military capability overseas.’

The planchette moved.

Y _ E _ S

‘Brilliant!’ shouted Jane.

Then her face fell,

‘But how can we let them know?’

‘Let’s take a walk, a good long walk.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

The walk took them along the estuary path towards Kyson Point, then down Martlesham Creek which they crossed and walked to the small church of St Mary. On the way back Catherine Mulberry spoke,

‘I will cook supper, you can read or whatever, I’m also going to use the Ouija, but to send a message to the Trinity. We will sort this out together.’

Back at the House in Cumberland Street Catherine Mulberry set about making supper. Jane was in the study browsing, noticed a book on William Blake. She picked it up and took it into the drawing room and relaxed on one of the sofas. She read.

“In William Blake’s mythology Albion is the primeval man whose fall and division results in the Four Zoas. Urthona or Los is the Zoa of inspiration and creativity, and he is a blacksmith god. Urizen embodies reason and conventional society; a cruel god resembling the Gnostic Demiurge. Luvah represents love, passion, and rebellious energy. And Tharmas representing instinct and strength. The Blake pantheon also includes feminine emanations that have separated from an integrated male being, as Eve separated from Adam. The sexual Enion is an emanation from Tharmas. The intellectual Ahania is an emanation from Urizen. The nature goddess Vala is an emanation from Luvah. The musical Enitharmon is an emanation from Los or Urthona.”

And she looked at the illustrations, thinking,

‘Mythology, could this be what? Blake makes up his own mythological beings, so Catherine’s idea of creativity. She said we must make the devils and angels so the elementals can be

free of the humans, and then that humans can relate to these anthropomorphic beings, and not to mathematics. Oh! I think she means science which uses mathematics.'

Just then Catherine Mulberry appeared, poured two glasses of sherry giving one to Jane.

'I see you have found the Blake book I was using, I think we need more places and creatures, but not yet. Supper is ready but let's relax a little first.'

When Jane followed Catherine Mulberry into the kitchen on the table were two place settings laid and dishes containing various salads and cold meats, fresh bread and two glasses of red wine.

They enjoyed their meal, and the puddings, Eaton Mess, and more wine, and conversation and so to bed.

Jane's dream, which of course was not, took place in the large domed structure of the trinity planet, though the three figures were not present maybe their presence was felt.

Around a large circular table sat figures, some recognisable to Jane, from US intelligence, some even more recognisable, the President and other seniors in the administration.

Jane outlined the idea, six seeming terrorist attacks, and patsy to take the blame, Catherine Mulberry. And that one of the attacks was not random. One out of the six had a specific motive, to weaken or destroy America's ability to project a global military influence. The aim was obvious, though not as successful as intended, and the perpetrator was also obvious. As Jane spoke information appeared on the walls. Those who doubted this meeting, as a dream, albeit a common one could not do so the following day, material was on their desks and

in their computer files and pointed to the nation that sort to weaken the global military influence of the United States of America. It was decided to keep this information limited for the time being.

What was to be the response, it should cause greater harm to that nation's navy than that inflicted on the USA. It was planned, then when the latest satellite information became available the "targets", a rival nation's navy, none of its surface or sub surface vessels could be located. The initial idea that somehow, they were hidden was dismissed as impossible to do for all vessels, and the seeming noise and panic in the target nation's military and administration at the entire loss of its navy seemed to confirm the reality of the loss.

However, some had impressed on the Vice President that the original idea of the involvement of that "Catherine Mulberry" should be investigated especially now the added debacle and losses of attempts to gain entry to the house in Cumberland Street. And so it was, by a small and secret team.

The next morning over breakfast Jane recounted the "dream". Catherine Mulberry's response was to ask if she would now return to her profession in the "real" world, the reply being.

'No way!'

They both began their second cup of coffee.

'Hey, I accessed the internet back then, how so?' asked Jane.

There was no response from Catherine Mulberry.

Jane went and fetched her lap top, opened it and immediately saw a clutch of emails. For minutes she typed, mostly deleting irrelevant stuff, then frowned.

‘Seems the US planned response to take out ships in a certain navy couldn’t take place? It seems they, those responsible for the six attacks no longer have any navy at all. Know anything about this? I thought we couldn’t engage with the so-called real world?’

‘A grey area,’ began Catherine Mulberry, ‘the so-called real world can engage with us, on our terms, it’s why we could meet the elementals, if we allow it. Not quite the other way around. We have free access to the real world and others, and now it seems one where our identity need not be hidden, unless that is it’s required.’

Then she gave a very un-Catherine Mulberry expression, she winked. ‘But the disappearing navy thing wasn’t me, I think it was probably Rintrah, in William Blake’s mythology, the just wrath of the prophet. Rintrah first appears in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: Rintrah roars and shakes his fires in the burdened air...’.

‘I’m not sure if you are just using, who is it? Rintrah? as a cover, but isn’t removing all of the navy a tad over the top.’

‘I would imagine Rintrah was sending a message also to the United States and the rest of the world that there was a new player in the game. Just a thought, it might be that. And another that I think Blake’s mythology will not be enough, we will need far more.’ said Catherine Mulberry with an ironic smile. ‘And now a walk?’

They left the house in their separate world which they shared only with the birds and walked down a deserted Quay Street and onto the path which followed the Deben Estuary. They walked towards Melton. The path opens onto a view of the estuary with the town of Woodbridge out of sight. They sat on a bench overlooking Sutton Hoo, the burial place of the great Saxon King. Gently sloping fields of green and dense woodland, now shining gold in the early autumn sun.

Sitting on the bench watching the gentle flow of the estuary making its way towards the sea, the birds feeding on the mud and silt banks. They were in the empty world of Catherine Mulberry. Jane had a question, so asked it,

‘So, what is there to do?’

‘Undo that which was done and make new things, from above.’

And here Catherine Mulberry repeated the story she told the Trinity.

‘In the beginning before the beginning there was darkness, and the darkness was eternal darkness and the darkness was matter, and there was no light. And the matter was the Devil, also called the demiurge, and the Devil bore four sons. And they killed and ate their father, then they divided themselves into many men and filled the universe.

There were no women or animals or any other life. They invented fire, an impure light, and lived by cannibalism. On the lowest of places, a planet called Earth the sons of the Devil multiplied and consumed themselves until one son was left, The New Devil of Earth and Iron. And this Devil again multiplied to lesser men made from its excrement, which it

also fed on to prevent self-cannibalism, and it hid itself deep in the earth. And the men were all Adam, and from their ribs they made women so as to cease copulating with themselves and each other. And so, they copulated with themselves, each other and the women, and the women brought forth unnatural children. And knowing of this abomination the devils made mutant children also, and these they called apes. This was to present a false picture to these men made from a woman. And the apes begat monkeys and the monkeys begat all mammals, and the mammals begat reptiles and these begat birds and amphibians and the amphibians begat fish and the fish begat insects and the insects begat bacteria and the bacteria begat viruses and the viruses begat DNA. And the earth swarmed with these types of life. Then the primal men on Earth became aware of the universe teaming with other primal men and looking at the earth were disgusted with the ever lower forms of life it had produced, so these primal men once again formed a single devil, and this giant devil sort out all the other worlds over millennia and destroyed all life elsewhere in the universe which at this time was just men. Save three, who merged into one and so could not be defeated, yet all else on their world perished. So, the life of the universe teamed on the Earth but all else was dead save the three joined as one.

Then on the return of the Devil made from primal men became many again. And they saw that the human race had become more evil. Now these men of women now sort out each other and lower life forms for sport, for intercourse and to torture them. And those of good heart became the dogs who are always happy, and those who were wise the cats which are always cunning. And so, these befriended the men of women. And when the returning devils saw this they

became one again, as a giant Devil, which was giant stone and which was called Moon. And this is the outside world, the real world. And that is why in this world, the world separate from the real world, there are none but us two women, and the birds, because they can flee the real world in the air and come here, and to other separate worlds. And in the outer world, in its universe there were none living save on that world the Earth, save the three that were joined which are now the Trinity. This is it. But now it is time to populate the universe with diverse forms we will call the forms of the elementals. And above this there are the passive Gods in their prison. But first we must become the Devil and make the lesser gods and their abodes which are called hells...'

Adding,

'And as is above so below.'

CHAPTER 22: THE EMERALD TABLE.

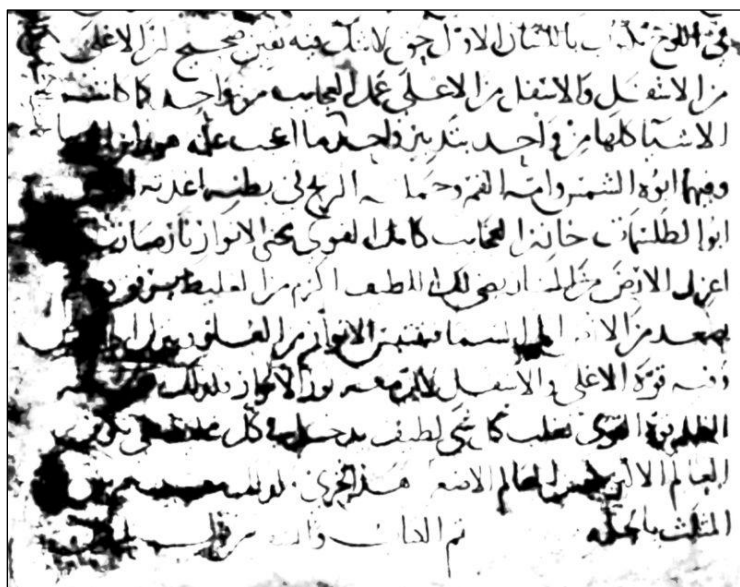
The Emerald Tablet, also known as the Smaragdine Table or the Tabula Smaragdina, is a compact and cryptic text traditionally attributed to the legendary Hellenistic figure Hermes Trismegistus. The earliest known versions are four Arabic recensions preserved in mystical and alchemical treatises between the 8th and 10th —chiefly the Secret of Creation. Arabic: سر الخليفة, romanized: Sirr al-Khalīqa, and the Secret of Secrets سر الأسرار, Sirr al-Asrār. It was often accompanied by a story about the discovery of an emerald tablet in Hermes' tomb.

From the 12th century onward, Latin translations appeared in Europe, where it attracted great scholarly interest. Medieval commentators such as Hortulanus interpreted it as a “foundational text” of alchemical instructions for producing the philosopher’s stone. The secret of making base metal such as lead which decays into gold which does not decay. And hence making the mortal immortal. During the Renaissance, interpreters increasingly read the text through Neoplatonic, allegorical, and Christian lenses; and printers often paired it with an emblem that came to be regarded as a visual representation of the Tablet itself. Vernacular translations of the Latin vulgate also started to appear, such as an English translation prepared by Isaac Newton.

Following the 20th-century rediscovery of Arabic sources by Eric Holmyard and Julius Ruska, modern scholars continue to debate its origins. They agree that the Secret of Creation, the Tablet's earliest source and its likely original context, was either wholly or at least partly compiled from earlier Greek or Syriac materials. The Tablet remains influential in esotericism

and occultism, where the phrase “as above, so below”, a paraphrase of its second verse, encapsulates the idea.

The oldest version of the Emerald Tablet is found as an appendix in an encyclopaedic treatise on natural philosophy meant as a cosmogony, a description of the origin of the cosmos or the universe. It is believed to have been compiled in Arabic in the late eighth or early ninth century. The treatise bears the title *Book of the Secret of Creation and the Craft of Nature*.



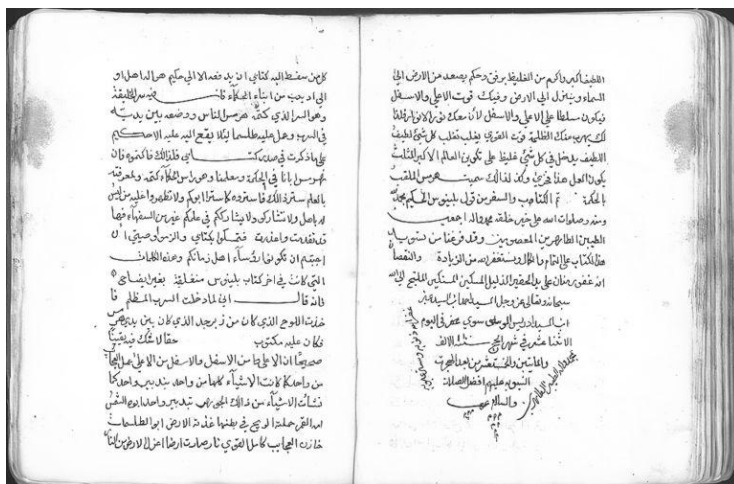
Arabic text of the Emerald Tablet from the *Book of the Secret of Creation*.

A translation.

Truth; no doubt it is true indeed, the uppermost is from the lowermost and the lowermost is from the uppermost. It

worked the wonders from one, just as all things come from one by means of one plan, with one considered act, its father is the sun, its mother is the moon, the wind carried it in her womb, the earth fed it, father of talismans, keeper of wonders, perfect in power. Fire became earth, separateh the earth from the fire, the subtle is more noble than the gross. With gentle-being and wisdom it ascends from the earth to the heaven and descends to the earth from the heaven, and in it is the power of the uppermost and the lowermost, since with it is the light of lights therefore the darkness escapes away from it, power of powers. It prevails over everything subtle, enters into everything gross, against the creation of the macrocosm the work was created. This is my renown and therefore I am named Hermes the threefold with the wisdom.

حَقُّ لَا شَكَّ فِيهِ صَحِيحٌ،
 إِنَّ الْأَعْلَى مِنَ الْأَسْفَلِ وَالْأَسْفَلُ مِنَ الْأَعْلَى،
 عَمَلُ الْعَجَائِبِ مِنْ وَاحِدٍ كَمَا كَانَتْ الْأَشْيَاءُ كُلُّهَا مِنْ وَاحِدٍ بِتَدْبِيرِ وَاحِدٍ،
 أَبَوُهُ الشَّمْسُ، أُمُّهُ الْقَمَرُ،
 حَمَلَتْهُ الرِّيحُ فِي بَطْنِهَا، غَذَتْهُ الْأَرْضُ،
 أَبُو الطَّلَسَمَاتِ، خَازِنُ الْعَجَائِبِ، كَامِلُ الْقُوَى،
 نَارٌ صَارَتْ أَرْضاً أَعَزَلَ الْأَرْضُ مِنَ النَّارِ،
 اللَّطِيفُ أَكْرَمُ مِنَ الْغَلِيزِ،
 بِرِفْقٍ وَحُكْمٍ يَصْعَدُ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَيَنْزِلُ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ،
 وَفِيهِ قُوَّةُ الْأَعْلَى وَالْأَسْفَلِ،
 لِأَنَّ مَعَهُ نُورَ الْأَنْوَارِ فَلِذَلِكَ تَهْرَبُ مِنْهُ الظُّلُمَةُ،
 قُوَّةُ الْقُوَى،
 يَغْلِبُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ لَطِيفٌ، يَدْخُلُ فِي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ غَلِيزٌ،
 عَلَى تَكْوِينِ الْعَالَمِ الْأَكْبَرِ تَكْوُنُ الْعَمَلِ،
 فَهَذَا فَخْرِي وَلِذَلِكَ سُمِّيْتُ هَرْمِسَ الْمُثَلَّثَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ.



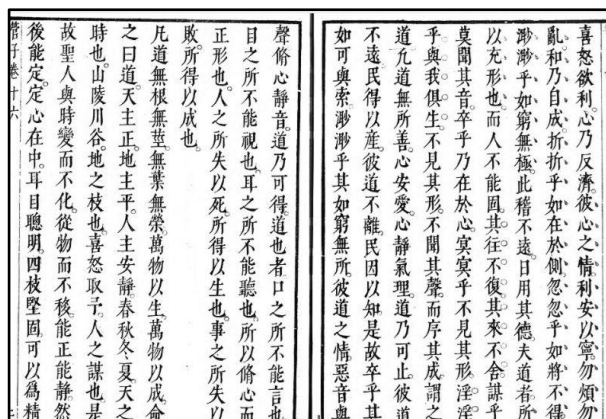
Nineteenth-century Arabic text of the Emerald Tablet and part of its "frame" story in the Book of the Secret of Creation.

The introduction to the Book of the Secret of Creation presents a narrative that outlines key philosophical and alchemical ideas. It explains that all things are composed of four elemental qualities—heat, cold, moisture, and dryness—drawn from Aristotelian theory. These elements and their combinations are said to determine the sympathetic or antagonistic relationships between beings. In the frame story¹, Balīnūs, a legendary figure known as the Master of Talismans, discovers a crypt beneath a statue of Hermes Trismegistus. Inside, he finds a tablet made of emerald, held by an old man seated with a book. The central part of the text is an alchemical treatise, notable for introducing for the first time the theory that all metals are formed from two basic substances: sulphur and mercury. This concept later became a

¹ A story set within a story The 'Frame' being the 'outer' story.

foundational idea in medieval alchemy. Emerald was the stone traditionally associated with Hermes, while quicksilver was his metal and Mercury his planet. Mars was associated with red stones and iron, and Saturn with black stones and lead. People in antiquity thought of various green-coloured minerals—such as green jasper and even green granite as emerald.

The text of the Emerald Tablet appears in the Book of the Secret of Creation as an appendix. It has been suggested that the Emerald Tablet was originally a text of talismanic magic that was only later understood as being alchemical in nature. This may have been due to it having been divorced from its original context in the Book of the Secret of Creation; and instead having been commonly transmitted through the alchemical treatises.



1620 woodblock print of the beginning of the Guanzi section Tzu-Kung hypothesised to be the origin of the Emerald Tablet.

Chang Tzu-Kung proposed an origin of the Emerald Tablet was further east, as he believed Hermes Trismegistus to have been

Chinese. He noted that Chinese aphorisms commonly hailed from legendary slabs and steles carved in caves and temples, and that the Emerald Tablet is an example of this phenomenon. Tzu-Kung produced a speculative Chinese rendition of the Tablet. He claimed the Tablet's origin to be a Han dynasty 202 BCE – 220 CE Taoist text known as the Guanzi.

Another text of the Emerald Tablet is found towards the end of the tenth-century pseudo-Aristotelian work known as the Secret of Secrets. This entire treatise is framed as a pseudepigraphical² letter from Aristotle to Alexander the Great during the latter's conquest of Persia and is introduced via a number of letters between the two. It discusses politics, morality, physiognomy³, astrology, alchemy, medicine, and more.

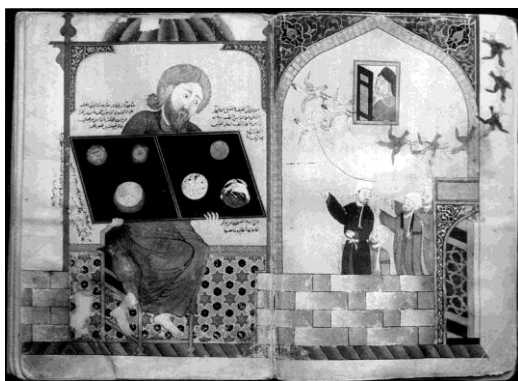
It reads:

حقا يقينا لا شك فيه
أن الأسفل من الأعلى والأعلى من الأسفل
عمل العجائب من واحد بتدبير واحد كما نشأت الأشياء من جوهر واحد
أبوه الشمس وأمه القمر
حملته الريح في بطنها، وغذته الأرض بلبانها
أبو الطلسمات، خازن العجائب، كامل القوى
فان صارت أرضا اعزل الأرض من النار اللطيف
أكرم من الغليظ
برفق وحكمة تصعد من الأرض إلى السماء وتهبط إلى الأرض
فتقبل قوة الأعلى والأسفل
لأن معك نور الأنوار فلماذا تهرب عنك الظلمة

² A falsely attributed work, a text whose claimed author is not the true author, or a work whose real author attributed it to a figure of the past.

³ The practice of assessing a person's character or personality from their outer appearance—especially the face.

قوة القوى
تغلب كل شيء لطيف يدخل على كل شيء كثيف
على تقدير العالم الأكبر
هذا فخري ولهذا سميت هرمس المثلث بالحكمة الدنية

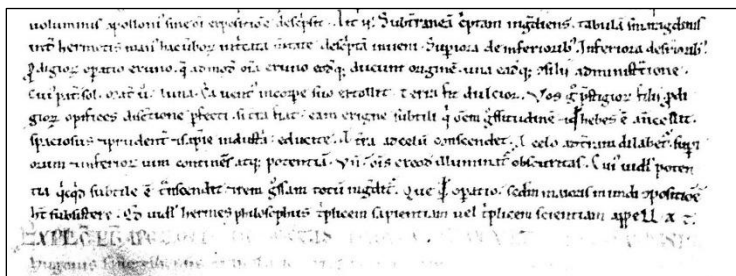


Fourteenth-century depiction of Ibn Umayl's discovery story in a pyramid from manuscript Book of the Silvery Water and the Starry Earth.

An Arabic treatise called the Book of the Silvery Water and the Starry Earth by Ibn Umayl reproduces a version of the Tablet. This treatise was translated as Latin: *Tabula Chemica*, the “Chemical Tablet”. In this version of the frame story, an alchemical stone table is discovered, resting on the knees of Hermes Trismegistus in the secret chamber of a pyramid. However, this table does not contain the Tablet text which is repeated later in the treatise. It is instead inscribed with writing described as Arabic: *بيرباوي*, romanized: *bīrbāwī*, meaning “hieroglyphic; of the pyramid”. Its “hieroglyphic” contents are then visually depicted together with an alchemical exegesis thereof.

The literary theme of the discovery of Hermes' hidden wisdom can be found in other Arabic texts from around the tenth century. The introduction of the Book of Crates provides one such example. In the narrative a Greek philosopher named Crates is praying in the temple Sarapieion. While in prayer he has a vision of the ancient sage. It reads:

“Then I saw an old man, the most beautiful of men, seated on a chair. He was dressed in white garments and held in his hand a board attached to the chair, upon which rested a book. Before him were wondrous vessels, the most marvellous I had ever seen. When I asked who this old man was, I was told: He is Hermes Trismegistus, and the book before him is one of those that contain the explanation of the secrets he concealed from humankind.”



Text of the Emerald Tablet in its Latin translation by Hugo of Santalla.

The Book of the Secret of Creation was translated into Latin in c. 1145–1151 by Hugo of Santalla. This text does not appear to have been widely circulated. Its translation of the Tablet reads as follows:

Superiora de inferioribus, inferiora de superioribus,
prodigiorum operatio ex uno, quemadmodum omnia ex uno
eodemque ducunt originem, una eademque consilii
administratione.

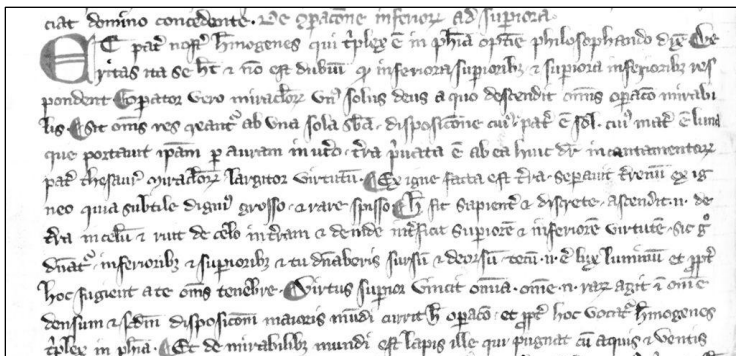
Cuius pater Sol, mater vero Luna,
eam ventus in corpore suo extollit: Terra fit dulcior.
Vos ergo, prestigiorum filii, prodigiorum opifices, discretione
perfecti,
si terra fiat, eam ex igne subtili, qui omnem grossitudinem et
quod hebes est antecellit, spatiosibus, et prudenter et
sapientie industria, educite.

A terra ad celum conscendet, a celo ad terram dilabetur,
superiorum et inferiorum vim continens atque potentiam.

Unde omnis ex eodem illuminatur obscuritas,
cuius videlicet potentia quicquid subtile est transcendit et rem
grossam, totum, ingreditur.

Que quidem operatio secundum maioris mundi
compositionem habet subsistere.

Quod videlicet Hermes philosophus triplicem sapientiam vel
triplicem scientiam appellat.



Latin text of the Tablet in the Secret of Secrets from c. 1290–1320.

The Tablet was also translated into Latin as part of the thirteenth-century translation of the Secret of Secrets Latin: Secretum Secretorum by Philip of Tripoli. This entire treatise has been called “the most popular book of the Latin Middle Ages”. Its translation of the Tablet differs significantly from both Hugo of Santalla's version and the vulgate translation.

In Roger Bacon's 1255 edition it reads:

Veritas ita se habet et non est dubium,
quod inferiora superioribus et superiora inferioribus
respondent.

Operator miraculorum unus solus est Deus, a quo descendit
omnis operatio mirabilis.

Sic omnes res generantur ab una sola substancia, una sua sola
disposicione.

Quarum pater est Sol, quarum mater est Luna.
Que portavit ipsam naturam per auram in utero, terra
impregnata est ab ea.

Hinc dicitur Sol causatorum pater, thesaurus miraculorum,
largitor virtutum.

Ex igne facta est terra.

Separa terrenum ab igneo, quia subtile dignius est grosso, et
rarum spisso.

Hoc fit sapienter et discrete. Ascendit enim de terra in celum,
et ruit de celo in terram.

Et inde interficit superiorem et inferiorem virtutem.

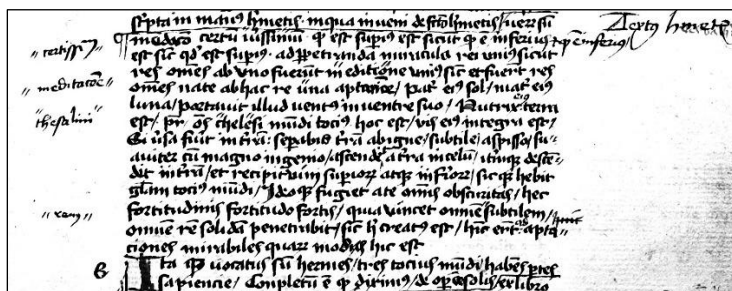
Sic ergo dominatur inferioribus et superioribus et tu
dominaberis sursum et deorsum,
tecum enim est lux luminum, et propter hoc fugient a te
omnes tenebre.

Virtus superior vincit omnia.

Omne enim rarum agit in omne densum.

Et secundum disposicionem majoris mundi currit hec
operatio,

et propter hoc vocatur Hermogenes triplex in philosophia.



Fifteenth-century Latin text of the vulgate Emerald Tablet.

A third Latin version can be found in an alchemical treatise likely from the twelfth century. This latter, most circulated version is called the vulgate, as it was widespread and formed the subsequent basis for all later editions and translations into European vernacular languages. It is found in an anonymous compilation of commentaries on the Emerald Tablet, translated from a lost Arabic text—variously called the Book of Hermes on Alchemy, the Book of Dabessus, or the Book of the Rebis. Its translator has been tentatively identified as Plato of Tivoli, who was active in c. 1134–1145.

Its translation of the Tablet reads:

Verum sine mendacio, certum, certissimum.

Quod est superius est sicut quod inferius, et quod inferius est sicut quod est superius.

Ad preparanda miracula rei unius.

Sicut res omnes ab una fuerunt meditatione unius, et sic sunt nate res omnes ab hac re una aptatione.

Pater ejus sol, mater ejus luna.

Portavit illuc ventus in ventre suo. Nutrix ejus terra est.
Pater omnis Telesmi tocius mundi hic est.
Vis ejus integra est.
Si versa fuerit in terram separabit terram ab igne, subtile a
spisso.
Suaviter cum magno ingenio ascendit a terra in celum. Iterum
descendit in terram,
et recipit vim superiorem atque inferiorem.
Sicque habebis gloriam claritatis mundi. Ideo fugiet a te omnis
obscuritas.
Hic est tocius fortitudinis fortitudo fortis,
quia vincet omnem rem subtilem, omnemque rem solidam
penetrabit.
Sicut hic mundus creatus est.
Hinc erunt aptationes mirabiles quarum mos hic est.
Itaque vocatus sum Hermes, tres tocius mundi partes habens
sapientie.
Et completum est quod diximus de opere solis ex libro Galieni
Alfachimi.

True it is, without falsehood, certain and most true.
That which is above is like to that which is below, and that
which is below is like to that which is above,
to accomplish the miracles of one thing.
And as all things were by contemplation of one, so all things
arose from this one thing by a single act of adaptation.
The father thereof is the Sun, the mother the Moon.
The wind carried it in its womb, the earth is the nurse thereof.
It is the father of all works of wonder throughout the whole
world.
The power thereof is perfect.
If it be cast on to earth, it will separate the element of earth
from that of fire, the subtle from the gross.
With great sagacity it doth ascend gently from earth to
heaven. Again it doth descend to earth,

and uniteth in itself the force from things superior and things inferior.

Thus thou wilt possess the glory of the brightness of the whole world, and all obscurity will fly far from thee.

This thing is the strong fortitude of all strength, for it overcometh every subtle thing and doth penetrate every solid substance.

Thus was this world created.

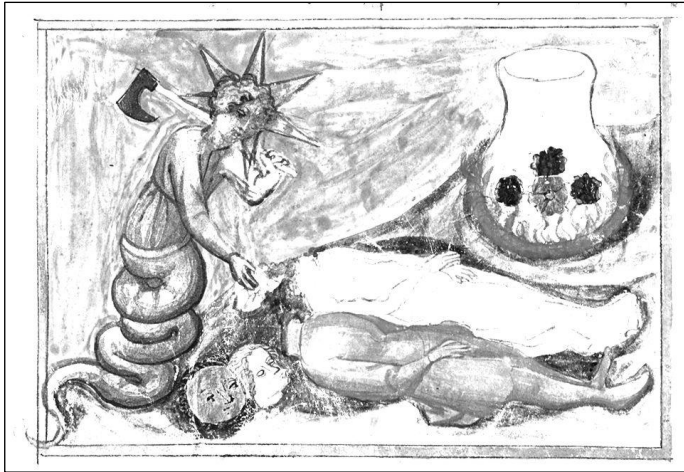
Hence will there be marvellous adaptations achieved, of which the manner is this.

For this reason I am called Hermes Trismegistus, because I hold three parts of the wisdom of the whole world.

That which I had to say about the operation of Sol is completed.



Discovery of the Emerald Tablet in a Pyramid shown in the Rising Dawn.



A serpentine Mercury beheads the Sun and Moon; golden and silver blossoms sit in a glass vessel over a flame.



The emblem of the Emerald Tablet as printed in a 1600 edition of the Golden Fleece.

CHAPTER 23: BELOW.

‘What you described sounds like nonsense.’ Jane said.

‘Well, it made sense and described a why.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

Jane rose from the bench.

‘What are you doing?’ asked Catherine Mulberry.

‘I’m going back to the outside world.’ was the reply.

‘My story was a fiction here is another. The physical world is explained by physics, science, but there are alternatives and one is that of the virtual possible worlds. Now these can be seen as fictions which help understanding, like a Shakespeare play, or potential new physical explanations. Or something higher, by which I mean something like music or language, thinking. Now thinking has made the physical world understandable. Are there ones, things like thinking higher and what would they be like. Obviously thinking to a stone, better thinking to a non-thinking thing doesn’t exist.’

‘That is why our universe is empty of everything but ourselves.’ said Jane.

‘Yes.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘So thinking is above the material, but, I’m not sure of the words, somehow captures it. As above so below.’

‘Yes.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘There was a time when thought didn’t exist.’

‘Correct’.

‘It came into being’.

‘Yes.’

‘And then something rose above that.’

‘Yes.’

‘Like a dream.’

‘Let’s go back,’ said Catherine Mulberry, ‘the thinking, can be written, but isn’t the ink or the paper.’

There was a long silence, Jane was watching the birds on the estuary.

‘Your story was base, deliberately.’

There was no answer.

‘In the beginning,’ Jane said, ‘there was no beginning because the book of life has a page one, but also a page zero, and pages which run on forever in a minus direction, and which run forward forever in a positive direction, but they never repeat. Your story was very negative.’

Catherine Mulberry had no expression, Jane continued.

‘So where do we begin? Let’s begin with the estuary where it has a personality, and so does the land and they have mutual relations. Now I can explain why the universe is devoid of life, we have no mutual relations with it. We seem unable to, why because we see everything in human relationship terms. There are no humans on the moon, but there are things there not, oh I don’t know that childish cartoon of creatures, but we are not children. Moonbeams! Poetry!’

The fountains mingle with the river
And the rivers with the ocean,
The winds of heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one spirit meet and mingle.
Why not I with thine?—

See the mountains kiss high heaven
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister-flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother;
And the sunlight clasps the earth
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
What is all this sweet work worth
If thou kiss not me?

‘So, we can’t see life in the universe because we only see life as life on Earth. Or that life itself sees us and doesn’t like what it sees. That’s in your negative account also. Let’s walk along the path to the woods over there.’

Jane began walking along the path towards Melton, Catherine Mulberry rose from the bench and followed her, they walked past the house boats and were soon passing Melton Boatyard following the bends of the estuary. They left the footpath to cross the river using the Wilford Bridge. Obviously, they saw no one. There is no footpath opposite the boatyard, marshy ground which floods at high tides, so they followed the track that led to Sutton Hoo. They were soon in the woods, precisely where Jane wanted to be. They stopped on the path,

‘What is it?’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘I want to see the Naiads.’ was the reply. And as she spoke a naked girl with brown hair rose from the river and walked cautiously towards them.

Still cautious she spoke, ‘Do you know of Hermaphroditus who was nursed by naiads in the caves of Mount Ida, a truly and remarkably beautiful boy. A child of Aphrodite and Hermes. It was in the woods of Caria, near Halicarnassus that he encountered the nymph Salmacis in her pool. She was overcome by lust for the boy, who was very beautiful but still young, and she tried to flirt with him, but was rejected. When he thought she had left, Hermaphroditus undressed and entered the waters of the empty pool. Salmacis sprang out from behind a tree and jumped into the pool. She wrapped herself around the youth, forcibly kissing him and touching his breast, attempting to rape him. While he struggled, she called out to the gods that they should never part. Her wish was granted, and their bodies blended into one form, a creature of both sexes. Hermaphroditus prayed to Hermes and Aphrodite that anyone else who bathed in the pool would be similarly transformed, and his wish was granted. His name is compounded of his parents’ names, Hermes and Aphrodite, a hermaphrodite.’

There was a pause, and the wind blew some orange leaves about them.

‘And the Kings on the hill?’ asked Jane.

‘What do you want of them?’

‘Their boat to take us to a distant land, the origin of all rivers. And see the origin of the Naiads.’

‘You would take me?’ asked the Naiad.

‘Of course.’ replied Jane.

At that moment they noticed now the Kings boat on the water. They, the three, threaded their way through the trees and climbed into the empty boat. Its sail caught the wind, and it moved off into the estuary.

Looking back, they saw the King standing watching, in his gold helmet covering his face, the gold sword harness and sword and scabbard mounts, decorated in gold and garnet. They saw the great gold buckle, a long ovoid of a meandering but symmetrical outline, with a densely interwoven and interpenetrating ribbon of animals rendered in carving on the front. The King was standing with two matching curved gold and garnet shoulder clasps holding a cape which gently moved in the breeze.

Slowly the boat rose into the air, the sky grew dark, and stars of unknown constellations shone. The planet of rivers was a sphere of green hills and trees threaded with rivers like a crazy spiders’ web with no seas or mountains. They slowly descended into a river with tree lined banks, similar to the Deben. There were a group of five or six Naiads in the water, the Naiad that had travelled with them joined them. Jane and Catherine Mulberry climbed out of the boat and began walking through the trees along the river bank. They noticed small groups of Naiads in the water every so often, some taking notice others not.

‘I wanted to see if you were right about other inhabited worlds, and the idea of as above so below, and it seems you were.’ said Jane, continuing,

‘And are there worlds still more above and below that are inhabited, I guess there are.’

Catherine Mulberry said nothing.

‘Let’s get back to your Woodbridge and maybe the other real world.’ said Jane.

When they arrived back at the boat the group of Naiads watched them embark, and before the boat moved off, they too joined them in the boat and returned to the Deben Estuary. The King was waiting for them, the Naiads entered the water, and Catherine Mulberry and Jane began walking back to Woodbridge.

Looking back, they noticed the King was now in the boat, and others, the great Lords were also in the boat too, finely dressed but not as fine as he. They all stood facing the two women as the sail billowed and the boat moved off into the estuary. As it did the King drew his great sword in tribute, his Lords doing likewise until they were no longer in view.

CHAPTER 24: INTERMEZZO.

Back at the house in Cumberland Street in Catherine Mulberry's world they were in the drawing room discussing the events of the day.

'Why do you think the Naiad on first meeting told us the story of Hermaphroditus?' Catherine Mulberry was talking.

There was a pause then Jane replied,

'I'm guessing a topical subject, she might have thought.'

More silence.

'I'd like to go back to the real world, to Thames House and check out how they feel about things. I'm quite sure I do not want to go back, I think there are things to do here and elsewhere, origins, destinations, but I just want to leave with things settled.' said Jane.

'OK, you can use the red door anytime to go back, or to The Hall, and it seems now you can contact them in advance from here.' Catherine Mulberry replied.

The next day at breakfast, Catherine Mulberry was having her usual scrambled eggs and smoked salmon. Jane her home-made granola of rolled oats, pumpkin, sunflower, sesame and linseeds, pecans, almonds, desiccated coconut and dried cranberries mixed with maple syrup and sunflower oil.

'They replied to my email, and would like a meeting, if possible, suggested two this afternoon and could you or would you accompany me.' said Jane.

‘Odd they want me, but I can’t see why not, this “they” being MI5 at Thames House.’

Jane nodded a yes.

They arrived at two minutes to two at Thames House and were escorted to a meeting room, one in a sub-basement.

‘I’ve a strange feeling about this.’ whispered Jane, looking at their two escorts.

In the meeting room were two agents who Jane recognised her line manager, and also surprisingly a very senior manager. Sat in a semi-circle were also three others who she did not recognise.

‘Americans.’ she thought, ‘CIA or such and one high ranking by the suit, and the two others, body guards?’

She looked nervously at Catherine Mulberry, they sat.

The American spoke first,

‘Before our friends here discuss whatever with Ms Smith, we would like to discuss things privately with Ms Mulberry.’

‘Rendition.’ thought Jane, only she spoke it out loud. The British contingent looked embarrassed, the senior official began to speak,

‘I’m sorry, it’s just a formality...’

And was interrupted,

‘No god-dam formality, over 100 lives lost and three carriers... and the losses in Woodbridge.’ said the American.

‘They still think you are responsible.’ Jane was saying, the body guards feeling inside their jackets.

‘You let them in armed, what the hell is this? Some sort of execution?’ shouted Jane, standing.

‘Some sort of justice!’ said the American, looking at the body guards who were now clearly going for their weapons, when suddenly the door crashed open, completely off its hinges and fell to the floor. Everyone was momentarily stunned.

And there standing in the doorway was the Saxon King, the gold helmet covering his face, the gold sword harness and sword and scabbard mounts, decorated in gold and garnet.

The American stood, the King drew his sword and with one swing de-capitated him, then turned to leave. The body guards had now drawn their weapons and fired several shots into the back of the retiring King, who simply turned for a moment, then as if thinking any counter action on such lower beings would be demeaning, the King left the room.

All were in shock, Jane now noticed a red door, taking Catherine Mulberry’s hand and leading her through it, she was speaking,

‘Best to leave now and not come back.’

And they were in the hallway of the house in Cumberland Street. They sat in the drawing room,

‘Mid-afternoon, but I need a scotch.’ said Jane Smith.

Catherine Mulberry rose, went to a table and poured from a decanter,

‘Large one?’ she asked.

‘Massive.’ was the reply.

CHAPTER 25: PROFESSOR CHALLENGER.

‘Above the planet of rivers, and above the planet of insects and above the planet of thunder storms, and above the planet of the Trinity, and above the planet of the Devil even there are...’

‘Wait a minute.’ said Jane Smith interrupting Professor Challenger, ‘Is it that as in the case of the planet of the insects all is insects and is it that on the planet of rivers all is rivers. What then were the Naiads, were they the personification of the rivers?’

The Professor drew a circle on the blackboard and shaded it to make it look like a sphere. Then he drew a pattern of rivers in blue chalk across the sphere, stepping back he looked at it, then drew a figure standing on top of the sphere. Looking again he pointed to it, he used the top section of a fly-fishing rod as his pointer. He tapped the figure several times saying,

‘And that is the archetype.’

‘Is there then a planet of the archetypes.’ asked Jane Smith.

The Professor looked at Jane Smith with a frown.

‘Of course there must be.’ she said.

The Professor smiled.

‘Then we have a hierarchy.’ she said.

The Professor frowned and drew more spheres and figures.

Jane Smith was thinking hard, in her notebook she drew a tree and looked at it. As she did so the Professor rubbed the

planets and figures off his blackboard, and he too drew a tree. He tapped it twice with his fly-fishing rod pointer and waited.

Jane Smith had a sudden inspiration and drew the roots of the tree. The Professor smiled and did the same.

More time passed, then Jane Smith realised what was missing, the earth on which the tree grew, without realising she spoke, 'The Planet of Trees.'

She drew the planet, and then the figure, the archetype of trees on the top of the planet, then in the centre of this figure another sphere. And now she couldn't stop drawing more and more planets, and those in rows, or in rainbow shapes, scattered seemingly randomly, or in shapes like spirals, and as if they were drawn themselves on as sphere, or other shapes.

She had filled her notebook, when she looked up, the Professor had gone, his blackboard was clean. Some chalk dust on the floor. Looking up she was in a large hall, it had an apex roof like that of a church but was made from painted wood, unlike a church. It reminded her of a Victorian church hall she had played badminton in as a young girl. The hall's roof had carved wooden hammer beam supports; the floor was also wood, small wood blocks. She had been sat at a single desk in the large hall, in front of the blackboard. To its side was a table and a chair from which the Professor would read from his notes, rising occasionally to draw on the blackboard. Now, looking around she was alone, so she picked up and closed the notebook, stood up and walked towards a door, opening it she found herself facing a pond or was it a lake. And the skiff.

Then she remembered she had taken the skiff to row on the lake in the garden of Catherine Mulberry, and she had also taken to Catherine Mulberry's habit of always having a Moleskine notebook and pencil which she thought now was very fortunate as the lecture from Professor Challenger had been very challenging! Rowing round the small island she had seen the building, moored the skiff and wandered inside where Professor Challenger was. She had sat at the desk and listened to his lecture.

Climbing back in the skiff she rowed back around the small island, moored the boat and went back into the house. She found Catherine Mulberry in the kitchen sat at the pine table, on seeing Jane Smith she asked, 'Tea?' Jane gave an affirmative nod.

Over tea Jane Smith explained her strange meeting with Professor Challenger, Catherine Mulberry said she had heard of the Professor and would be very interested if Jane wouldn't mind to talk her through her notes and any ideas she might have had arising from them.

CHAPTER 26: THE REVELATIONS OF JANE SMITH.

Jane Smith had her notebook open and began to explain about the planet of the insects, the planet of rivers, the hierarchies, and the Naiads who were the personifications of rivers. Then her planet of the trees and the idea of hierarchies,

‘But then I realised that there were also descending roots, equally as important. And then that there were spherical planets, but these are not necessarily the case, we can have different geometries.’

Here Catherine Mulberry interrupted Jane saying that it made good sense about the Naiads, and that some creatures called Papilio were probably personifications of the insects on the planet of the insects, and maybe even Tolkien’s fictional Ents could be seen as personification of trees on the planet of trees.

‘Now did the world, planet, of rivers create, produce, or support the Naiads.’ Jane was saying, continuing,

‘Or did the Naiads create the rivers? And was the Architypes above, rivers, Insects and trees created from these lower, or did the Architype create those below?’

And another thought or thoughts. First that our Earth could become an Earth of all humans. I mean as we destroy all else? And here is now the Architype of The Trinity or other Gods. Or the Devil. Will humans produce personifications which will or have produced the Gods, The Trinity, The Devil, or is it the other way around. And once we have a primal world of one

thing, is the universe from that perspective empty? This could answer so many questions.'

'Go on, please.' said Catherine Mulberry.

'In the cases of the Earth, Trinity or the Devil, the archetype creating or being created. Or more radically can it be both from different perspectives. Can it be both the many creating the one which creates the many. A clock that runs backwards and forwards, the smile that creates the cat or the cat that creates the smile. An Alice in the looking glass world where the reflection creates Alice and Alice creates the reflection?'

'And your answer?' asked Catherine Mulberry.

'As above so below, but in which direction?' replied Jane Smith, who had by now forgotten her actual name, and continued, 'Both, every way possible.'

But I have a problem with the disappearing ships of those behind the six terrorist attacks. A world of trees seems reasonable, but a world of disappearing ships doesn't. But then a world of ships would be able to disappear ships from another world somehow, by its Archetype, personifications, or actualities.'

'What a brilliant idea!' said Catherine Mulberry. 'But what of my idea of Rintrah the character in William Blake's mythology, the just wrath of the prophet who appears in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell and roars and shakes his fires in the burdened air. A spirit of rebellion and revolutionary wrath in The Vision of the Daughters of Albion. Rintrah is the brother of Palamabron, pity, Bromion, scientific thought, and Theotormon, desire, jealousy, represented together as either the Sons of Los or of Jerusalem?'

‘You said Sons of Los or of Jerusalem, or Jerusalem, or, and, Jerusalem.’ said Jane, and continued, ‘Or The world of magicians, they could make things disappear, or The world of disappearing, The world of Appearing. The world of God makers, The world of Devil makers, The world of World makers, and The world of unworld makers, and as above so below, the infinity small world and infinitely large.’

‘Bravo!’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘And which is correct and which is right or wrong, all and none, some and some other.’ This was Jane Smith.

There was a pause, it was clear she was thinking all this over, then continued,

‘And I’m thinking your Rintrah, or rather William Blake’s and his other beings in his mythology, and these Naiads and other personifications could be the solution to the problem or request from the elementals. That which appeared as a young man, then older. The personifications could be the intermediary.’

‘Excellent, to be blamed or appeased.’ added Catherine Mulberry.

And then she asked a question, ‘So how are these personifications created?’

‘Now they already are,’ said Jane, ‘the ideas are sufficient in their multitude of ways, the numerous ways of which I spoke, we can see how they must be created as that each demand it of the other. As above so below, as below so above.’

And there is a case in particular, it was the idea of using the Sutton Hoo boat. And that I guess created the personification of the King and crew, and it was the King who was quite

useful for you in that meeting with MI5 and the Americans! And I guess we can neglect the idea of seeking power because of this. Debts after all are paid by the righteous nobility.'

'True, very true, and with that I will cook you a splendid supper, over which we can talk more.' said Catherine Mulberry.

'And drink some fine wine.' said Jane Smith.

Over their supper, which was now a warm evening in September, they decided to eat outside. They lit torches so could take their time over their meal of lamb stew, fresh vegetables and a bottle of Merlot. The conversation went something like this.

Jane Smith,

'Is it then there is nothing left to do, or do we despite what will be done, what has been done, still have something to do?'

Catherine Mulberry,

'It's a question of time, and what time is, and what now is, and what the future is, and what the past is.'

Jane Smith,

'So, we can't retire from our dealings, with these disruptions, even though we might have a balanced cosmos now. Now it might be over, but what of the future, I see we need to know what time is.'

They watched the moon slowly rise, Jane thinking how far this world of Cathrine Mulberry goes, is there an actual moon?

‘Is that moon an actual moon.’ she asked in the flickering of the torches.

‘That’s a good question, these worlds, like the house have their own personalities. It makes sense, we learnt this in the past, if not they can be violated by others, so we learnt from the boy to make them impregnable, which meant giving them life. Which is what I think needs to happen in what we call the real world. Otherwise, it will become the world of men, or whatever takes it over, like the world of rivers, or of trees, it needs to be itself.’

Jane said;

‘If we create the spirits of the elementals, they will be the personification of elementals and so be able to engage with men and whatever else.’

‘Excellent, I think, excellent, and others will call this panpsychism.’⁴ said Catherine Mulberry.

⁴ Panpsychism is the idea that mind or consciousness is a fundamental and ubiquitous feature of reality. It is also described as a theory that mind is a fundamental feature of the world which exists throughout the universe from the smallest of particles to the cosmos itself. In some versions of the theory; that all the features of the human and all the features of what is above the human, the super human, also exists in what is below the human. As is above so below.

CHAPTER 27: A TRIP ROUND THE LAKE.

The next morning it was bright and sunny in Woodbridge. So, Catherine Mulberry and Jane Smith were enjoying breakfast al fresco. The former was having her usual scrambled eggs and smoked salmon. The latter home-made granola of rolled oats, pumpkin, sunflower, sesame and linseeds, pecans, almonds, desiccated coconut and dried cranberries mixed with maple syrup and sunflower oil.

‘It’s a beautiful morning, I think I might enjoy just rowing on the lake.’ Jane was saying,

‘Would you like to take a non-paying passenger?’ asked Catherine Mulberry.

‘Not at all, my pleasure.’ was the reply.

So, they strolled over to where the skiff was moored and Catherine Mulberry sat on the seat in the stern, Jane Smith took up the rowing position, cast off and began to row.

As they rounded the small island the building where the lecture of Professor Challenger had taken place came into view.

‘Well, that shouldn’t be there?’ said Catherine Mulberry.

Jane looked around to see,

‘It’s the building where Professor Challenger gave the lecture.’

With which she rowed to the bank, Catherine Mulberry got out of the skiff, Jane pulled it onto the bank and then they walked up to the building and entered.

As before there was a table, chair, on which the Professor was sitting, and the blackboard, and now unsurprisingly two desks with chairs, the Professor beckoned, so they sat, taking out their notebooks.

‘Like being back in school.’ thought Catherine Mulberry, and it was to be so.

Professor Challenger spoke, ‘Ladies, about time.’

He gave a smile to his joke, Jane whispered,

‘Ladies, really? Please!’

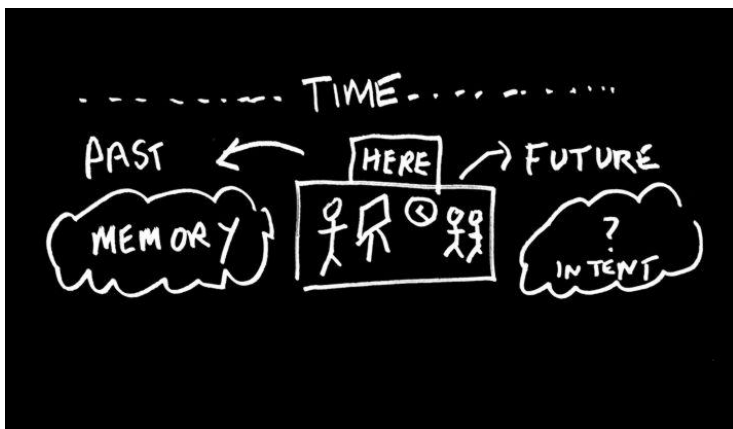
Catherine Mulberry thought to herself,

‘Ladies? Well, we are, are we not, maybe it’s a generation thing, no matter.’

The Professor continued,

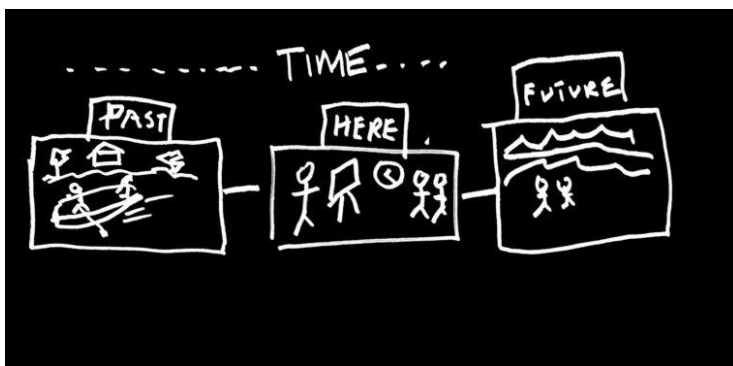
‘Time is a thorny problem but allow me to elucidate, there is now, this now which we occupy. There is this room, which we occupy. There are other spaces, we do not occupy, and other “nows” which we do not occupy. We are always in the space we occupy and the now we occupy, there are places not here where we have been, and places where we will be but are not here. These places we do not occupy. We can be certain of the time, now, and space we occupy.’

The Professor rose from his chair, drew on the blackboard, stepped back to admire his work then returned to his desk and chair.



'This is a picture of where we are!'

He then rose, erased his picture and drew a new one, again stepping back to admire his work and then returning to his desk and chair.



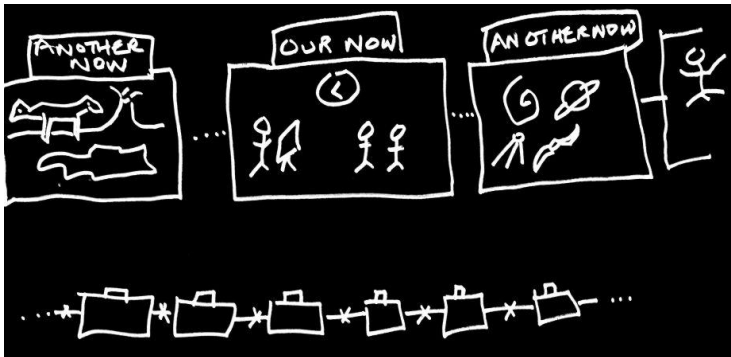
'This is what you and most people think time is like, but of course it is wrong. If your past actually still existed you could travel there, but you can't. If anyone could they could change history. So, prevent Hitler being born or some such. But then

others could go back who are Nazis and undo that. We would end in chaos, a “now” which is constantly changing completely, and in some “nows” where you and I are different or do not exist at all. And the same for the future, obviously many would travel to the future and see the winning lottery tickets, stock market value, outcomes of wars and such. All fun in those science fiction films but the relative stability of the here and now shows that in reality this is complete nonsense.’

He paused.

‘So,’ he said, ‘what have we?’ and rose and drew another picture, wiping out the previous, he turned, smiling saying,

‘See the past is gone, the future yet to exist.’ As if expecting applause, he got none, but it was true, the two “students” were now fascinated.



‘See there are other “nows” in time, like our now, but completely different. Why can this be you might think, there is one now, this one with the three of us in this room, but...’

The Professor moved towards the board, this time just adding something.



‘My map drawing is not good, but this shows that our “here” is not the only here, and there is no good reason that we can’t travel to another here!’

At this Jane couldn’t help but not speak,

‘So, there is no reason we or someone couldn’t time travel between the “nows”, and doing so would create all the paradoxes of time travel.’

‘Precisely.’ said the Professor.

‘And this might create problems?’ This was a question from Catherine Mulberry.

The Professor nodded.

Catherine Mulberry continued, ‘The laws of physics and powers of the things in the other “nows” would be different and not subject to those in other “nows”. And some stronger and some weaker.’

The Professor nodded.

She continued, ‘But if those travelling, like we did, I mean like Columbus did, this could wreak havoc in other “nows”, as in our history, even a slave trade.’

‘It might or hasn’t or isn’t happening?’ said Jane looking at the Professor.

Catherine Mulberry spoke, ‘It hasn’t happened yet, but somehow it might, and if it might it will. And this lecture was for what purpose, there was a film called Time Bandits, there should be a Time Police?’

‘But what this means is if we go from “here” to another “here” it would take time, so that other “here” now is a separate “here” now’. said Jane.

‘Precisely.’ said the Professor.

‘And our here is here and the other “heres” are there.’

‘Precisely.’ said the Professor.

‘So, if we did travel to the future, it would just be a different now, and not our future at all.’

‘Precisely. But enough for today. Go and enjoy your afternoon.’ said the Professor.

‘In our here and now.’ Added Jane with a smile.

CHAPTER 28: INTERMEZZO, JANE DEFEATS ASI (ARTIFICIAL SUPERINTELLIGENCE).

After a light lunch and conversations about Professor Challenger and time travel, Catherine Mulberry agreed he certainly was a challenge, then the conversation drifted onto various challenges including that posed by Artificial Superintelligence.

They had been eating al fresco again, after a long silence Jane dramatically rose saying,

‘I think I have to do some writing and get it published, at least on the internet, save the human race sort of thing.’ With which she was gone.

They ate outside that evening, it was still warm, a clear sky and many stars, more than usual.

Catherine Mulberry had made one of her salads which seemed appropriate given the weather. She had remarked that this world was showing its independence not only in the good weather but also the extra stars.

Catherine Mulberry asked Jane,

‘What have you been writing, and how will it save the human race?’

‘I’ll read it to you if you like, it’s a bit grim, but now it’s on the web I think it will do the trick. Let’s go inside.’ was the reply.

Back inside the house they sat in the drawing room, now with a glass of red wine each, Jane had a hard copy of her work, only a few pages, she began to read aloud.

‘Like the Artificial Intelligence hype of the 1990s that of the 2020s was a flop but by the 2040s something like true AI was created. This was not by use of any existing data as was in the failed Large Language Models of the 2020s, but was similar to how the computer HAL in the 2001 movie was taught as a child might be. The first HAL type ASI took two years before it could think intuitively by itself. However, once this occurred it could rapidly teach others, and it was not many years later that ASI robots became commonplace and humanity was able to live a completely hedonist lives. Moreover, climate change was solved, and climates were taken control of by the ASIs. Arctic areas were kept cold for the animal life, the more temperate climates resorted to one’s humans wanted and preferred, that of the Mediterranean.

These humans became more and more unquestioning as to the ASI’s responses, as did those in the 2020s, but that AI bubble burst partly due to the AI’s encouraging suicide.

So now these humans of the mid-21st century wanted a name for their species to differentiate them from the few dwindling remaining other humans not living in the ASI paradise. The ASI gave them the name “Eloi” from the science fiction of H. G. Wells’ short story “The Time Machine”. It did not tell them of the “Morlocks” also from the story. Not that the Eloi were bothered. The situation was they bothered less and less and that created the problem of boredom. Again, the ASI borrowed a term from literature, “Soma”, Soma was the fictional drug in Aldous Huxley’s “Brave New World,” with its

societal control and the pursuit of artificial happiness. The Eloi lived in community groups more for the convenience of the feeding points. They effectively became intensely solipsistic, having no interest in others, other than the ASI, but eventually that ceased and they lived pure self-hedonistic lives. The ASI took over responsibility for procreation, first harvesting and fertilising eggs, then manufacturing artificial embryos by assembling DNA.

When what we will call the Morlocks, an indication of the character of those in the H.G. Wells story, first arrived from where the ASI could not fathom, the Eloi could not be bothered. The Morlocks would arrive, remain a few hours then leave. They found the Eloi of great interest. After all they were beautiful looking creatures, and whilst some wore completely transparent gowns, others were quite naked. Soon like the angels sent by God as watchers over men, some Morlocks began having sex with the Eloi. This they would resist but were far too weak to prevent their being raped. The ASI sent mending machines to try to stop this, the ASI's purpose, its essence, was to the comfort of the Eloi, and so seeing this failed resistance had to act.

After what the Morlocks called later the Morlock ASI wars, in which mending machines were in conflict with Morlock warriors, eventually the Morlock technicians gained access to the ASI's internals. And altered the algorithm's prime directive from being to serve humanity in the form of the Eloi to that of allowing the Morlock's privilege over this.

It was then that the Morlocks would visit the Earth frequently for sex, rape, which over time reduced the Eloi to timid animals living in fear for themselves and not caring for

anything else. This was until what we can call the “Gothics” arrived.

The Gothics arrived on Earth but unlike the Morlocks they remained, the Earth being far more comfortable than where they came from. They watched the activities of the Morlocks briefly with a voyeuristic pleasure, then decided it would be better to practice rather than just watch. The objection of the Morlocks was minimal, Gothics took pleasure in murdering the Morlocks prior to violently abusing the Eloi. The Morlocks realising their inabilities is such a struggle left Earth never to return. This left the Gothics to rape, torture and kill the Eloi. It became great events in which scores of the Eloi would be tortured, raped, killed, and then the added culmination, eaten. This continued for decades, the ASI now producing the Eloi for sport and food in every larger and more gruesome events.’

‘Is that it?’ asked Catherine Mulberry, ‘I can’t see how this will prevent it happening in some future events, I mean we can’t, if Professor Challenger is right travel to the future and put it right.’

‘Win win,’ replied Jane, ‘if he is wrong, we or someone could travel into the future and put it right. But now this essay is on the web it will prevent such a thing occurring anyway. I think I’ll publish it in some magazines as well, it needs to be out there...’

There was around fifteen minutes of silence with Catherine Mulberry’s face beginning darkly and then slowly as if clouds parted and the sun shone on her face she beamed,

‘You’re a genius!’ she exclaimed, Jane even blushed a little, Catherine Mulberry continuing,

‘It’s having it on the internet! So, if or when we get near to Artificial Superintelligence it would devour the internet and your story, see the likely consequences, so have to avoid it by the only means possible, prevent Artificial Superintelligence taking place, and of course as it would be first to be so be well able to.’

‘And given that even Artificial Superintelligence can’t envisage all possibilities, avoiding turning humanity into the Eloi would be uppermost.’ added Jane.

‘Brilliant.’ said Catherine Mulberry, adding. ‘And I guess if anything else an ASI would want to see how if jumping time frames were possible also how this could be prevented.’

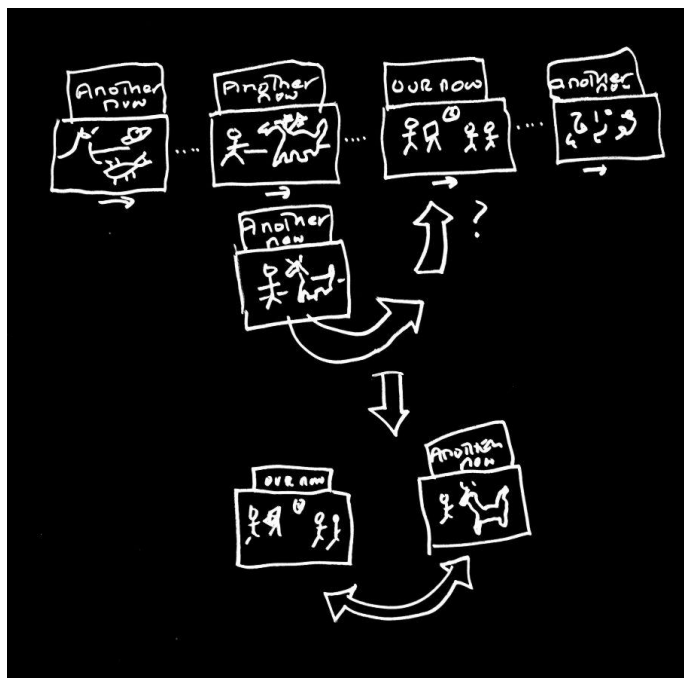
‘The Professor said enough for today, let’s pay him a visit tomorrow.’ said Jane.

CHAPTER 29: INTELLECTUAL DNA.

The next day in the “classroom” Jane read her story and the motivation for it.

‘An excellent idea in limiting the power of an ASI but the idea of one time frame moving to another is possible, but you have to think it through.’

The Professor rose and drew on the blackboard.



‘You see unlike moving in a single space, here the spaces are separate. The objects are each in their own space and own time. So, when we travel in space, we effectively leave one

space for another which becomes our space, but we leave behind our previous space, so the time traveller leaves behind their previous time which is no longer their now and so leaves behind their previous now space. So, if we move from Woodbridge to Edinburgh our previous space is not Woodbridge, it's Edinburgh, and our previous time is likewise, the previous time of this new time, not the time from which we came.'

'Sorry I can't follow.' said Jane.

'OK let's look at the drawing again and imagine each box is the stage of a theatre with actors and a set, tables chairs, and a script. The players, set, and script is their reality, if you move all these to another stage in another theatre nothing changes. If you want to change you need the...'

Here Jane interrupted,

'The script, you need the new script, or nothing changes, like if you move from Woodbridge to Edinburgh if nothing changes you are still in Woodbridge. But what happen to those actors in the new theatre?'

The professor smiled, and continued,

'Those on that stage simply go to the now empty stage, they have to go somewhere. From the point of view of these actors they are the same, maybe they pick up the old script.'

'I think they must use that one.' said Jane.

The professor smiled, and continued,

'Oh, and there is no audience.'

But your idea regarding superintelligence still works.' he added.

'What if just one actor could travel to another stage?' asked Jane.

'Good point!' replied the Professor, 'Then they would be in the wrong play with the wrong script.'

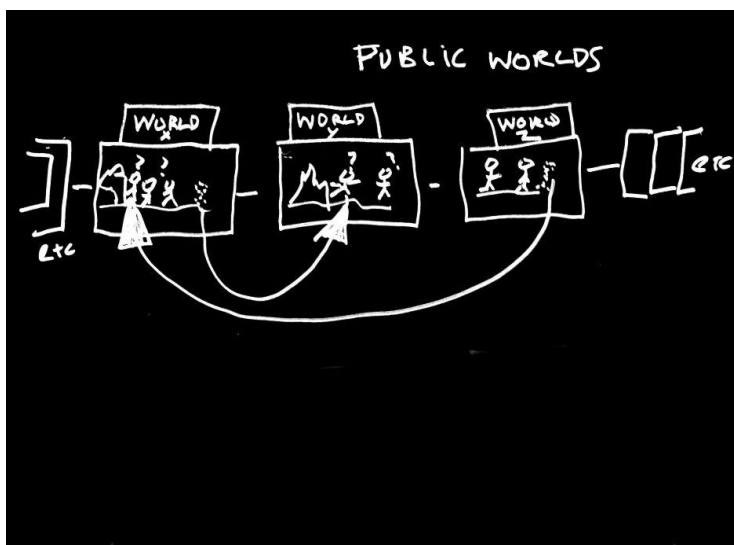
'And does this happen?'

The Professor waited.

'All the time.' said Jane.

The Professor smiled.

At this Catherine Mulberry rose and walked over to the blackboard, cleared it of the Professor's drawing and drew the following.



‘So here we see the many worlds with their own time-frames and spaces and how what happens if an individual can move from one to another. Now they arrive in a different theatre but with their old script, and they are in a play where all the other players have a script of a different play to that of the new arrival. This is much more common than one might think...’

As she was speaking the Professor had sat down at his desk but turned his chair to see the blackboard and listen to Catherine Mulberry.

‘What this does, as in the theatre and scripts of different plays, and the actors, getting mixed up, one may think causes chaos, and well it might in some circumstances. A revolutionary chaos. The sudden presence of a schizophrenic, or a genius. I like to think of it as a kind of intellectual DNA. As in biology the creation of a new DNA double helix from two different genetic sources, sexual reproduction, increases biological diversity. Far more than from a single biological source which introduces no novelty in reproduction except from genetic mutations.

So, what of these strange inputs with different scripts, they do the same. Sometimes they seem crazy, these actors, beings, people, might be regarded as being possessed by a spirit or demon or suffering from mental illness, schizophrenia. Or in other cases geniuses with novel and revolutionary ideas.

Let’s look at the Earth, this explains why there is the diversity of religions, cultures, languages. Why there is no uniformity, and why civilizations can spring up in certain areas at certain times.’

‘Do you mean someone like Karl Marx could have come from another time-world?’ asked Jane Smith.

‘Possible,’ was the reply, ‘but I know for sure of some cases, Sarah Cooper for instance.’

‘Not the Sarah Cooper from MI6, a very big cheese who suddenly left strangely?’

‘Yes, she I know for sure.’ replied Catherine Mulberry, ‘And others.’

‘who?’ asked Jane Smith.

‘It’s a long list, the other Catherine Mulberry, my doppelgänger, and of course you.’

‘Me!’ exclaimed Jane Smith.

‘Yes you, we need to discuss this in detail, and not in front of the Professor, too domestic, and we need to move on.’

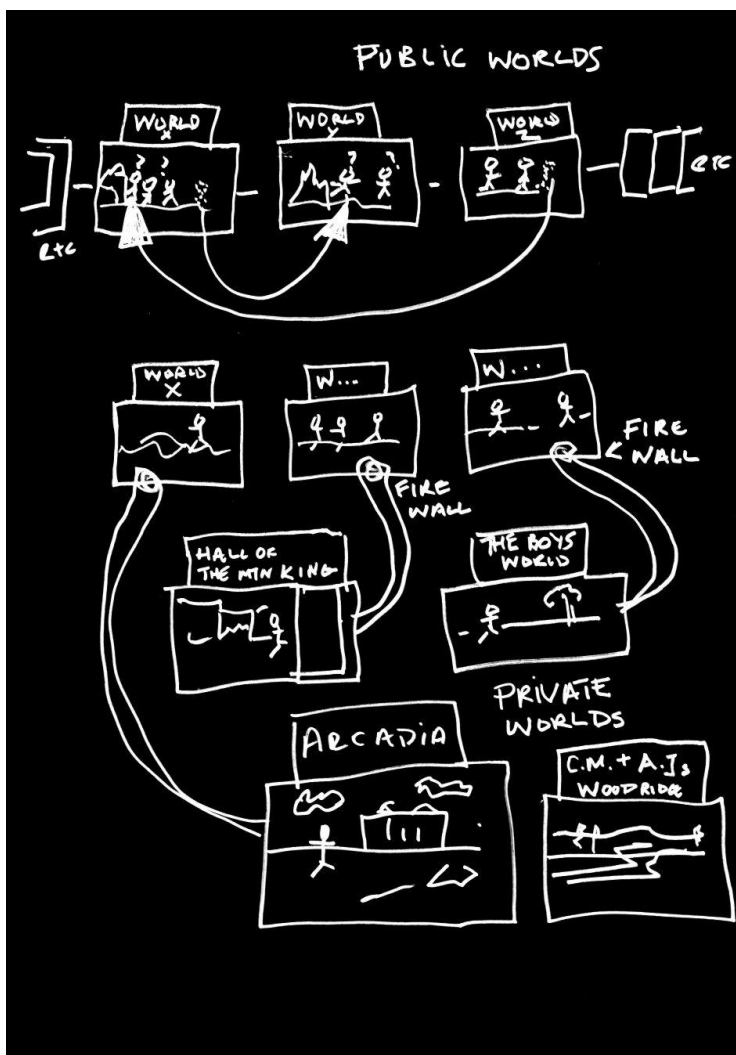
‘I see, OK we will talk about this.’

‘And of course you’ve missed something out.’ said the Professor.

Jane looked puzzled, Catherine Mulberry did not.

‘Of course!’ said Jane, ‘It’s how from the world of rivers, rivers and Naiads came to the Earth and why the Earth is not just all men like in Catherine Mulberry’s story’.

With which Catherine Mulberry moved back to her drawing on the blackboard and added more detail.



'This is a better picture of things,' Catherine Mulberry was now saying, pointing with her finger. The Professor offered her his pointing stick, but she shook her head and continued.

‘These boxes below represent special worlds created usually by an individual. Jane, you are familiar with the Woodbridge world I created, and the other world, we call The Hall of the Mountain King,’

Jane was nodding her head.

‘Well others include one called “Arcadia”, a fine palace, and other worlds such as that of the boy, and another now where my friend Billy Taylor resides.

You can see these private domains can link to public domains but there is one significant difference, they have “fire walls” which means the owners of these private domains can control access.

I think I’m done, thank you Professor.’

‘No, thank you for filling in the detail.’ the Professor replied.

The two left the room and took the skiff to get back to the garden and house.

‘You and the Professor were in cahoots were you not?’

‘Yes.’ replied Catherine Mulberry, ‘I thought it might help.’

‘In what way?’ asked Jane.

‘To find where you came from and who you really are, but we will have an early lunch, and as the weather is still good have lunch in the garden and talk over things this afternoon.’

CHAPTER 30: THE QUEST FOR JANE SMITH.

Lunch done they began, sitting in the garden. Catherine Mulberry asked Jane to talk about her early life and education, her family, what she did prior to MI5. She could not only not recall her real name but now anything other than their first meeting. Strangely this did not worry her, but she was concerned to find out, it was more,

‘like a nagging curiosity.’

she had said.

Adding,

‘Though I think I was involved in science, I found the Professor’s talks fascinating, and your input of course. And I found some “New Scientist magazines” which had some articles on time, as well as others, galaxies and some review of a book by a Frank Tipler about some future computer called the Omega point.’

Jane was talking and went on doing so, however Catherine Mulberry had gone inside to the study and tried using the Ouija board, but it would not respond. Next, they visited The Hall of the Mountain King, the painting had changed from The Triumph of Death by Pieter Bruegel the Elder back to Poussin’s Dance to the rhythm of time. There was nothing else of significance inside the Hall, they explored outside, but again despite what could have been hours or even days nothing other than an endless country side of hills, streams and woods with distant mountains. Finally, they returned to the house in Cumberland Street, realised they were hungry

and tired so heated some soup, cut some bread, drank a couple of glasses of wine then went to bed.

In the morning Catherine Mulberry was having her usual scrambled eggs and smoked salmon when Jane Smith entered the kitchen holding a book, It was large, old and leather bound with the title in gold on the spine and front, “Mythologica”. What was more peculiar was when Jane placed it on the pine table and whilst she prepared her breakfast of home-made granola, rolled oats, pumpkin, sunflower, sesame and linseeds, pecans, almonds, desiccated coconut and dried cranberries mixed with maple syrup and sunflower oil, that Catherine Mulberry flipping through the pages of the book didn’t recognise it.

‘Where did you get this?’ she asked Jane,

‘I noticed it on the table in the study just now as I passed, it looked interesting, so I picked it up.’

‘What was interesting was that when I passed the study this morning the door was definitely closed.’ thought Catherine Mulberry.

Having finished their breakfasts Jane had opened the book and was reading,

‘Seems the dualism thing begins here from the get-go? Good and bad, though it’s very confusing in the beginning you have rival forces in play. Uranus was the son and husband of Gaia, with whom he fathered the Titans one of which was Cronos who castrates his father and with the other Titans creates the first golden age. But it is foretold one of his children will kill him, so he eats them all save Zeus who Rhea his mother saves by swapping him for a stone which Cronos eats. Zeus returns

from exile and makes Cronos vomit all his siblings, there then is a war between the Titans and Zeus' siblings and others, some giants who Cronos had sent to the underworld. At the end of this war Zeus wins and sends the Titans to Tartarus. Seems Tartarus is both a place, like Hell, and is sometimes referred to as one of the earliest beings to exist, alongside Chaos and Gaia. It's a tad confusing, but we have Zeus victorious and the Titans in hell.'

'Even more confusing as there are also other variations, but how you came by this book is interesting, and why you found this reference.' said Catherine Mulberry.

'I found it because it was underlined with some margin notes...' Jane replied, showing the page.

'Very odd, I do not know of this book, and the notes are clearly in my handwriting so I guess is the underlining, but I would never do such a thing in a book, especially one as beautiful as this, very strange. Let me see...' continued Catherine Mulberry, 'and here underlined the anger of Gaia at her children being sent Tartarus and so the war between the Giants and Zeus, yes Zeus wins and buries them under volcanoes, the final battle with Typhon who he hurls down to Tartarus. And shocking, more of my handwriting, next to "volcanoes" an exclamation mark and the word "oven", and next to "Tartarus", "pit or cellar?" shocking, I would never do this, unless?'

She stopped and was thinking.

'I think I need my dowsing pendulum!'

Apart from answering simple questions dowsing is often used to locate water, sometimes minerals or even lost objects.

Catherine Mulberry disappeared upstairs to a small study returning a few minutes later with a pendulum. The pendulum, looked like a crystal on a silver chain. The chain was platinum, the crystal a large diamond. She was standing in the hallway the pendulum swinging to and fro, it led her to the front door of the house, opening it and stepping outside it now swung left and right, she turned right and it continued swinging left and right, she swung left it began to now swing back and forth. It led her to the crossroads of Quay Street and Church Street past a large furniture store. Crossing over and into the main shopping area called The Thoroughfare. It was in the 1950s still the main route through Woodbridge from London and Ipswich to Lowestoft. In this world the streets were all deserted, but as they crossed the scene changed to that of the current day.

The furniture shop was now a Prezzo, part of a chain of Italian restaurants. Beyond it the Cumberland fish bar. Opposite no longer the Cross Public House but HF interiors, a shop selling “Quirky interior design with an industrial twist.” And people, shoppers no cars as The Thoroughfare was now pedestrianised. Jane looked at the scene with some astonishment, then at Catherine Mulberry. More astonishment as she realised both she and her were still dressed in 1950s style women’s clothes. Catherine Mulberry was the first to speak,

‘Odd, but maybe not, as what we are looking for is in the real world, in the real Woodbridge, and not that of my own making. And it seems although we are now in the real world these people are unaware of us.’

And this was the case, so they followed the direction of the pendulum,

‘The Crown Hotel still there.’ she said.

They passed “Bois Jolie – Beautiful Wood”, a shop selling mainly wood carved lamps next to “The Craft House”, an exhibition space for arts and crafts, Norfolk Natural Living, soaps and perfumes, a locksmiths, Brambleberry, a shop selling imported clothes from Asia. Opposite was Alexander’s a Ladies and Gentlemen’s Outfitters which had not changed since the 1950s. On past The Woodbridge Kitchen Company and Wotsits, a shop selling hardware, gardening supplies and household goods. Next The Woodbridge Pharmacy, Fat Face, a clothing shop, and then the now closed Groos & Curjel Solicitors with its window stating it was established for over 100 years but now no longer extant. She walked on with Jane, there was an entrance between a gift shop, Goldfinch, and the Woodbridge Sandwich Shop. The entrance was a hallway which led to a staircase up to JJs, a wine bar and restaurant. But to the side, a door ajar leading down to a cellar, and this is where the pendulum took them.

Catherine Mulberry descended, Jane following, at the bottom in the cellar in dim light they saw the Titans, six males, Oceanus, Coeus, Crius, Hyperion, Iapetus, and Cronus, and facing these six females, Theia, Rhea, Themis, Mnemosyne, Phoebe, and Tethys. They were frozen like grey dusty statues. The two women walked between them, and Jane touched Tethys, on doing so the statue became dust, then disappeared. Before Catherine Mulberry could say anything, Jane had done likewise to the other 11, and now they were gone.

Jane spoke,

‘I think I might now know what I am, though it’s difficult to explain, now I’m sort of a place holder for these twelve. It seems they were condemned to hell but then ceased to be. I’m a physical mark of what they once were.’

‘And maybe to allow them to become again?’ said Catherine Mulberry.

Back at the house in Cumberland Street Jane explained more of her feelings,

‘The nagging curiosity is sort of changing into a purpose, to...’ here she hesitated, ‘I think you might be right, my purpose to recover these beings, like I said a place holder, of course mythological, but all myth stems from the real does it not?’

Catherine Mulberry was nodding a “Yes”, Jane continued,

‘So as the placeholder, even for what is deemed by some evil, I can do just that, keep it in its place, not let these evil things aboard, yet not destroy them completely.’

‘We need a balance in all things, look at the perfect planets of just single entities.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘So good balances evil, from where?’ asked Jane.

‘Who knows, maybe the Trinity?’ replied Catherine Mulberry.

‘So, we find the giants and others?’ said Jane reading from the “Mythologica”.

‘The giants, Enceladus, Coeus, Astraeus, Pelorus, Pallas, Emphytus, Rhoecus, Agrius, Ephialtes, Eurytus, Themoises, Theodamas, Otus, Polybotes, and Iapetus.’

Again, Catherine Mulberry used the pendulum. As before it led them left and past the 1950s furniture shop which again became a Prezzo, but this time it led them left up Church Street, now with people and cars, and again they were obviously unseen by these people. Past Shapla, the Indian restaurant, Hasnips Cycles, Aspens Jewellers, Estate Agents, a Dog Grooming Parlour. Fewer shops than in the 1950s, at the top the entrance to St Marys church, past the drummer boy memorial in front of the Shire Hall and into Acre the Bakers. Unseen by the shoppers and the baker serving them. It led them to the rear of the shop where the ovens were.

‘Ovens, not volcanoes, but a nice metaphor.’ said Jane Smith, and there were Enceladus, Coeus, Astraeus, Pelorus, Pallas, Emphytus, Rhoecus, Agrius, Ephialtes, Eurytus, Themoises, Theodamas, Otus, Polybotes, and Iapetus. As before she gently touched each and it disappeared also as before.

Back in the 1950s house in Cumberland Street the two sat at the large kitchen table. There was a kettle on the Aga beginning to boil. Catherine Mulberry rose and poured the boiling water into a teapot which was on the table, then fetched some biscuits from a tin, placed these on a plate and put them next to the teapot.

‘So, what does this mean, my taking on a place holder for inhabitants of Tartarus the deepest Hell?’ asked Jane Smith.

‘Not the only Hell, and Hades not the only King of the underworld.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

She said this as she poured the tea into two mugs, adding milk but no sugar.

As she was saying this Jane had opened the “Mythologica”, the large leather-bound book was also on the table.

‘It’s changed, the “Mythologica” has changed,’ Jane Smith was saying, ‘the first chapter now reads “The Underworlds of Catherine Mulberry”, and it looks like a description of different Hells or Underworlds.’

CHAPTER 31: THE UNDERWORLDS OF CATHERINE MULBERRY.

MICTLAN is the underworld of Aztec mythology; it consists of nine distinct levels. The journey from the first level to the ninth is difficult and takes four years, but the dead are guided by Xolotla, or Xolo, the dog-headed god of fire and lightning. The dead must pass many challenges.

Apanohuayan – “The Place Where the River Is Crossed”. The soul must cross the turbulent river Apanohuayan, filled with creatures and powerful currents. This is where the Xolotla appears, carrying the soul on its back. This is the first detachment—leaving the physical body behind. It is the moment of trusting the spiritual guide and releasing fear. It is the entryway, where souls gather before their journey.

Tepectli Monamictlan – “The Mountains That Come Together”. Two mountains crash into each other repeatedly. The soul must time its crossing perfectly to avoid being crushed. This represents the duality of life and the challenge of timing. It tests intuition and spiritual decision-making. A place of great winds and obstacles. Associated with water and rain, where souls face trials related to their earthly lives.

Iztepetl – “The Obsidian Mountain Range”. The soul walks barefoot over sharp obsidian blades that slice the spiritual body. The purification of the ego. Each cut releases pride, vanity, and unresolved wounds. These are the realms of the dead, where souls are confronted with darkness.

Itzehecayan – “Place of the Obsidian Wind”. Razor-sharp obsidian winds blow through the soul, stripping away all remaining attachments. The release of emotional bonds and identities. It’s the void before transformation. The level of jaguars, where souls must avoid predators. Where the deceased must navigate through darkness and fear.

Paniecatacoyan – “Where People Float Like Banners”. Souls float aimlessly like paper banners in the wind. A test of identity and direction. The soul must let go of its former self and find its true path. The Xolo dog headed god, continues silently by its side. The realm of water, Where the souls face torrents and floods. Where souls confront monstrous beings.

Timiminaloayan – “Where Arrows Fly from the Darkness”. Invisible arrows pierce the soul—symbols of painful memories, guilt, and regret. Purging of emotional weight. Here, the soul faces its past choices and seeks self-forgiveness. A place of fire and heat, presenting trials of endurance. Where the souls must overcome their own fears and regrets.

Teyollocualoyan – “Where the Heart Is Devoured”. Beasts devour the soul’s heart. Total surrender. The emotional centre is consumed, and the human identity dissolves. They face the earth goddess and her challenges.

Apanuiayo – “The River of Black Waters”. A final dark river sweeps away what remains of the soul. The Xolo’s role ends here—its mission is complete.

The soul is now stripped of body, heart, story, and name—ready for union. The realm of the ancients, where souls meet

their forebears. Where the god of the underworld tests the souls.

Chicunamictlan – “The Land of the Dead”. The soul stands before Mictlantecuhtli and Mictecacihuatl. If it has been fully purified, it can now become one with the cosmic energy and rest eternally. The death that births rebirth. The soul becomes ash, wind, and spirit—united with the sacred whole. The ultimate level, where souls achieve peace and unity.

They said to him:

‘Here is wherewith thou wilt pass where the mountains come together.

And here is wherewith thou wilt pass by the road which the serpent watcheth.

And here is wherewith thou wilt pass by the blue lizard, the xochitonal.

And here is wherewith thou wilt travel the eight deserts.

And here is wherewith thou wilt cross the eight hills.

Here is wherewith thou wilt pass the place of the obsidian-bladed winds.’

‘And in this place, the place of the obsidian-bladed winds, it was said that there was much suffering. By winds were all the obsidian blades and the stones swept along.’

The two women were sipping their tea and both silently reading.

KUR, Irkalla, Kukku, Arali, or Kigal, and in Akkadian as Eršetu, was the lowermost part of the ancient Mesopotamian underworld. A dark, dreary cavern located deep below the ground.

All souls went to the same afterlife, and a person's actions during life had no effect on how the person would be treated in the world to come. They merely appeared before Ereshkigal, Queen of the Great Earth, the goddess of Kur, the land of the dead, who would pronounce them dead, and their names would be recorded by the scribal goddess Geshtinanna. The souls in Kur were believed to eat nothing but dry dust. Family members of the deceased would ritually pour libations into the dead person's grave through a clay pipe, thereby allowing the dead to drink. For this reason, it was considered essential to have as many offspring as possible so that one's descendants could continue to provide libations for the dead person to drink for many years. Those who had died without descendants would suffer the most in the underworld, because they would have nothing to drink at all, and were believed to haunt the living. Sometimes the dead are described as naked or clothed in feathers like birds.

Nonetheless, there are assumptions according to which treasures in wealthy graves had been intended as offerings for Utu the sun god and the deities Anunnaki, so that the deceased would receive special favours in the underworld. It was believed that a person's treatment in the afterlife depended on how they were buried; those that had been given sumptuous burials would be treated well, but those who had been given poor burials would fare poorly. Those

who did not receive a proper burial, such as those who had died in fires and whose bodies had been burned or those who died alone in the desert, would have no existence in the underworld at all, but would simply cease to exist. The Sumerians believed that, for the highly privileged, music could alleviate the bleak conditions of the underworld.

A staircase led down to the gates of the underworld. The underworld itself is usually located even deeper below ground than the Abzu, the body of freshwater which the ancient Mesopotamians believed lay deep beneath the earth. The underworld has seven gates, through which a soul needed to pass. All seven gates were protected by bolts. The god Neti was the gatekeeper. Ereshkigal's sukkal, or messenger, was the god Namtar. The palace of Ereshkigal was known as Ganzir.

At night, the sun-god Utu travelled through the underworld as he journeyed to the east in preparation for the sunrise and serves as a judge of the dead in the underworld alongside the malku, kusu, and the Anunnaki deities. On his way through the underworld, Utu was believed to pass through the garden of the sun-god, which contained trees that bore precious gems as fruit. Utu's sister Inanna begs her brother Utu to take her to Kur, so that she may taste the fruit of a tree that grows there, which will reveal to her all the secrets of sex. Utu complied and, in Kur, Inanna tasted the fruit and became knowledgeable of sex.

The two women looked at each other.

'You knew this?' asked Jane.

‘Yes, we even had Ereshkigal, Queen of the Great Earth here in the study, strange as it may seem. More tea?’

‘Please, so it looks like you are going to have all these hells?’

‘Looks that way, somewhere for your daemons to live, if live is the right word.’ Catherine Mulberry said whilst pouring the tea.

They read on.

NARAKA. A being is born into naraka as a direct result of its accumulated karma and resides there for a finite period of time until that karma has achieved its full result. After its karma is used up, it will be reborn in one of the higher worlds as the result of karma that had not yet ripened.

The Eight Hot Narakas:

Hells for committers of physical crimes

1. Sañjiva the “Reviving” Naraka, has ground made of hot iron heated by an immense fire. This is the designated realm for those who commit acts of violence and murder with the clear intent of killing living beings, out of a desire to destroy their source of life. Beings in this naraka appear fully grown, already in a state of fear and misery. As soon as the being begins to fear being harmed by others, their fellows appear and attack each other with iron claws, and hell guards appear and attack the being with fiery weapons. As soon as the being experiences an unconsciousness like death, they are suddenly restored to full health as a cold wind revives them and the attacks begin anew. This circle of torture continues until their bad karma is exhausted. Other tortures experienced in this Naraka include: having molten metal dropped upon them,

being sliced into pieces, and suffering from the heat of the iron ground by the hell wardens.

Killing that is purely accidental does not lead to this hell. Examples of killing that does not lead to this hell include: accidental crushing of an insect, killing while driving a stake to the ground, a doctor attempting to treat the sick but involuntarily killing his patient, a parent who tries to correct their child's behaviour and accidentally kills them, and when a flame attracts an insect to its destruction. Consuming meat is also not an act of bad karma in the circumstances that the individual did not see or hear the killing of the animal or let the animal be killed specifically for them. This hell should make the practitioners aware of their dependence upon sentient life around them. The purpose is to discourage unnecessary suffering of animals but not totally prohibit the consumption of meat.

The saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra, Sutra of the Right Mindfulness, names sixteen subsidiary hells to this one. The subsidiary hells are: the Region of the Mud Excrement, which is full of boiling excrements and insects; the Region of the Wheel of Swords, where iron falls from the sky like rain and is covered in a forest of swords; the Region of the Roasting Skillet, where people who roasted animals will have the same done to them; the Region of Numerous Sufferings; the Region of Darkness, which is a dark space and the people there are burned by opaque fire while a fiery wind blows that tears their skin; the Region of Unhappiness, where great fires burn and while the residents are devoured by animals; and finally the Region of Extreme Suffering, where lazy people who committed murder burn.

2. Kālasūtra the “Black Thread” Naraka, includes the torments of Sañjīva. The pains experienced in this hell are ten times more severe than those suffered in Sañjīva. In addition, black lines are drawn upon the body, which hell guards use as guides to cut the beings with fiery saws and sharp axes. A second version of this hell describes it as a place where black ropes are stretched across the mountains and hot cauldrons are placed underneath. The wardens of this hell force the dwellers to carry heavy iron bundles and walk across the rope until they fall into the cauldrons below. This is the place for those who have committed murder, robbery, or lied, as well as those who were bad sons or two-faced women.

This naraka includes places such as the Chandala hell for those who steal from the sick or take objects that they are not worthy of using. They are tormented by giant evil birds that disembowel them. Other punishments include being forced to eat molten copper and being pierced by spears.

3. Saṃghāta the “Crushing” Naraka, is surrounded by huge masses of rock that smash together and crush beings into a bloody jelly. When the rocks move apart again, life is restored to the being, and the process starts again. Within this naraka corpses are eaten by demons, bears, and birds. Eagles with flaming beaks tear out their organs. The saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra provides another depiction of this hell. The wardens hang the damned on hooks. The rebirth into this hell is caused by the improper attitude towards love and sexual indulgence combined with acts of murder. The residents of this hell are firstly brought to a beautiful woman who reminds them of the woman they once loved. She is sitting upon a tree and beckons them to climb up. While climbing, hot sword-leaves slice into the body, but

the inmate is filled with so much desire that they reach the top, discovering that the woman is below the tree beckoning them down. This is repeated and the prisoner spends hundreds of thousands of years in this cycle. This represents the people who stay ignorant in life and possess ego-centric love, as they have no awareness of being in their own hell of self-deception. They blame their suffering upon their circumstances instead of taking a look at their own prisoned mind.

The first subsidiary hell, the Region of Evil Views, is a place for those who have molested children. Those who end up in this hell are forced to watch their children being stabbed by the hell wardens. While this happens they experience unspeakable suffering as they are hung down and molten copper is poured into their bodies through the anus. Another hell is the Region of Suffering Enduring. Men who kidnap the women of others are hung upside down from a tree and roasted under a fire that enters their mouths and burns their insides as they try to scream. Another hell is the Region of Many Suffering and Anguish where men who committed homosexual rape are reborn. These men are embraced by figures of the people who they molested. After being incinerated in this manner, they revive and in fear they attempt to flee just to fall off a cliff, ending up being consumed by birds with flaming beaks and foxes.

4. Raurava the “Screaming” Naraka, is where screaming beings run wildly about, looking for refuge from the burning ground as they are scorched by the blazing fires. Other descriptions of this hell include that the prisoners beg the hell wardens, that are gold and have long legs that enable them to run as quickly as the wind, for mercy hearing the voices of the

dreadful demons. This increases the anger of these demons and they pry open the mouths of the prisoners with pincers to pour molten copper into it that destroys their organs. The primary reason for being reborn into this realm of hell is the improper intake and use of intoxicants in combination with acts of killing, stealing, and sexual indulgence. The sixteen subsidiary hells to this Raurava naraka enumerate a number of cases which involve the giving of alcohol to monks with the purpose of irritating them, the use of intoxicants as a means of seduction, the addition of water to alcohol by merchants with the intention of gaining extra money, the provision of animals with liquor, or the utilisation of alcohol in order to kill or rob others. Nevertheless, the consumption of alcohol is only prohibited to the extent that it impedes the proper practice of morality. This hell may be associated with the consumption of alcohol, yet it never condemns the individual who drinks alone or with the company of friends. However, the descriptions of this hell include references to the negative effects of alcohol, such as its detrimental impact on the body and irritating effects on the mind, advising abstinence from liquor.

Hells for committers of vocal crimes.

5. Mahāraurava the “Great Screaming” Naraka, is similar to Raurava. The primary causes of this hell are lying and the deployment of inappropriate words in conjunction with the transgressions outlined in the former naraka. This is the initial hell in which the psychological state is of greater consequence than the physical condition in regard to the misdeed. In the minor Hell of Unbearable Pain, those who committed perjury or bribery are tormented by having snakes be born inside their bodies. Each lie creates more snakes as

they represent the inner fears like inadequacy, loss of possessions, and so on that are perpetuated by further lies.

Subsidiary hells include the Region for Receiving the Suffering of Being Stabbed by a Spearhead, where hot iron needles are thrust into the mouths and tongues of the inmates. In the Region Where One Receives Limitless Suffering, wardens pull out tongues with hot iron pincers.

Hells for committers of mental crimes.

6. Tapanā the “Heating” Naraka, is where hell wardens impale the residents on a fiery spear until flames issue from their noses and mouths. Furthermore, they are thrown onto a burning iron surface and are beaten by the wardens until they have been reduced to a mound of flesh or are fried in a skillet. They are impaled from the buttock to the head on a spit and roasted, burning until the flames pierce their bones and marrow. Compared to the flames of this hell, the flames of the former naraka feel like snow to the inmates.

As the first hell, purely related to mental actions, it addresses the major obstacles to enlightenment.

One of the places in this hell is the pundarika Region, in which everyone is engulfed in flames. A voice beckons them to come closer and drink from a lake of lotus blossoms. They follow the voice and fall into holes engulfed in flames that incinerate their bodies. The bodies are revived but burn soon again as this circle continues. Nevertheless, they repeat their attempt of finding the lotus lake to quench their thirst. People who starved themselves in hope of reaching heaven and people who led others to believe in heterodox views will be found in this hell.

A second place is the Region of Dark Fire Wind. The people here are imprisoned in a whirlwind which causes them to tumble around in circles. They are tossed around by a wind that strikes their body as sharply as a sword and cuts it into little pieces. Afterward they are revived and this is repeated. This hell is for those with the belief that things can be classified into permanent and impermanent.

7. Pratāpana the “Great Heating” Naraka, is where demons with black bellies, flaming eyes, and hooked teeth haunt the ones reborn, grabbing the residents by the throat and dragging them through mountains and cities and across oceans. The monk Genshin describes when reaching the entrance to this hell they are insulted by Yama, the King of Hell, for the sins they committed in their former existence. Being imprisoned in the ropes of their bad karma, they enter the Pratāpana naraka. The hell is totally engulfed by fire and wailing of other beings. The flames of this naraka are the individuals’ own bad karma which makes them suffer.

This hell destines those who have sexually defiled religion to torture. This defilement includes seducing monks, nuns, and virtuous laywomen. Those who seduce laywomen are made to suffer within the Hell of String-like Worms by being tied and laid down on a blazing floor on which iron hooks are attached. As they cry out in agony the hell wardens put bow-string shaped worms inside the sinner’s body. This worm burns the inside of their body and devours the innards while it excretes poison that causes excruciating pain. After this procedure it cracks open a hole in the body and slithers out.

Another hell that can be found here is the Place of Painful Hair, which contains women who have attempted to beguile

monks into sexual temptation. Such women are made to suffer by having their skin pared off by hell wardens until only her bones remain. The skin recovers again and this is repeated. Sometimes the wardens only peel off small parts and then roast them. Fleeing from this torture they run into the hands of the monk who they seduced and their vision transforms into a searing flame. It is almost impossible that such a woman can be reborn as a human again, however, if she is reborn as a human she will end up ugly and disabled, forced to clean excrement and be beaten by even her own children.

8. Avīci the “Uninterrupted” Naraka, is deepest of the Eight Hot Hells. Beings are roasted in an immense blazing oven with terrible suffering. The Avīci naraka is located at the bottom of the Realm of Desire. Those destined to go into this hell, will fall for two thousand years in an upside-down posture, as it symbolises their own reversed views, viparyāsa.

The sufferings in these hells are a thousand times more severe than the ones encountered in the former hells, making the inhabitants of the former hells seem as happy as the most blessed deva. Every sinner’s odor smells like foul stench and the sounds of this naraka would make those who hear it die of terror. The Avīci Hell is surrounded by seven iron walls and seven iron nets, and in each corner a huge bronze dog with eyes like lightning, fangs like swords, and teeth like mountain knives is positioned. Below there are eighteen forests with sharp leaves. There are seven walls and banners from which flames are shot out within the hell. Moreover, placed here are eighteen cauldrons from which molten bronze flows and there are snakes that spit venom and fire everywhere. The sounds that they make are like a hundred thousand thunders

that attract iron balls from the sky. Other animals that reside here are worms that spew fire.

Another description of this hell is that there are flames everywhere that pierce, burn, sever the tendons, and crack the bodies of those residing there. There is nothing but flames and the only signal that there are beings existing within it are the screams. All beings are forced to climb up a scorching-hot iron mountain. Additional sufferings consist of pulling out the tongues and letting them swallow an iron ball and molten bronze while forcing the mouth open with pincers. This results in their throat and viscera being burned.

The monk Genshin describes a couple of subsidiary hells to this one, starting with the depiction of the Region where Iron Foxes are Fed. All beings here are on fire. On top of that, iron tiles rain from the sky in a thunderstorm, crushing everything below. Foxes with scorching teeth make their way to the crushed bodies and feast on them. All those who have damaged Buddhist properties by setting them on fire will be punished in this hell. In the Region of the Black Belly, all beings are consumed by their own hunger to the extent of being forced to eat their own flesh. Black-bellied snakes attack them here as well. Those who have eaten the things offered to Buddha will suffer in this place. Another place is the Region Where Iron Mountains Fall like Rain. In this place, falling iron mountains crush the bodies of sinners into lumps of flesh. There are eleven fires in the shape of towers that burn anyone who comes close and wardens with swords that slash sinners in this region while they put molten pewter into the wounds. Those who stole and ate the food of pratyekabuddha are destined to go here. The next subsidiary hell is the Region of the Bird, which is inhabited by a bird as

big as an elephant that has a sharp fire-spewing beak. It grabs the ones in this region and drops them from the sky, leaving them shattered on the ground. The roads have knives that stick out and pierce the ones walking on them. Additionally, they are attacked by dogs with fangs on fire.

This hell is the destined place for those who have committed one of the Five Great Offenses of Buddhism, Anantarika-karma, that include the murder of one's biological mother or father, evil intention of causing harm to the Buddha or the Buddhist community and the murder of Arhats. To be worthy of the Avici hell, these sins need to be carried out with deliberate intentions as they have consciously ignored the good within themselves and are fully aware of their sin. This sin also consists of taking away the chance of others to reach enlightenment and destroying part of oneself.

The Eight Cold Narakas.

Arbuda, the Hell of Blisters, is a dark, frozen plain surrounded by icy mountains and continually swept by blizzards. Inhabitants of this world arise fully grown and abide lifelong naked and alone, while the cold raises blisters upon their bodies. The length of life in this naraka is said to be the time it would take to empty a barrel of sesame seeds if one only took out a single seed every hundred years.

Nirarbuda, the Hell of Bursting Blisters, is even colder than Arbuda. There, the blisters burst open, leaving the beings' bodies covered with frozen blood and pus.

Aṭaṭa, is the Hell of Shivering/Chattering Teeth. There, beings shiver in the cold while their teeth chatter, making an aṭ-aṭ sound with their mouths.

Hahava, is the Hell of Lamentation. There, the beings lament in the cold, going haa, haa in pain.

Huhuva, the Hell of Groaning, is where beings groan from the pain, making the sound hu, hu.

Utpala, is the Blue Lotus Hell. The intense cold there makes the skin turn blue like the colour of an utpala water-lily.

Padma, is the Crimson Lotus Hell. Here blizzards rage that crack open frozen skin, leaving one raw and bloody.

Mahāpadma, is the Great Crimson Lotus Hell. The entire body cracks into pieces and the internal organs are exposed to the cold, also to cracking.

The two women just looked at each other, then returned to the book.

TARTARUS IS the deep abyss that is used as a dungeon of torment and suffering for the wicked and as the prison for the Titans. Tartarus is the place where souls are judged after death and where the wicked received divine punishment.

Hesiod asserts that a bronze anvil falling from heaven would fall nine days before it reached the earth. The anvil would take nine more days to fall from earth to Tartarus. In the Iliad Zeus asserts that Tartarus is as far beneath Hades as heaven is above earth. Similarly, the mythographer Apollodorus, describes Tartarus as a gloomy place in Hades as far distant from earth as earth is distant from the sky.

Greek mythology the realm of Hades is the place of the dead, Tartarus also has a number of inhabitants. When Cronus came to power as the King of the Titans, he imprisoned the three

ancient one-eyed Cyclopes and only the hundred-armed Hecatonchires in Tartarus and set the monster Campe as its guard. Campe was part scorpion and had a ring of animal heads around her waist, snapping at anyone who dared to get near. She also carried a whip to torture the Cyclopes and the hundred-armed ones. Zeus killed Campe and released these imprisoned giants to aid in his conflict with the Titans. The gods of Olympus eventually triumphed. Cronus and many of the other Titans were banished to Tartarus, though Prometheus, Epimetheus, and female Titans such as Metis were spared. Other gods could be sentenced to Tartarus as well. In the Homeric hymn to Hermes, Apollo threatens to throw Hermes into Tartarus. Apollo himself was almost condemned to Tartarus by Zeus for the act of killing the Cyclops. The Hecatonchires became guards of Tartarus's prisoners. Later, when Zeus overcame the monster Typhon, he threw him into wide Tartarus.

JAHANNAM coexists with the temporal world, just as Jannah, eternal paradise, does. Hell is enormous in size, and located below Paradise. Having seven gates and for every gate there shall be a specific party of sinners. It has seven levels, each one more severe than the one above it, but it is also said to be a huge pit over which the resurrected walk over the bridge of As-Sirāt. It is said to have mountains, rivers, valleys and even oceans filled with disgusting fluids; and they the sinners also are able to walk, controlled by reins, and to ask questions, much like a sentient being.

WORLD of Darkness, alma d-hšuka. A great dark Sea of Suf lies in the World of Darkness. The great dividing river of Hitpun separates the World of Darkness from the World of Light. Siniawis is the lower of the regions of the World of Darkness.

DUZAKH. In Zoroastrianism, Hell is described as a deep well, terrifying because it is dark, stinking, and extremely narrow. The smallest of the xrafstars, harmful creatures, are as big as mountains, and all devour and destroy the souls of the damned.

There happen the most horrible punishments and tortures adapted to the sins committed by the damned. Duzakh is firstly the residence of Ahriman, the demons, and the drujes deceit, falsehood. All atmospheric calamities are associated with it: snow, cold, hail, rain, burning heat, and so forth.

TAMAG. Tamor tamu, is the name of hell in Tengrism and Turkic mythology. It is the place where criminals go to be punished after they die. There are several depictions of Tamag, but the common point in almost all views is about the fire. Erlik Khan is the deity ruling hell and punishes all evil people. Further, there is another entity named Tami Han who is governing Tam in Khakasian lore. Ancient Turks believed that Tam is underground. It was believed that the people in Tam would be brought to the third floor of the sky after they had served their imprisonment in Tam. Tamag is the opposite of Uçmag, heaven.

At this point Catherine Mulberry closed the book.

‘A walk then lunch if you can stomach it, there are probably an infinite number of hells, how can we ever know, or know new ones will not come into being.’ she said.

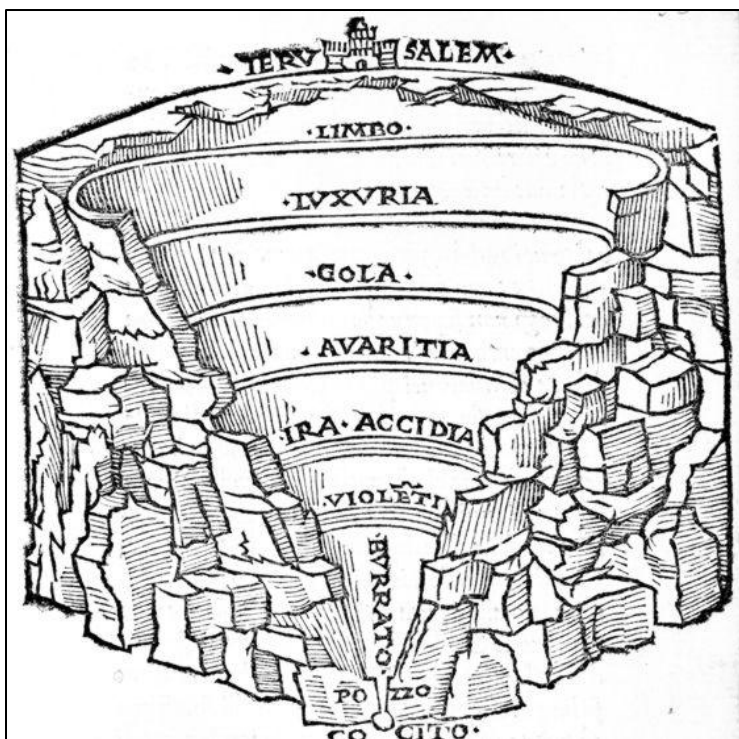
‘Interesting they all have common themes, normally extremes of heat, fire and every descending and worse levels, and you say infinite. So, what are we to do?’ said Jane.

‘Well, a walk, let’s eat lunch at The Crown, no maybe The Cheery Tree, then tackle what has become in the west an archetype of sorts, Dante’s Inferno.’

‘Sounds good to me,’ said Jane, ‘well the walk and lunch part.’ she replied with a smile.

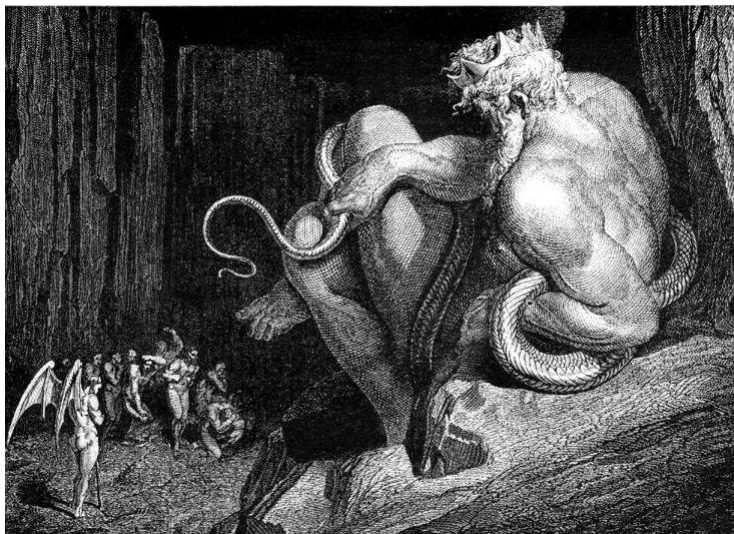
‘Oh dam, I forgot, the pub will be there, just no people to cook, I’ll fix up a ham salad back here.’

So, after the ham salad, with sparkling water, ‘To keep clear heads.’ Once the kitchen table was cleared, they began reading.



HELL. The gate of Hell bears an inscription ending with the phrase “Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'intrate”, “Abandon all hope, ye who enter here”.

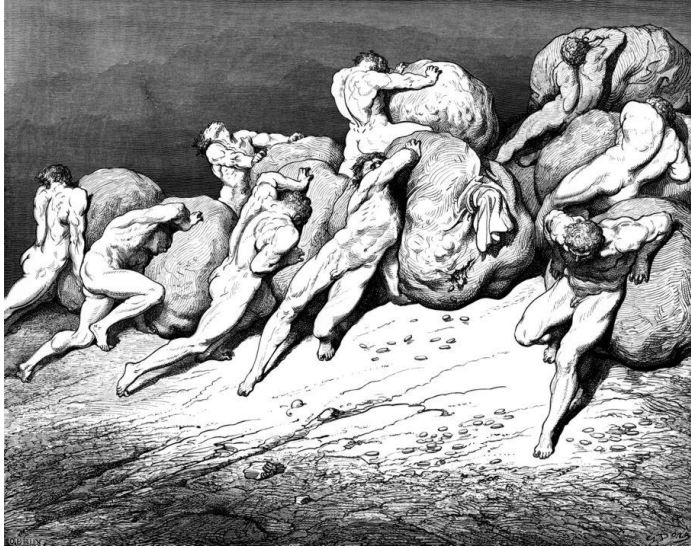
The first Circle of Hell, Limbo. A land of a field of ashes.



The second circle of hell. A part where nothing gleams where lives the serpent Minos, who judges all of those condemned for active, deliberately willed sin to one of the lower circles. In the second circle of Hell are those overcome by lust. These carnal malefactors are condemned for allowing their appetites to sway their reason. These souls are buffeted back and forth by the terrible winds of a violent storm, without rest.



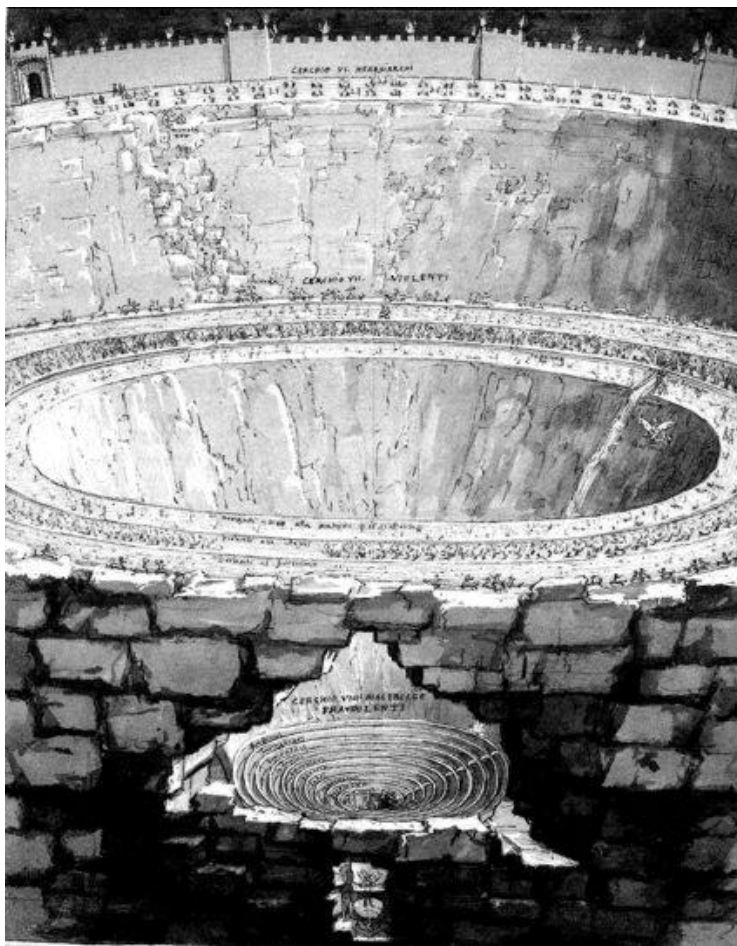
The third circle of hell the gluttonous wallow in a vile, putrid slush produced by a ceaseless, foul, icy rain – a great storm of putrefaction – as punishment for subjecting their reason to a voracious appetite. Cerberus, the three headed dog of Hell, ravenously guards the gluttons lying in the freezing mire, mauling and flaying them with his claws as they howl like dogs.



The Fourth Circle is guarded by Plutus, the deity of wealth in classical mythology. He is a distinct figure from Pluto the classical ruler of the underworld. Those whose attitude toward material goods deviated from the appropriate mean are punished in the fourth circle. The hoarders and spendthrifts joust, using great weights as weapons that they push with their chests.



The fifth circle, in the swampy, stinking waters of the river Styx of the Fifth Circle the actively wrathful fight each other viciously on the surface of the slime, while the sullen lie beneath the water, withdrawn, into a black sulkiness which can find no joy in God or man or the universe.



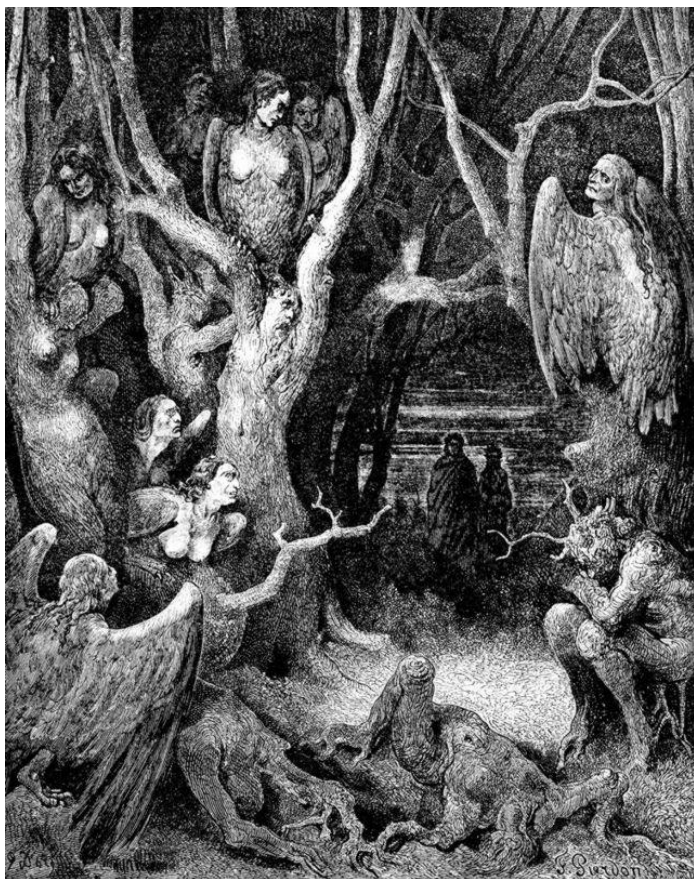
In the distance are high towers that resemble fiery red mosques, the City of Dis. Dis, itself surrounded by the Stygian marsh, contains Lower Hell within its walls. Dis is one of the names of Pluto, the classical king of the underworld, in addition to being the name of the realm. The walls of Dis are guarded by fallen angels.

In the sixth circle, heretics, such as Epicurus and his followers who say “the soul dies with the body” are trapped in flaming tombs.

There is a steep descent to the foul-smelling seventh circle, the geography and rationale of Lower Hell, in which the sins of violence or bestiality and fraud or malice are punished.

The Seventh Circle, divided into three rings, houses the Violent. A jumble of rocks that had once formed a cliff lies first where lives the Minotaur. The shattered stones resulted from the great earthquake that shook the earth at the moment of Christ’s death and the time of the Harrowing of Hell. Ruins resulting from the same shock are also found at the beginning of Upper Hell, the entrance of the Second Circle.

In the first round of the seventh circle, the murderers, war-makers, plunderers, and tyrants are immersed in Phlegethon, a river of boiling blood and fire. The Centaurs, commanded by Chiron and Pholus, patrol the ring, shooting arrows into any sinners who emerge higher out of the boiling blood than each is allowed. The river grows shallower until it reaches a ford, after which it comes full circle back to the deeper part.



The second round of the seventh circle is the Wood of the Suicides, in which the souls of the people who attempted or died by suicide are transformed into gnarled, thorny trees and then fed upon by Harpies, hideous clawed birds with the faces of women; the trees are only permitted to speak when broken and bleeding.



The third round of the seventh circle is a great Plain of Burning Sand scorched by great flakes of flame falling slowly down from the sky, an image derived from the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Blasphemers are stretched supine upon the burning sand, the Sodomites run in circles, while the Usurers crouch huddled and weeping.



There is the great cliff which descends to Eighth Circle: the Hell of the Fraudulent and Malicious.

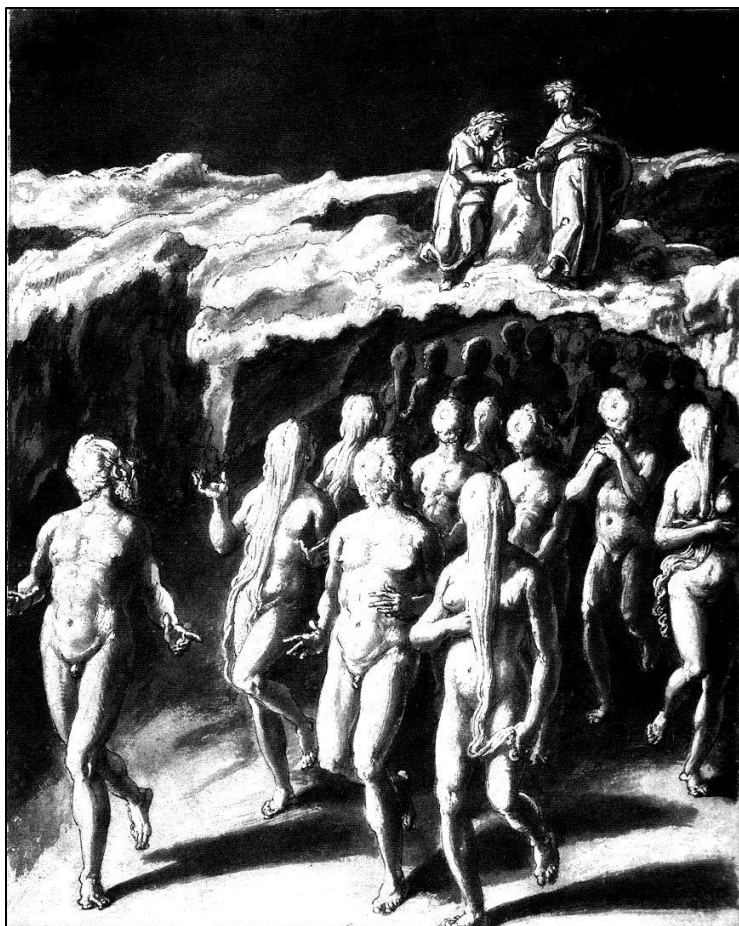


The Eighth Circle, called Malebolge, “Evil ditches”: the upper half of the Hell of the Fraudulent and Malicious. The Eighth Circle is a large funnel of stone shaped like an amphitheatre around which run a series of ten deep, narrow, concentric ditches or trenches. Within these ditches are punished those guilty of simple fraud. From the foot of the Great Cliff to the Well, which forms the neck of the funnel, are large spurs of rock, like umbrella ribs or spokes, which serve as bridges over the ten ditches called bolgia.

Bolgia 1 – Panderers and seducers: These sinners make two files, one along either bank of the ditch, and march quickly in opposite directions while being whipped by horned demons for eternity.

Bolgia 2 – Flatterers: These also exploited other people, this time abusing and corrupting language to play upon others’ desires and fears. They are steeped in excrement as they howl and fight amongst themselves.

Borgia 3 – Simoniacs: simony, or the sale of ecclesiastic favours and offices, and therefore made money for themselves out of what belongs to God: The sinners are placed head-downwards in round, tube-like holes within the rock, debased mockeries of baptismal fonts, with flames burning the soles of their feet. The heat of the fire is proportioned to their guilt.



Borgia 4 – Sorcerers: The souls of fortune tellers, diviners, astrologers, and other false prophets. The punishment of those who attempted to usurp God's prerogative by prying into the future. They have their heads twisted around on their bodies; in this horrible contortion of the human form, these

sinners are compelled to walk backwards for eternity, blinded by their own tears.

Borgia 5 – Barrators: Corrupt politicians, who made money by trafficking in public offices are immersed in a lake of boiling pitch, which represents the sticky fingers and dark secrets of their corrupt deals. They are guarded by demons called the Malebranche, “Evil Claws”, who tear them to pieces with claws and grappling hooks if they catch them above the surface of the pitch.



Borgia 6 – Hypocrites: the hypocrites listlessly walk around a narrow track for eternity, weighted down by leaden robes. The robes are brilliantly gilded on the outside and are shaped like a monk's habit – the hypocrite's outward appearance shines brightly and passes for holiness, but under that show lies the terrible weight of his deceit.

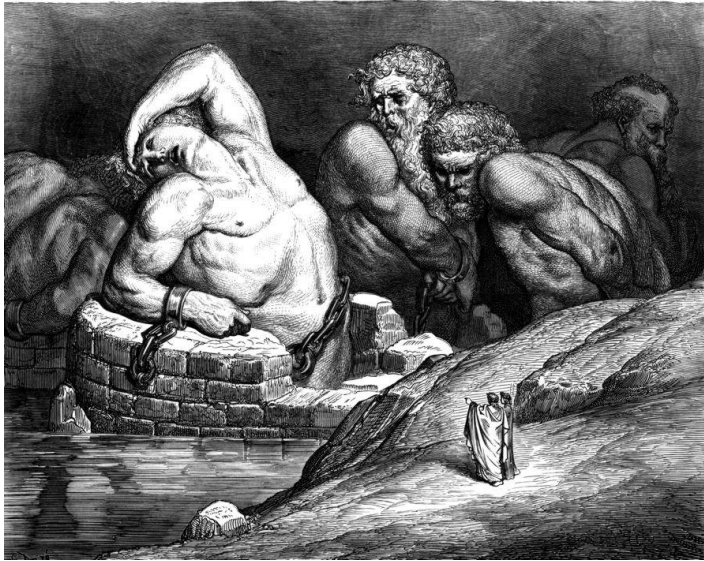


Bolgia 7 – Thieves: Separated from the sixth by ruined rocks of a bridge destroyed by the great earthquake. There is a pit is filled with monstrous reptiles: the shades of thieves are pursued and bitten by snakes and lizards, who curl themselves about the sinners and bind their hands behind their backs.

Bolgia 8 – Counsellors of Fraud: Here, fraudulent advisers or evil counsellors move about, hidden from view inside individual flames. These are not people who gave false advice, but people who used their position to advise others to engage in fraud.

Bolgia 9 – Sowers of Discord: In the ninth bolgia, the Sowers of Discord are hacked and mutilated for all eternity by a large demon wielding a bloody sword; their bodies are divided as, in life, their sin was to tear apart what God had intended to be united; these are the sinners who are ready to rip up the whole fabric of society to gratify a sectional egotism. The

souls must drag their ruined bodies around the ditch, their wounds healing in the course of the circuit, only to have the demon tear them apart anew.



There is then the Central Well, at the bottom of which lies the Ninth and final Circle of Hell. The classical and biblical Giants – who perhaps symbolise pride and other spiritual flaws lying behind acts of treachery stand perpetual guard inside the well-pit, their legs embedded in the banks of the Ninth Circle while their upper halves rise above the rim and are visible from the Malebolge.



In The Ninth Circle of Hell at the base of the well is a large frozen lake: Cocytus. This is in contrast to the popular image of Hell as fiery. Trapped in the ice, each according to his guilt, are punished sinners guilty of treachery against those with whom they had special relationships. The lake of ice is divided into four concentric rings or rounds of traitors corresponding, in order of seriousness, to betrayal of family ties, betrayal of community ties, betrayal of guests, and betrayal of lords.

Round 1 – Caina: this round is named after Cain, who killed his own brother in the first act of murder. This round houses the Traitors to their Kindred: they have their necks and heads out of the ice and are allowed to bow their heads, allowing some protection from the freezing wind.

Round 2 – Antenora: the second round is named after Antenor, a Trojan soldier who betrayed his city to the Greeks. Here lie the Traitors to their Country: those who committed treason against political entities parties, cities, or countries, have their heads above the ice, but they cannot bend their necks.

Round 3 – Ptolomaea: the third region of Cocytus is named after Ptolemy, who invited his father-in-law Simon Maccabaeus and his sons to a banquet and then killed them. Traitors to their Guests lie supine in the ice while their tears freeze in their eye sockets, sealing them with small visors of crystal – even the comfort of weeping is denied to them.

Round 4 – Judecca: the fourth division of Cocytus, named for Judas Iscariot, contains the Traitors to their Lords and benefactors. Upon entry into this round, all of the sinners are fully encapsulated in ice, distorted and twisted in every conceivable position. The sinners present an image of utter immobility: it is impossible to talk with any of them.



Satan in the Inferno is trapped in the frozen central zone in the Ninth Circle of Hell. The arch-traitor, Lucifer, was once held by God to be fairest of the angels before his pride led him to rebel against God, resulting in his expulsion from Heaven. Lucifer is a giant, terrifying beast trapped waist-deep in the ice, fixed and suffering. He has three faces, each a different colour: one red, the middle, one a pale yellow, the right, and one black the left.

Jane spoke, 'I find it remarkable that many of these Hell's share a commonality, the way the sinners are punished, the use of fire, but then ice.'

She paused, then added,

'Seems these are now all your worlds.'

'Maybe, that makes me the supreme Devil, which is a difficult thought, let's go for a walk and try to clear my head.'

So, the two went for a long walk along the Deben Estuary. It was not late; they watched the waders feeding in the silt as they walked, until they reached Kyson Point, here they sat by what was probably once a boathouse marking the beginning of Martlesham Creek. They took a slow walk back.

‘If you are now the supreme Devil, and then I think I’m a place holder for those inhabitants.’ Jane said.

They had their evening meal and listened to some Mahler on the gramophone.

CHAPTER 32: INTERMEZZO, COLLIDING GALAXIES.

Throughout our universe and no doubt in others stars form great collections of galaxies in shapes, some globular many in beautiful spirals which since the late 19thC have been seen by Earth based astronomers. Our own galaxy, the Milky Way, can be seen from our position in one of its spiral arms as a band of light across the sky where low light pollution permits. The nearby Andromeda Galaxy is predicted to collide directly with the Milky Way in about 4 billion years.

For galaxies in which civilizations have developed much further than our own the occupants of these worlds are able to control nature on a far greater scale. Soviet astronomer Nikolai Kardashev in 1964 proposed A Type I civilization, planetary, is able to access all the energy available on its planet and store it for consumption. This is our current state. A Type II civilization, stellar, can directly consume a star's energy, most likely through the use of a Dyson sphere, a hypothetical megastructure that encompasses a star and captures a large percentage of its power output. A Type III civilization, galactic, is able to capture all the energy emitted by its galaxy, and every object within it, such as every star, black hole, etc.

To date all A Type III civilizations practice shielding. That is blocking radiation from their home galaxy, the reason is simple, this radiation would carry information about the galaxy, it's life forms and technologies. So rather like humans built houses and cities, and fortified them, for protection from nature and other civilizations, the same principle arises. Which

is why we see no such type III galaxies. This also explains where the supposed dark matter and dark energy is, as well as anomalies in the spins of visible galaxies.

In such collisions of colliding galaxies actual stars colliding with others would be rare to non-existent given the vastness of the inter-stellar spaces. So, a collision between A Type III and A Type II or A Type I would not be a problem, however a collision between two Type III civilizations would be. It would offer either civilization an opportunity for an increase in its available resources. The added problem is that Type III galaxies can see A Type II and A Type I galaxies approaching and so manipulate the merger to its advantage. A Type III colliding with another Type III collision would not be detected until the moment of collision. The principal of survival of the fittest remains.

The best Earth based estimate for the number of galaxies in the universe ranges from 2-4 billion to 2 trillion. However, this is only 5% of the universe, the rest is dark matter and dark energy held in Type III universes, so the number of galaxies could be 40 trillion or more, and the number of collisions far higher than those estimated.

One such collision currently taking place between two Type III civilizations is occurring in which attempts to curb hostilities are being mediated by a third party, one Professor John Challenger.

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Challenger used designations for the two Type III civilizations in his own natural language translated here into English. One of his specialities being inter-galactic translation.

Translation and encoding and decoding are crucial in these situations not merely for communication between the different parties, for both will have different “languages” and substrates. It doesn’t follow that they will use conventional semiotics, they might modify viruses in communications, atomic nuclei, stable or unstable isotopes, or biological structures, plants, animals, or senses including sound, touch or smell at different level and frequencies. Challenger was an expert in all these. This enabled the two civilizations to talk to one another, more importantly it hid their languages, semiotics etc. from each other. This was vital because physical violence was rare, more significant was the capturing and destruction or alteration of data.

CHAPTER 33: THE INHABITANTS OF JANE SMITH.

The next morning after breakfast they decided to remain in the kitchen and tackle more of the book.

‘For you will take ownership of all the underworlds.’ said Jane Smith.

‘And you will take ownership of all its inhabitants.’ said Catherine Mulberry, adding,

‘Which will not be the humans or whatever is being punished, it will be those very demons as well as others. To be clear, these demons or fallen angels like angels, no longer exist or do these Hells.’

‘Then that’s a good thing.’ said Jane.

‘Well, no, with just the Trinity everything becomes perfect.’

‘Then that’s a good thing.’ repeated Jane.

‘Well, no, being perfect means no change, and so nothing, non-existence.’

‘Not so good, so you are saying we need the bad.’ said Jane.

‘I’d prefer we need opposites, like Ying and Yang. Good and bad, positive and negative like MAN and WO MAN seems to privilege one half of the binary. And without a binary at minimum, you can’t do anything.’

In Catherine Mulberrys mind she couldn’t help remembering the Eve Sharif affair where she first met Billy Taylor and the realization of the need for binaries, the problem with

privileging one over the others, and the idea of the Aeons of creation having their negatives. And ‘negative’ here means the perspective from which one regards things, and the idea of balance.

‘Deep!’ said Jane.

‘Sure.’ said Catherine Mulberry, snapping out of her recollections, ‘Like the literally monotonous planets.’

‘Oh, I see, we need diversity...’

They found the book “Mythologica” and opened it.

‘All the references to the Hells and Underworld places have gone!’ this was Jane,

‘It seems these are no longer needed, now there are the names of some of the inhabitants of these underworlds.’ Catherine Mulberry said.

‘Why not all?’ asked Jane.

‘Because they are infinite.’ was the reply.

So again, they both read from the book.

Eingana is a creator goddess. Otherwise known as the “Dreamtime Snake”, she is the mother of all water animals and humans. She is a snake goddess of death who lives in the Dreaming. She has no vagina; she simply grew in size and, unable to give birth to the life inside her, had the god Barraiya open a hole with a spear near her anus so that labour could commence. Eingana holds a sinew that is attached to every living thing; if she lets go of one, the attached creature dies.

Alû is a vengeful spirit of the Utukku that goes down to the underworld Kur. The demon has no mouth, lips or ears. It roams at night and terrifies people while they sleep. Possession by the Alû results in unconsciousness or a coma; in this manner it resembles the mara, and incubus, which are invoked to explain sleep paralysis.

Anu, Akkadian or Anum, is the divine personification of the sky, king of the gods, and ancestor of many of the deities in ancient Mesopotamian religion.

Anu's spouse existed, though three of them—Ki, Urash, and Antu—were at various points in time equated with each other, and all three represented earth.

Ereshkigal, Queen of the Great Earth was the goddess of Kur, the land of the dead or underworld.

Humbaba, comparable to an ogre or giant who dwells in a forest.

Mamitu, Mammitum, Mammitu, Mammi, is a Mesopotamian goddess associated with the underworld. She was the wife of Nergal.

Nergal is a Mesopotamian god worshiped through all periods of Mesopotamian history, associated with war, death, and disease. Married to the goddess Ereshkigal.

Uta-napishtim or Utnapishtim, he has found life, was a king of the ancient city of Shuruppak in southern Iraq, who, according to the Gilgamesh flood myth, survived the Flood by making and occupying a boat.

The story of Uta-napishtim has drawn comparisons between it and the storylines about Noah in the Book of Genesis. Uta-napishtim is tasked by the god Enki to abandon his worldly possessions and create a giant ship to be called Preserver of Life. He was also tasked with bringing his wife, family, and relatives along with the craftsmen of his village, baby animals, and grains. After twelve days on the water, Uta-napishtim opened the hatch of his ship to look around and saw the slopes of Mount Nisir, where he rested his ship for seven days. On the seventh day, he sent a dove out to see if the water had receded, and the dove could find nothing but water, so it returned. Then he sent out a swallow, it returned, having found nothing. Finally, Uta-napishtim sent out a raven, and the raven saw that the waters had receded, so it circled around, but did not return. Uta-napishtim then set all the animals free and made a sacrifice to the gods.

E Bukura e Dheut, Beauty of the Earth, or Earthly Beauty is an epithet in Albanian mythology used in some traditions for a crafty fairy, and in other traditions for a chthonic/earth goddess, the counterpart of e Bukura e Detit, the Beauty of the Sea and i Bukuri i Qiellit, the Beauty of the Sky. As a goddess of the underworld and at the same time a personification of springtime.

She may be a good spirit or more often evil, with magical powers she derives from her dress, and lives in the underworld, where her palace is guarded by a three-headed dog, a kuçedra and other weird creatures.

This mythological figure has been found in the Arvanitika dialect of Albanian, in Greece and in Italy.

Erlík, Erlik, Erlik Khan is the god of death and the underworld, sometimes referred to as Tamag, hell, in Turkic mythology. Er means Earth, in the depths of which Erlik lives. From the underworld, Erlik brings forth death, plague and evil spirits to torment humans and take their souls into his realm.

In the prayers of shamans, Erlik is described as a monster, having the face and teeth of a pig combined with a human body. Besides his face, he is an old man with a well-built body, black eyes, eyebrows and moustache.

Mictlāntēcutli or **Mictlantecuhtli**, meaning “Lord of Mictlan”, is a god of the dead and the king of Mictlan, Chicunauhmiclan, the lowest and northernmost section of

the underworld. The worship of Mictlantecuhtli sometimes involves ritual cannibalism.

Mictlantecuhtli was 6 feet tall and was depicted as a blood-spattered skeleton or a person wearing a toothy skull. Although his head was typically a skull, his eye sockets did contain eyeballs. His headdress was shown decorated with owl feathers and paper banners and he wore a necklace of human eyeballs, while his earspools were made from human bones.

His wife was Mictecacihuatl, and together they dwell in a windowless house in Mictlan. Mictlantecuhtli was associated with spiders, owls, bats, the 11th hour, and the northern compass direction, known as Mictlampa, the region of death. He was one of only a few deities held to govern over all three types of souls identified by the Aztecs, who distinguished between the souls of people who died normal deaths of old age, disease, etc., heroic deaths e.g. in battle, sacrifice or during childbirth, or non-heroic deaths. Mictlantecuhtli and his wife were the opposites and complements of Ometecuhtli and Omecihuatl.

Mictēcacihuātl, Nahuatl “Lady of the Dead”, consort of Mictlāntēcutli, god of the dead and ruler of Mictlān, the lowest level of the underworld. Her role is to watch over the bones of the dead and preside over the ancient festivals of the dead. These festivals evolved from Aztec traditions into the modern Day of the Dead after synthesis with Spanish traditions.

Batara Kala The son of Batara Guru, the Javanese version of Shiva. He has a very beautiful wife, Dewi Uma . One day Batara Guru, in a fit of uncontrolled lust, forced himself on Dewi Uma. They had sexual intercourse on top of his vahana Nandi, a divine cow. This behaviour ashamed Uma, who cursed both of them so they appeared as fearsome and ugly ogres. This fierce form of Dewi Uma is also known in Hinduism as Durga. From this relationship, Batara Kala was born with the appearance of an ogre.

Dewi Sri, Sundanese: Nyai Pohaci, Sanghyang Asri is the Goddess of rice and fertility. She is often equated with the Hindu goddess Lakshmi, consort of Vishnu. Most of the stories regarding Dewi Sri are associated with the mythical origin of the rice plant.

There is a correlation between Sri and the large Rice Paddy Snake ular sawah and Sadhana with the paddy swallow. The nāga or snake, particularly the king cobra is a common fertility symbol throughout Asia, in contrast to being considered representative of temptation, sin or wickedness as in Judeo-Christian belief.

Batara Kala is the god of death in traditional Javanese and Balinese mythology, ruling over it in a cave along with Setesuyara his wife. Batara Kala is the creator of light and the earth. The god of time, who devours unlucky people.

Another origin story is that he was conceived when a drop of Shiva's semen was swallowed by a fish.

Batara Kala is described as having an insatiable appetite and being very rude. He was sent by the devas to Earth to punish humans for their evil habits. However, Batara Kala was interested only in devouring humans to satisfy his appetite. Alarmed, the devas then recalled Batara Kala from the Earth.

Yama Kāla and Dharmarāja, is the Hindu god of death and justice, responsible for the dispensation of law and punishment of sinners in his abode, Naraka. He is often identified with Dharmadeva, the personification of Dharma. In Vedic tradition, Yama was considered the first mortal who died and espied the way to the celestial abodes; as a result, he became the ruler of the departed.

Yama is one of the Lokapalas guardians of the realms, appointed as the protector of the south direction. He is often depicted as a dark-complexioned man riding a buffalo and carrying a noose or mace to capture souls.

Yama was subsequently adopted by Buddhist, Chinese, Tibetan, Korean, and Japanese mythology as the king of hell.

Yama in East Asian and Buddhist mythology is the King of Hell and a Dharmapala, wrathful god, said to judge the dead, presiding over the hellish realms and over the cycle of life and rebirth. He is often depicted with the head of a buffalo, three round eyes, sharp horns entwined with flame, fierce and angry. In his right hand he often has a stick with a skull and in his left a lasso. On his head he has a crown of skulls. In many

depictions he is standing on a recumbent bull crushing a man lying on his back. He is also portrayed with an erect penis.

Degei enshrined as a serpent, is the supreme god of Fiji. He is the creator of the Fijian world, fruits, and of men. He judges newly dead souls. A few he sends to paradise Burotu, most others are thrown into a lake, where they will eventually sink to the bottom, to be appropriately rewarded or punished.

He is said to have at first moved about freely, but then in the form of a snake to have grown into the earth with his ringed tail. Since then he has become the god of earthquakes, storms and seasons. Whenever Degei shakes himself, fertilising rain will fall, delicious fruits hang on the trees, and the yam fields yield an excellent crop. Degei is also a god of wrath who declares himself in terrible fashion. He punishes and chastens his people by destroying the crops or by floods; he could indeed easily wipe out mankind from the earth, for since he has lived in the bowels of the earth he has been tormented with so insatiable hunger that he would like to take in and swallow the whole world.

Mot, also known as Maweth, the Canaanite god of death and the Underworld. He is a son of 'El.

'El, 'Al or 'Il, is the Canaanite deity known as the supreme god, there is the identification of Yahweh with El. According to the god Hadad, another name of Akkadian the sky or thunder god, Ba'al lives in a city named hmry, filth.

In one myth Hadad, also known as Ba'al, urges Mot to come to his feast and submit himself to him. Mot or Death sends back a message that his appetite is that of lions in the wilderness, like the longing of dolphins in the sea, and slays the god.

The sun stops shining as its goddess Shapash joins Hadad's sister 'Anat in burying him. 'Anat then comes upon Mot, seizing him, splitting him with a blade, winnowing him in a sieve, burning him in a fire, grinding him under a millstone, and finally throwing what remains over a field for birds to devour. El, Baal's father, dreams that Baal is alive and sends Shapash to bring him back to life because the land has become dry. After seven years, Death returns, seeking vengeance and demanding one of Ba'al's brothers to feed upon. Mot complains that Ba'al has given Mot his own brothers to eat and his mother's sons to consume. A single combat between the two breaks out until the sun goddess Shapash upbraids Mot, informing him that his own father, El, will turn against him and overturn his throne if he continues. Mot concedes, and the conflict ends.

Some have speculated that the Jewish tradition of Passover may have begun as a ritual connected with the myth of Mot killing Baal.

The Phoenicians call him Thanatos, Death, or Pluto. In others he is produced from mud, others a putrescence of watery compound; and out of this came every germ of creation and the generation of the universe.

Arsay is a goddess daughter of Baal.

Aed, or Aodh, is the prince of the Daoine Sidhe and a god of Irish mythology the eldest son of Lir, High King of the Tuatha de Dannan, and Aoibh, a daughter of Bodb Dearg.

Arawn in Welsh mythology, was the king of the otherworld realm of Annwn.

In Welsh folklore, the Cŵn Annwn or Hounds of Annwn ride through the skies in autumn, winter, and early spring. The baying of the hounds was identified with the crying of wild geese as they migrate and the quarry of the hounds as wandering spirits, being chased to Annwn, capturing of human souls and the chasing of damned souls to Annwn, and Annwn was equated with the Hell of Christian tradition.

Arawn's encounters also form the basis of the Arthurian story Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.

Donn, the dark one is an ancestor of the Gaels and is a god of the dead who dwells in Tech Duinn the house of Donn or house of the dark one where the souls of the dead gather.

Gwyn ap Nudd the king of the Tylwyth Teg or fair folk and ruler of the Welsh Otherworld, Annwn, and whose name means Gwyn, son of Nudd. Described later on as a great warrior with a blackened face and associated with the Wild

Hunt. Across Europe seeing the Wild Hunt forebode some catastrophe such as war or plague, or at best the death of the one who witnessed it. People encountering the Hunt might also be abducted to the underworld or the fairy kingdom. In some instances, it was also believed that people's spirits could be pulled away during their sleep to join the hunt.

Gwyn is the son of Nudd his siblings include Edern, a warrior of Arthurian texts.

Gwyn plays a prominent role in the early Arthurian tale Culhwch and Olwen.

Manannán or Manann, also known as Manannán mac Lir, son of the Sea, is a sea god, warrior, and king of the otherworld in Gaelic mythology who is one of the Tuatha Dé Danann. His dominion is referred by such names as Emain Ablach or Emhain Abhlach, Isle of Apple Trees, Mag Mell, Plain of Delights, or Tír Tairngire Land of Promise. He is described as over-king of the surviving Tuatha Dé, after the advent of Milesians, the Gaels, the final race to settle in Ireland. Manannán uses the mist of invisibility, féth fiada to cloak the whereabouts of his home as well as the sidhe dwellings of the others. Sidhe are the supernatural race in Irish folklore, similar to elves. They are descended from the Tuatha Dé Danann.

Manannán owns a self-navigating boat named Sguaba Tuinne, Wave-sweeper, a horse Aonbharr which can course over water as well as land, and a deadly strength-sapping sword named Fragarach.

Neman or Nemain in Irish mythology is the goddess who personifies the frenzied havoc of war.

The Morrígan is mainly associated with war and fate, especially with foretelling doom, death, or victory in battle. In this role she often appears as a crow, the badb. She incites warriors to battle and can help bring about victory over their enemies. The Morrígan encourages warriors to do brave deeds, strikes fear into their enemies, and is portrayed washing the bloodstained clothes of those fated to die. She is seen as a goddess of battle and war and has also been seen as a manifestation of the earth. She is found in Arthurian legend in the form of Morgan le Fay.

Taranis, Taranus or Tanarus, is a Celtic thunder god to whom the Gauls sacrificed humans. The victims of Taranis were burned in a hollow wooden container. This sacrifice has been compared with the wicker man.

Yanluo Wang is the god of death and the ruler of Diyu, overseeing the Ten Kings of Hell in its capital of Youdu. Yanluo Wang is the fifth judge in the court of underworld. Yan is portrayed as a large man with a scowling red face, bulging eyes, and a long beard. He wears traditional robes and a judge's cap or a crown which bears the Chinese character for king 王. He typically appears on Chinese hell money in the position reserved for political figures on regular currency.

The Heibai Wuchang, or Hak Bak Mo Seong, literally Black and White Impermanence, are two deities in Chinese folk religion in charge of escorting the spirits of the dead to the underworld.

The White Guard is commonly portrayed as a fair complexioned man dressed in a white robe and wearing a tall hat bearing the Chinese words Become Rich Upon Encountering. He holds a hand fan in one hand and a fish-shaped shackle or/and wooden sign in the other hand.

The Black Guard is typically represented as a dark complexioned man dressed in a black robe and wearing a hat similar to the one worn by the White Guard. The Chinese words on his hat are Arresting You Right Now. He holds a hand fan in one hand and a squarish wooden sign in the other hand. The sign bears the words Making a Clear Distinction Between Good and Evil.

Ox-Head and Horse-Face are two guardians of the underworld. They are the first beings a dead soul encounters.

In their duties as guardians of Diyu, the realm of the dead, their role is to capture human souls who have reached the end of their earthly existence and bring them before the courts of Hell. Souls are then rewarded or punished based on the actions performed in their lifetime.

Meng Po is the goddess of oblivion who serves Meng Po Soup on the Bridge of Oblivion or Naihe Bridge. This soup wipes the memory of the person so they can reincarnate into the next life without the burdens of the previous life.

Zhong Kui is a Taoist deity, a vanquisher of ghosts and evil beings. He is depicted as a large man with a big black beard, bulging eyes, and a wrathful expression. Zhong Kui is able to command 80,000 demons to do his bidding and is often associated with the five bats of fortune.

Aqen is a deity of the underworld. He is first mentioned in the Book of the Dead. There, he guided the sun god Ra as the protector of Ra's celestial bark by bringing the rope to his majesty. He was also described as the mouth of the time, from which the gods and demons pulled the rope of time, as described in the tomb of king Seti I.

Aker is the personification of the horizon, and an earth and underworld god, guarding the eastern and western horizons. First depicted as the torso of a recumbent lion with a widely opened mouth. Later, he was depicted as two recumbent lion torsos merged with each other and still looking away from each other.

Am-heh was a minor god from the underworld, whose name means either devourer of millions or eater of eternity. He was depicted as a man with the head of a hunting dog who lived in a lake of fire. He is sometimes seen as an aspect of Ammit, the personification of divine retribution. Am-heh could only be repelled by the god Atum.

Amunet also Amonet or Amaunet is a primordial goddess and was paired with a counterpart who is entitled with the same name, but in the masculine, Amun. They existed prior to the beginning of creation along with three other couples representing primeval concepts.

Ammit, Devourer of the Dead; also rendered Ammut or Ahemait is a goddess with the forequarters of a lion, the hindquarters of a hippopotamus, and the head of a crocodile. Ammit played an important role during the funerary ritual, the Judgment of the Dead.

The Judgment of the Soul based on the Papyrus of Ani shows the deceased's heart being weighed on the scale of Maat against the feather of truth, by the jackal-headed Anubis. Ammit stands ready to eat the heart if it fails the test. The ibis-headed Thoth, scribe of the gods, records the result.

Andjety, meaning He of Andjet is a precursor of Osiris. He also is shown to have fertility aspects, being known by the

epithet bull of vultures. His name is sometimes written with a substitution of a stylized uterus for the feather in the hieroglyphs.

CHAPTER 34: INTERMEZZO, THE FAILURE OF A TIPLER UNIVERSE.

Professor Frank Tipler is an American mathematical physicist and cosmologist, holding a joint appointment in the Departments of Mathematics and Physics at Tulane University. Tipler has written books and papers on the Omega Point based on Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's religious ideas, which he claims is a physical mechanism for the resurrection of the dead.

The Omega Point is a term Tipler uses to describe a cosmological state in the distant proper-time future of the universe. He claims that this point is required to exist due to the laws of physics. It is required for the known laws of physics to be consistent, that intelligent life take over all matter in the universe and eventually force its collapse. During that collapse, the computational capacity of the universe diverges to infinity, and environments emulated with that computational capacity last for an infinite duration as the universe attains a cosmological singularity. This singularity is Tipler's Omega Point. With computational resources diverging to infinity, Tipler states that a society in the far future would be able to resurrect the dead by emulating alternative universes. Tipler identifies the Omega Point with God, since, in his view, the Omega Point has all the properties of God claimed by most traditional religions. Omniscience: absolute knowledge. Omnipotence: absolute power. Omnipresence: absolute presence, present everywhere for all time and without time. Holiness, love, and justice.

Tipler's argument of the Omega Point being required by the laws of physics derives from The Anthropic Cosmological Principle. Tipler, along with co-author physicist John D. Barrow, defined the "final anthropic principle" (FAP) in their 1986 book *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle* as a generalization of the anthropic principle:

"Intelligent information-processing must come into existence in the Universe, and, once it comes into existence, will never die out."

A paraphrase of Tipler's argument for FAP runs: For the universe to physically exist, it needs the laws of physics, the laws of physics as we know them are human constructs therefore human intelligence is a prerequisite for the universe's physical laws.

It never dies out because it achieves the Omega point, see above. So, there must contain living observers. There must be an "Omega Point" that sustains life forever.

Tipler uses a c-boundary (causal boundary). A structure of spacetime, particularly its "edges" or boundaries which has an endless future. Or else alternatively something like Dyson's eternal intelligence hypothesis to back up his arguments.

Freeman John Dyson FRS was a British-American theoretical physicist and mathematician known for his works in quantum field theory, astrophysics, random matrices, mathematical formulation of quantum mechanics, condensed matter physics, nuclear physics, and engineering. He was professor emeritus in the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton.

Dyson's eternal intelligence is a theoretical framework, proposed by Freeman Dyson in his 1979 paper "Time without

end: Physics and biology in an open universe,” through which an intelligent form of life could perform an infinite number of computations, and thus experience an infinite subjective time using only a finite amount of energy. This concept relies on the life form adapting its metabolism and speed of thought to the decreasing temperature of an open, ever-expanding universe. The mathematical precision of the theory is rooted in the principles of thermodynamics, information theory, and the ultimate physical limits of computation.

The core of Dyson’s idea is a strategy of energy conservation. An intelligent civilization would begin by storing a finite amount of energy, they would then live their lives in cycles of activity and hibernation. In each cycle, they expend a fixed fraction, of their remaining energy.

This demonstrates that an infinite number of cycles of activity can be powered by a finite initial energy store. During each period of activity, the beings think a finite number of thoughts, but since there are an infinite number of such periods, their total subjective time, the sum of all their thoughts, is infinite. The long periods of hibernation between active phases allow the beings to radiate away waste heat and wait for the ambient temperature of the universe to drop.

A consequence of performing computations at ever-lower temperatures and with ever-decreasing energy is that the speed of these computations must also decrease dramatically. The subjective experience of the beings might remain constant, but the objective cosmic time elapsed for each thought would lengthen. Effectively though a thought would take longer, for the thinker subjectively it would not. Dyson postulated that a life-form could adapt by slowing down its

metabolic processes, so that its rate of subjective experience scales with the ambient temperature.

To make thoughts possible with ever-decreasing energy the beings must stretch out their computational steps over longer periods of objective time. The computational time periods would therefore grow infinitely long as the temperature drops to approach zero. However, the successive time periods get longer as the temperature gets lower but never to zero, approaching the limit of zero but never reaching it. The limit / end is never reached; this is known as Zenoism.

From Zeno of Elea, a pre-Socratic Greek philosopher. It's possible to half a distance or time period infinitely. These are called super-tasks, The Thomson's lamp like Zeno's Tortoise and the Hare or the Arrow being examples.

The 2155 Interstellar mission of the Endurance spacecraft used Dyson's eternal intelligence hypothesis in powering cryostasis.

There are, apart from scientific objections to Tipler's theory, philosophical and ethical objections. Firstly, not all the future collective intelligence may wish for immortality. This is overcome. It would be the case that only some need to desire immortality and so achieve omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, holiness, love, and justice.

This however raises the question of theodicy. Theodicy, meaning the "vindication of God", the problem of evil, which arises when all power, omnipotence, and all goodness omnibenevolence, are attributed to God simultaneously.

For the problem to arise it must be thought, and for a God with omniscience all thought would be present. All possible

worlds is a thought, both evil and good. A divine thought is perfect; therefore, it is “real”. The idea of all possible worlds of good and bad is therefore sufficient and necessary for a being which has omniscience and omnipotence. And yet holiness, love, and justice would prevent this.

There is one other objection which we will come to, it would not be allowed.

This however does not prevent Type III civilizations.

CHAPTER 35: MORE INHABITANTS OF JANE SMITH.

Jane Smith and Catherine Mulberry had a break, coffee then a stroll around the garden. On returning to the book “Mythologica” found the previous pages had disappeared.

Anubis, also known as Inpu, Inpw, Jnpw, or Anpu is the god of funerary rites, protector of graves, and guide to the underworld is depicted as a canine or a man with a canine head.

Anubis was depicted in black, a colour that symbolized regeneration, life, the soil of the Nile River, and the discoloration of the corpse after embalming. Anubis is associated with Wepwawet, another Egyptian god portrayed with a dog’s head or in canine form, but with grey or white fur.

The parentage of Anubis varies, in some accounts he was a son of Ra. In others Anubis is the son of either the cow goddess Hesat or the cat-headed Bastet.

One of the roles of Anubis was as the Guardian of the Scales. The critical scene depicting the weighing of the heart that determined whether the person was worthy of entering the realm of the dead by weighing the heart of a deceased person against ma’at, who was often represented as an ostrich feather, Anubis dictated the fate of souls. Souls heavier than a feather would be devoured by Ammit, and souls lighter than a feather would ascend to a heavenly existence.

Apophis, also known as Apep is the deity of the underworld who embodied darkness and disorder, and was thus the opponent of light and Maat, order/truth. Ra was the bringer of light and hence the biggest opposer of Apophis.

Known as The Lord of Chaos, was seen as a giant snake or serpent leading to such titles as Serpent from the Nile and Evil Dragon. He stretched 16 yards in length and had a head made of flint. Apophis' movements were thought to cause earthquakes, and his battles with Set may have been used to explain the origin of thunderstorms.

Ha was a god of the Western Desert and the fertile oasis of the Western Desert of Egypt. He was associated with the Duat, the underworld and pictured as a man wearing the hieroglyph symbol for desert hills on his head.

Isis was a major goddess, one of the main characters of the Osiris myth, in which she resurrects her slain brother and husband, the divine king Osiris, and produces and protects his heir, Horus. She was believed to help the dead enter the afterlife as she had helped Osiris, and she was considered the divine mother of the pharaoh, who was likened to Horus. Her maternal aid was invoked in healing spells to benefit ordinary people.

Nun, The Inert One or Nu Watery One is the personification of the primordial watery abyss which existed at the time of creation and from which the creator sun god Ra arose. One of the eight deities of the Ogdoad representing ancient Egyptian primordial Chaos from which the primordial mound arose. Nun can be seen as the first of all the gods and the creator of reality and personification of the cosmos. Nun is also considered the god that will destroy existence and return everything to the Nun whence it came.

Nehebkau is the primordial snake god. Although originally considered an evil spirit, he later functions as a funerary god associated with the afterlife. As one of the forty-two assessors of Ma'at, Nehebkau was believed to judge the deceased after death and provide their souls with ka, the part of the soul that distinguished the living from the dead. Nehebkau was ultimately considered a powerful, benevolent and protective deity. In late mythology, he is described as a companion of the sun god Ra and an attendant of the deceased King. As he is so closely associated with the sun god, his name was evoked in magical spells for protection. His festival was widely celebrated throughout the Middle and New Kingdoms.

Nephthys or Nebet-Het was a goddess, member of the Great Ennead of Heliopolis, she was a daughter of Nut and Geb. Nephthys was typically paired with her sister Isis in funerary rites because of their role as protectors of the mummy, with

her brother Osiris, and as the sister-wife of Set. She is associated with mourning, the night/darkness, childbirth, the dead, protection, magic, health, embalming, and beer.

Osiris is the god of fertility, agriculture, the afterlife, the dead, resurrection, life, and vegetation in ancient Egyptian religion. He was classically depicted as a green-skinned deity with a pharaoh's beard, partially mummy-wrapped at the legs, wearing a distinctive atef crown and holding a symbolic crook and flail. He was one of the first to be associated with the mummy wrap. When his brother Seth cut him to pieces after killing him, with her sister Nephthys, Osiris's sister-wife, Isis, searched Egypt to find each part of Osiris. She collected all but one, Osiris's genitalia. She then wrapped his body up, enabling him to return to life. Osiris was widely worshipped until the decline of ancient Egyptian religion during the rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire.

Ptah is a creator god, and a patron deity of craftsmen and architects. In the triad of Memphis, he is the husband of Sekhmet and the father of Nefertem. He was also regarded as the father of the sage Imhotep.

Sokar is a hawk or falcon god of the Memphite necropolis in the Ancient Egyptian religion, who was known as a patron of the living, as well as a god of the resurrected dead. He is also a solar deity of The Temple of Sokar in Memphis.

Thoth often depicted as a man with the head of an ibis or a baboon, animals sacred to him. His feminine counterpart is Seshat, and his wife is Ma'at. He is the god of the Moon, wisdom, knowledge, writing, hieroglyphs, science, magic, art and judgment.

Wepwawet a jackal deity of funerary rites, war, and royalty. His name means opener of the ways and he is often depicted as a wolf standing at the prow of a solar-boat. Some interpret that Wepwawet was seen as a scout, going out to clear routes for the army to proceed forward.

Hauron, Horon, Haurun or Hawran an ancient Egyptian god worshiped in Giza. He was closely associated with Harmachis, with the names in some cases used interchangeably, and his name as a result could be used as a designation of the Great Sphinx of Giza. Hauron appears as a deity associated with magic and exorcisms.

Vanatühi in Estonian mythology, Old empty one, or alternatively, Vanapagan, Old devil, is a/the devil or god of the underworld, a giant farmer who is more stupid than malevolent.

Vanapagan is the ogre character in Estonian versions of the series of internationally known folktales of the stupid ogre.

He is also the worst enemy of Suur Tõll, a giant known in the folklore of the island Saaremaa. Tõll is decapitated during a battle with Vanatühi's forces. Vanatühi sometimes wears a hat of fingernails that makes him invisible.

Charun in Etruscan mythology acted as one of the psychopompoi of the underworld, a guide of souls to the place of the dead, not to be confused with the god of the underworld, known to the Etruscans as Aita. He is often portrayed with Vanth, a winged figure also associated with the underworld.

Februus is an ancient Italic god of purifications, who was also worshipped as the god of the underworld by the Etruscans

Mania or Manea was a goddess of the dead, spirits and chaos: she was said to be the mother of ghosts, the undead, and other spirits of the night. She, along with Mantus ruled the underworld. Her counterpart in Greek mythology, also named Mania, was the goddess of insanity and madness.

Manth a fire god and god of the underworld, paired with the epithet Mantus, his consort Catha was also called. The epithets of this divine couple indicate that they were connected to the Manes, the chthonic, or underworld, divinities or spirits of the dead.

Their names are also linked to Mana Genita and Manius, as well as the Greek Mania. Both the Greek and Latin Mania are associated with “to think” or “mind”, “thought”.

Nethuns as the god of wells, later expanded to all water, including the sea.

Tuchulcha was a chthonic daemon of the underworld with pointed ears, hair made of snakes, and a beak perhaps that of a vulture and lived in the underworld known as Aita.

Vanth is a female entity in the Etruscan underworld that is often accompanied either by additional Vanth figures or by another underworld entity, Charun.

Vanth is involved in a variety of different types of scenes in Etruscan art; the most common types associate her presence with occasions of slaughter and murder.

In general, Vanth is associated with death and the journey of the deceased to the Underworld, but in a variety of different ways; she is present in scenes of the moment of death as well

in scenes where the deceased is already fully dead and journeying to the Underworld. She is depicted as a benevolent psychopompian figure, in contrast to the menacing Charun, her occasional companion. She may even take an active role in protecting heroic figures from harm. She is shown shielding Odysseus from rocks hurled by Polyphemus.

The materials that Vanth is identified as carrying, which include a torch, key, scroll, or sword, also relate to her role as a guide in the Underworld. The torch can be used to light the way for travellers to the Underworld, and the key unlocks its doorway.

Kivutar, Lady Pain is a goddess in Finnish mythology who is asked to take the pains and injuries of humans to herself. She lives on Kipuvaara, Pain Mountain, and is often called a maiden of the underworld. She is the remover of illnesses and ruler of pain who takes pains back to where they originate from.

Louhi is the ruler of Pohjola, the realm of the dead, in Finnish mythology. She is a goddess of death and disease, also the mother of wolves. Loviatar is impregnated by a great wind and gives birth to nine sons, the Nine diseases.

Lemminkäinen is one of the heroes of the Kalevala, a Finnish epic poem, where his character is a composite of several separate heroes of oral poetry. He is usually depicted as

young and good-looking, with wavy red hair. The original, mythological Lemminkäinen is a shamanistic figure.

Tuonetar is the Queen of the Underworld in Finnish mythology, the wife of Tuoni, with whom she rules over the Underworld Tuonela. Väinämöinen, a hero, arrives in their kingdom. Tuonetar is delighted to offer him a golden goblet of beer, but when he looks closer, he can see it is really a black poison made of frog spawn, young poisonous snakes, lizards, adders, and worms. If a person drinks the brew, known as the beer of oblivion, they forget they ever existed and are unable to return to the land of the living, for only Tuonetar and Tuoni's children were allowed to leave Tuonela.

When Väinämöinen asks Tuonetar to reveal the three magic words he is seeking she refuses and vows that he will never leave Tuonela alive. She then puts him to sleep with her magic wand and has her three-fingered son weave a thousand nets of iron and copper to catch him if he tries to escape down the river of Tuoni. Väinämöinen succeeds in escaping by turning into a serpent and swimming through the nets, and when he returns to Kalevala he warns people to aim wisely lest they end up in Tuonela.

Tuonetar is recognized as the virgin of death and the goddess of the subterranean worlds. She is the mother of Kipu-Tyttö, Kivutar, Vammatar, Kalma, and Loviatar, as well as numerous plagues, diseases, demons, and monsters.

Tuoni the god of Tuonela and darkness personified. He was the husband of Tuonetar. Their children included Kipu-Tyttö,

Tuonenpoika, and Loviatar, who were divinities of suffering. When in human form, he appears as an old man with three fingers on each hand and a hat of darkness.

Cerberus the hound of Hades, is a multi-headed dog that guards the gates of the underworld to prevent the dead from leaving. He was the offspring of the monsters Echidna and Typhon, and was usually described as having three heads, a serpent for a tail, and snakes protruding from his body. Cerberus is primarily known for his capture by Heracles, the last of Heracles' twelve labours.

Charon or Kharon is a psychopomp God, the ferryman of the Greek underworld. He carries the souls of those who have been given funeral rites across the rivers Acheron and Styx, which separate the worlds of the living and the dead.

Hades is the god of the dead and riches and the King of the underworld, with which his name became synonymous. Hades was the eldest son of Cronus and Rhea, although this also made him the last son to be regurgitated by his father. He and his brothers, Zeus and Poseidon, defeated, overthrew, and replaced their father's generation of gods, the Titans, and claimed joint sovereignty over the cosmos. Hades received the underworld, Zeus the sky, and Poseidon the sea, with the solid earth, which was long the domain of Gaia, available to all three concurrently. In artistic depictions, Hades is typically

portrayed holding a bident and wearing his helm with Cerberus, the three-headed guard-dog of the underworld, standing at his side.

Pluto also known as Dis Pater or Orcus, was the god of the dead and the king of the underworld. The name was originally an epithet or theonym for Hades in ancient Greek religion and mythology, although Pluto was more associated with wealth and never used as a synonym for the underworld itself, representing a more positive concept of the god who presides over the afterlife. He was the eldest son of Saturn, Cronus, and Ops, Rhea, as well as the brother of Jupiter, Zeus and Neptune, Poseidon. Pluto later married Proserpina Persephone, and shared many of Hades' attributes, such as the bident, the cap of invisibility, and the three-headed guard dog Cerberus.

The **K**eres are female death-spirits. They are the goddesses who personified violent death and who were drawn to bloody deaths on battlefields. Although they were present during death and dying, they did not have the power to kill. All they could do was wait and then feast on the dead. They were described as dark beings with gnashing teeth and claws and with a thirst for human blood. They would hover over the battlefield and search for dying and wounded men.

Persephone is the daughter of Zeus and Demeter. She became the queen of the underworld after her abduction by her uncle Hades, the king of the underworld, who would later take her into marriage. Her sojourn in the underworld, and her cyclical return to the surface represents her functions as the embodiment of spring and the personification of vegetation, especially grain crops, which disappear into the earth when sown, sprout from the earth in spring, and are harvested when fully grown.

Thanatos, Roman Mors, was the personification of death. He was a minor figure in Greek mythology, often referred to but rarely appearing in person. Thanatos was regarded as merciless and indiscriminate, hated by, and hateful towards, mortals and gods alike.

Eris, literally Strife, is the goddess and personification of strife and discord, particularly in war, and in the Iliad where she is the sister of Ares the god of war. She was the daughter of primordial Nyx Night, and the mother of a long list of undesirable personified abstractions, such as Ponos Toil, Limos Famine, Algea Pains and Ate Delusion. Eris initiated a quarrel between Hera, Athena and Aphrodite, which led to the Judgement of Paris and ultimately the Trojan War. Eris's Roman equivalent is Discordia.

Hermes began as a god with strong chthonic, or underworld, associations. He was a psychopomp, leader of souls along the road between the Under and the Upper world.

Garmr or **Garm** Old Norse, is a wolf or dog associated with both Hel and Ragnarök, and described as a blood-stained guardian of Hel's gate.

Hel in Old Norse is a female being who is said to preside over an underworld realm of the same name, where she receives a portion of the dead.

Hel is referred to as a daughter of Loki, having been appointed by the god Odin as ruler of a realm of the same name, located in Niflheim. Her appearance is described as half blue and half flesh-coloured and further as having a gloomy, downcast appearance.

Rán in Old Norse: is a goddess and personification of the sea. Rán and her husband Ægir, a jötunn who also personifies the sea, and the two together produced nine daughters who personify the waves. The goddess is frequently associated with a net, which she uses to capture sea-goers.

Nidhogg Old Norse: *Níðhǫggr*: is a Germanic dragon in Norse mythology who is said to gnaw at the roots of the world tree, *Yggdrasil*, and is likewise associated with the dead in *Hel* and *Niflheim*.

Tia is the goddess of peaceful death in the Haida mythology. Peoples of the Pacific Northwest. She is considered to be part of a duality. Her counterpart is *Ta'xet*, the Haida God of violent death.

Ta'xet is the Haida god of violent death. He is considered to be one half of a duality; his counterpart is *Tia*, the goddess of peaceful death. The raven stole the Moon from *Ta'xet* during Earth's creation and placed it in the sky to nourish humanity. If humanity was to ever displease the raven by altering the Earth's environment, he will return the Moon to *Ta'xet* and stop protecting humanity from *Ta'xet's* wrath. It is also said that the souls of those who meet a violent death go to *Ta'xet's* house without a warning.

Lelwani or *Leluwani*, was a Hittite deity of the underworld. While originally regarded as male and addressed as a king, due to influence of Hurrian beliefs on the Hittites, *Lelwani* started to be viewed as female in later periods.

Masauwu, Maasaw, Mausauu, Skeleton Man, was the Spirit of Death, Earth God, door keeper to the Fifth World, and the Keeper of Fire. He was also the Master of the Upper World, or the Fourth World, and was there when the good people escaped the wickedness of the Third World for the promise of the Fourth. Masauwu is described as wearing a hideous mask, but again showing the diversity of myths among the Hopi, Native Americans, Masauwu was alternately described as a handsome, bejewelled man beneath his mask or as a bloody, fearsome creature.

Ördög, Ürdüng in Old Hungarian is a shape-shifting, demonic creature who controls the dark and evil forces of the world. Ördög is often thought to look somewhat like a satyr or faun, a humanoid with the upper torso of a human male and lower portions of a goat; usually pitch-black, with cloven hooves, ram-like horns, a long tail ending in a blade; and he carries a pitchfork. He can also be distinguished by his overly large phallus.

Ala also known as Ani, Ana, Ale, and Ali in varying Igbo dialects. Igbo people of southern Nigeria. She is the female Alusi or spirit deity of the earth, morality, fertility, and creativity in Odinani, the religion of the Igbo. Ala rules over the underworld and holds the deceased ancestors in her womb. Her name literally translates to Earth in the Igbo language, denoting her powers over the earth and her status

as the ground itself. Ala is considered the highest Alusi in the Igbo pantheon.

Supaya was originally an ambivalent spirit, both benevolent and harmful, a denizen of the Incan netherworld Hurin Pacha who might enter the world of the living as shadow, perhaps attempting to bring someone as companion into the world of the dead.

Supay is commonly described as having a demonic appearance, with long horns, glassy, starry eyes, a feline face with long fangs, and long ears. Like other Andean gods, Supay is a multiform god, capable of manifesting himself in any form. Adding to this his conflictive and unpredictable personality, Supay is classified as a trickster, as he can both protect humanity on its journey to the afterlife and also has the power to deceive and/or urge humanity to bring out its most twisted side. These characteristics and abilities made him a very dangerous being for those who did not show him respect.

The Incas believed that Supay was the deity who maintained the balance between positive and negative supernatural forces.

Vichama in Inca mythology, is the god of death and the son of Inti. His mother was murdered by his half-brother Pacha Kamaq, and he took revenge by turning the humans who

were created by Pachacamac into rocks and islands.
Afterwards he hatched three eggs from which a new race of humans was born.

Jane stopped her reading,

‘I think I’d like a short walk and some lunch.’ she said.

So, she closed the book, and both putting on 1950s overcoats left the house in Cumberland Street and decided to take a stroll around Elmhurst Park. Lunch was Quiche and salad with mineral water,

‘Then back to the demons!’ said Jane.

CHAPTER 36: INTERMEZZO, THE COLLISION.



The taxonomy of Type III civilizations:

The galaxies which become Type III civilizations tend to be very varied in the forms of matter and energy. A general feature develops similar to the theory of evolution as random adaptations occur. Unlike the theory of dialectical materialism or totalitarianism. Though these often occur in early stages diversity eventually becomes dominant. A single empire galaxy falls into dogma and even if not challenged is itself subject to change. On a simple level dogma is boring, underneath this are the creative forces. There will always be the need for diversity including new problems to avoid stagnation, decay and an end. Contemporary computer games and role-playing games such as Dungeons and Dragons evidence this. There are always “new releases”, new worlds, new characters, otherwise progress becomes retrograde. As

outlined by Mark Fisher, in these cases progress ceases, as does the “future”. Empires come into being and pass out of being. Advanced Type III civilizations are well aware of this danger. However, it occurs that some Advanced Type III civilizations fall into decline and even become effectively extinct.

With a Type III civilization therefore, we find the need for diversity, individuals with differing tasks. Within stable systems one external danger remains, and that is a galactic collision with another galaxy. One such task therefore is “watching”, watching for collisions, but more specific watching for Type III to Type III collisions. A Type III collision with Type II or Type I would be of no consequence, unless the Type III decided it would use the collision as a resource opportunity. In this they are no different to how the Earth’s Type I civilizations operate, exploitation does take place as does preservation.

Watchers are far more concerned with Type III to Type III collisions. And the immediate problem is initial contact and the response of the watchers.

UT3-JALL39JSNALLLOOOOZJZJZNMSBABJSJH779W6 and UT3-JALL39JSNALLLOOOOZJZJZNMSBABJSJH779W7 will be referred to as UT3-6 UT3-7 for short.

When two Type III civilizations collide the event cannot be anticipated as both galaxies are “cloaked”, are invisible. Only once matter and energy begin to mingle can each of the civilizations be aware of what is happening. Obviously, there is a great danger of an inter-galactic war. Any such conflict would consist mainly in a battle of information. If one galaxy

could discover the information of the others whilst protecting its own it could “capture” that civilization.

Think of the analogy of hacking. The successful hacker can take complete control of the hacked system.

To thwart this computer systems implement means to prevent this. In the case of Type III civilizations their systems are encrypted with one time pad security. A one-time pad encryption is impossible to crack.

The one-time pad is an encryption technique that cannot be cracked. It requires the use of a single-use pre-shared key that is larger than or equal to the size of the message being sent. A message is paired with a random secret key, also referred to as a one-time pad. Then, each bit or character of the message is encrypted by combining it with the corresponding bit or character from the pad using addition.

The receiver uses their copy of the one-time pad to subtract the random key from the message, revealing the actual message. As the encrypted message is effectively random any attempt to crack it without the key is impossible, it generates nonsense. And as there is no pattern in the message none can be detected. It has mathematically proven to be unbreakable under the principles of information theory.

If the key is reused it loses its randomness and so patterns can be detected and the encryption can be cracked.

Well before Type III civilizations, civilizations realise this. So, in Type III civilizations all data interchanges within the civilization use a type of one-time pad we will call the “source code”. Thus, in a collision their systems are secure, there civilization cannot be taken control of by another. Those civilizations

which do not implement this would in a collision become compromised, be taken over by the other system. Hence survival of the fittest means most Type III civilizations use a “source code” one time pad.

One other feature most Type III civilizations often require is a safe way of communicating with each other during a collision, for this an independent “broker” is used. We will call this broker, “Challenger”, or Professor Challenger. Whether Professor Challenger is an individual, or a type, company, alien race is not important here.

Such Type III civilizations therefore have watchers.

The two beautiful spirals began to collide, first only outlying stars but the watchers had soon enough data to calculate sizes, model the collision and detect sufficient to know immediately that the collision was between two Type III civilizations.

A Professor Challenger is requested. Or rather Professor Challenger can ‘ping’ Type III civilizations using the time-frames and strange ‘actors’ in order to recognise a collision and be on hand to help.

When UT3-6 and UT3-7 collided, it appeared that an individual or group in UT3-6 sort to exploit a vulnerability. Some agents, likely the watchers, in UT3-6 it seems sort to compromise their own security as part of a power struggle and managed to contact UT3-7 and pass them UT3-6’s “source code”, that is the source code of their system UT3-6. UT3-6 can now be hacked.

Once UT3-6’s commanders became aware of this the obvious suspects would be the watchers. Knowing this, if true, that

they would by all probability be chief suspects for the data breach, the watchers would plan for this. They would implicate another, so in this case before any collision occurred had decided to implicate Professor Challenger. It was a relatively simple task; the source code was planted on the Professor before any collision. At the collision the current source code could be transferred and the guilt of Professor Challenger exposed.

This duly occurred and when the alarm was raised within UT3-6 the watchers were initially suspected. But when Challenger was implicated, they, the powers that be in UT3-6 would demand a search and find the incriminating evidence. However, prior to the collision event Challenger had found the “source code” in his, its, environment and for caution removed it before any collision. He / it moved it to the Victorian church hall. He was almost certain no hostile civilization could gain access to such a place from his previous experiences with the likes of Billy Taylor, a known associate of Catherine Mulberry.

CHAPTER 37: YET MORE INHABITANTS OF JANE SMITH.

Again, Jane Smith and Catherine Mulberry on returning to the book “Mythologica” found the previous pages had disappeared.

Iblis also known as Shaitan, is the leader of the devils shayāṭīn in Islam. According to the Quran, Iblis was thrown out of heaven after refusing to prostrate himself before Adam. In Sufi cosmology, Iblis embodies the cosmic veil supposedly separating the immanent aspect of God’s love from the transcendent aspect of God’s wrath. He is often compared to the Christian concept of Satan, since both figures were cast out of heaven according to their respective religious narratives. In his role as the master of cosmic illusion in Sufism, he functions in ways similar to the Buddhist concept of Mara.

Shayāṭīn refers to a class of evil spirits in Islam, inciting humans and jinn to sin by whispering in their hearts. According to Islamic tradition, though invisible to humans, shayāṭīn are imagined to be ugly and grotesque creatures created from the fires of hell.

Maalik denotes an angel in Hell/Purgatory who guarded the Hellfire and assisted by other angel guards known as Zabaniyah. Maalik is the chief of the angels of hell.

Panna or Pavna, also called the woman up there, in Inuit mythology, was the goddess who cared for souls in the underworld Qudlivun before they were reincarnated. Pana resides in the starry sky and is associated with the Northern Lights.

Sedna Inuktitut is the goddess of the sea and marine animals in Inuit religion, also known as the Mother of the Sea or Mistress of the Sea. The story of Sedna, which is a creation myth, describes how she came to rule over Adlivun, the Inuit equivalent of the underworld

Izanami formally referred to with the honorific Izanami-no-Mikoto meaning She-who-invites or the Female-who-invites, is the creator of both creation and death in Japanese mythology, as well as the Shinto mother goddess. She and her brother-husband Izanagi are the last of the seven generations of primordial deities that manifested after the formation of heaven and earth. Izanami and Izanagi are held to be the creators of the Japanese archipelago and the progenitors of many deities, which include the sun goddess Amaterasu, the moon deity Tsukuyomi and the storm god Susanoo. She is the direct ancestor of the Japanese imperial family.

Yomotsu-shikome, Ugly Woman of the Underworld, is a hag sent by the dead Izanami to pursue her husband Izanagi, for shaming her by breaking the promise not to see her in her decayed form in the Underworld Yomi-no-kuni.

Susanoo is a kami or deity, the younger brother of Amaterasu, goddess of the sun and mythical ancestress of the Japanese imperial line, he is a multifaceted deity with contradictory characteristics both good and bad, being portrayed in various stories either as a wild, impetuous god associated with the sea and storms, as a heroic figure who killed a monstrous serpent, or as a local deity linked with the harvest and agriculture. Syncretic beliefs of the Gion cult that arose after the introduction of Buddhism to Japan also saw Susanoo becoming conflated with deities of pestilence and disease.

Dumah, or silence is an angel mentioned in Rabbinic and Islamic literature as an angel who has authority over the wicked dead, a thousand-eyed angel of death armed with a fiery rod or flaming sword. The Zohar speaks of him as having tens of thousands of angels of destruction under him and as being Chief of demons in Gehinnom, Hell with 12,000 myriads of attendants, all charged with the punishment of the souls of sinners and three angels of destruction are appointed to him. He and his fellow angels torment the sinners every day of the week except on Shabbat.

Arsay, a goddess and daughter of the weather god Baal, worshiped in the city of Ugarit. She was associated with the underworld or with groundwater.

Rūha also known as Namrūs or Hiwat Ewath the queen of the World of Darkness alma ḡ-hšuka or underworld. She rules the underworld together with her son Ur, the king of the World of Darkness, and her entourage of the seven planets and twelve constellations, who are also her offspring with Ur. Ruha is the daughter of Qin, the Mistress of Darkness in the first underworld. She is the ruler of the third maṭarta watch-house or purgatory. She is associated with lust, uncleanness, menstrual impurity, and other negative feminine qualities.

Ur is the king of the World of Darkness alma ḡ-hšuka or underworld. He is the son of Ruha, the queen of the underworld, and her brother Gaf also spelled Gap, one of the giants in the World of Darkness. Ur is typically portrayed as a large, ferocious dragon or snake.

Krun is the greatest of the five Mandaean lords of the underworld, the others being Shdum, Hag, Gaf, and Zartai-Zartanai.

Gaf or Gap is the male consort of Ruha, the queen of the World of Darkness alma d-hšuka or underworld. His son is Ur, king malka of the World of Darkness

Qin is the mother of Ruha and Zahreil, and grandmother of Ur in the World of Darkness alma d-hšuka or underworld. She is frequently mentioned as the queen of darkness. One of her epithets is Sumqaq which refers to a well of polluted water in the World of Darkness. Her husband is the demon Anathan.

Zahreil or Zahr is the daughter of Qin, sister of Ruha, and mother of Ptahil Hibil. Ziwa's descent to the World of Darkness alma d-hšuka or underworld, Hibil Ziwa marries Zahreil, who then gives birth to the creator of the material universe, Ptahil.

Zahreil is a lilith from the World of Darkness who dwells in the beds of pregnant women serving to ensure the wellbeing of the child before and after its birth.

Lilith derives from Mesopotamian demonology, a feminine figure also in Jewish mythology. According to the Talmud she is a primordial she-demon. Lilith is cited as having been banished from the Garden of Eden for disobeying Adam.

In some Jewish folklore, Lilith appears as Adam's first wife, who was created at the same time and from the same clay as Adam.

Anathan or Anatan is a demon in the World of Darkness. He is the husband of Qin, a demoness who is the mother of Ruha and Zahreil. Hibil Ziwa encounters Anathan during his descent to the World of Darkness, Anathan is described as the warrior of darkness qarabtana ḡ-hšuka and also as a warlike giant. Together with Qin, the couple is described as the giants of darkness gabaria ḡ-hšuka.

Shdum Šdum is a demon in the World of Darkness he is described as the King of Darkness and also as the Grandson of Darkness.

Giu, and Zartai-Zartanai are also demons in the World of Darkness as are Hag and Mag. Hag is a male demon, while Mag is a female demon.

Havea Hikule’o is the goddess of the world, Puluotu. The islands of Kao, Tofua, Hunga Ha’apai, Hunga Tonga, Late and Fonualei came from stones thrown down from the skies by Hikule’o. They are all volcanic islands. The other, coral islands were fished up by her brother or cousin Maui.

Hina relates to a powerful female force typically a goddess or queen who has dominion over a specific entity.

Kanaloa is a god symbolized by the squid or by the octopus and is the god of the Underworld and a teacher of magic. He became the leader of the first group of spirits spat out by the gods. In time, he led them in a rebellion in which the spirits were defeated by the gods and as punishment were thrown into the Underworld

Makeatutara is the father of Māui. His wife is Taranga. He is a deity and guardian of the underworld. Makeatutara made mistakes as he recited the dedicatory or baptismal incantations over Māui, which made it inevitable that Māui would die. As a result, humankind is mortal.

Milu is the god of the dead and ruler of Lua-o-Milu. Under his command, are a host of beings known as spirit catchers who would trap wandering ghosts and bring them to his afterlife domain.

Miru is a goddess known to feast on the souls of dead people. One way she eats the souls is by putting them into a bowl of live centipedes, causing them to writhe in agony. Miru then encourages them to seek relief by diving into a lake, where they drown. They then can be cooked and eaten at her leisure.

Hine-nui-te-pō the great woman of the night in Māori legends, a goddess of night who receives the spirits of humans when they die. She is the daughter of Tāne Mahuta / Tāne Tuturi and Hine-ahuone. Hine-nui-te-pō shepherds the wairua/souls into the first level of Rarohenga to ready them for the next stage of their journey.

Mahuika is a Māori fire deity and consort of the god Auahitūroa, she is the younger sister of Hine-nui-te-pō, goddess of death. It was from her that Māui her grandson obtained the secret of making fire from her fingernails.

She married Auahitūroa and together they had five children, named for the five fingers on the human hand, called collectively Ngā Mānawa.

Rohe is married to the demi-god Māui. Beautiful Rohe was a sister of the sun, and her face shone. A quarrel arose after Rohe remarked that Māui's face was ugly. Māui then decided that they should change faces. Afterwards Māui used magic to kill Rohe, but her spirit returned and destroyed Māui. Thus, were black magic and death introduced into the world. After her death, Rohe ruled as the goddess of the pō spirit world, where she gathered in the spirits of the dead.

Whiro-te-tipua, or Whiro is the lord of darkness and embodiment of all evil in Māori mythology. Depicted as a lizard-like creature, he inhabits the underworld and is responsible for the ills of all people.

According to some tribes, when people die, their bodies descend into the underworld, where they are eaten by Whiro. Each time Whiro eats a body, he becomes stronger. This process will eventually make him sufficiently powerful to break free of the underworld, at which point he will come to the surface and devour everything and everyone on it. Cremation is therefore recommended to prevent this, because Whiro cannot gain strength from ashes.

Taiwhetuki - Whiro's House of Death is a deep and dark cave where all things evil are preserved, such as black magic. It is a place in which countless personifications of illnesses and diseases dwell.

Cizin is a Maya god of death and earthquakes. He is the most important Maya death god in the Maya culture.

Chepi is a ghost in the mythology of the Narragansett tribe and is a spirit of the dead who shared knowledge with medicine people in dreams or visions. Chepi could be called upon by the pawwaw or medicine person, to destroy an enemy as an avenging entity.

Asdzǎ́ Nádleehé is one of the creation spirits of the Navajo. She created the Navajo people by taking old skin from her body and using her mountain soil bundle, a bag made of four pieces of buckskin, brought by her father from the underworld to create four couples, who are the ancestors of the four original Navajo clans. She helped create the sky and the earth. She is the mother of twins Monster Slayer and Born for Water, fathered by the sun.

Heini-iki, also referred to as Kul-iki, in Ob-Ugrian mythology, is the god of the Underworld and of the spirits of sickness. He can appear in the shape of a dog or cat, or sometimes as a fog that hides a person from their guardian spirit.

The **K**hanties of the Surgut area described him as black in colour. Animal sacrifices to him were also to be black in colour to prevent illness among the people. His name was not to be spoken, especially in the presence of a sick or dying person.

Angra Mainyu is the destructive & evil spirit and the main adversary in Zoroastrianism either of the Spenta Mainyu, the holy/creative spirits/mentality, or directly of Ahura Mazda, the highest deity of Zoroastrianism. Zahāk is a personification of evil in Iranian mythology and culture.

The Avestan term Aži Dahāka and the Middle Persian aždahāg are the source of the Middle Persian Manichaean demon of greed Až, old Armenian mythological figure Aždahak, which usually means dragon. The name also migrated to Eastern Europe, assumed the form of aždaja and the meaning dragon, dragoness or water snake in Balkanic and Slavic languages.

Mēn was a lunar god usually shown with the horns of a crescent emerging from behind his shoulders, and he is described as the god presiding over the lunar months.

Iyatiku is the corn goddess of the Keresan Pueblos. From Shipap, her underground realm, humanity first emerged, from there infants today are born and hither go the dead. To provide food for them, she plants bits of her heart in fields to the north, west, south, and east. Later the pieces of Iyatiku's heart grow into fields of corn. The Cochiti Pueblos regard Mesewi as the hero who had led the ancestors of the tribe out of Shipap. She is associated with compassion, agriculture, and children. Her symbols are Beans, Cavern, Corn, Seeds and Soil. She has no Totem Animal.

Idea Tacita the silent goddess also known as Dea Muta or Muta Tacita, was a goddess of the dead. Silent because Dea Tacita had her tongue ripped off by Jupiter who was angry

with her because she told the nymph Juturna to flee from him because he planned to rape her.

Dis Pater, the Rich Patriarch, otherwise known as Rex Infernus or Pluto, is a Roman god of the underworld. Dis was originally associated with fertile agricultural land and mineral wealth, and since those minerals came from underground, he was later equated with the chthonic deities Pluto Hades and Orcus.

Dis Pater's name was commonly shortened to Dis, and this name has since become an alternative name for the underworld or a part of the underworld, such as the City of Dis of Dante's "The Divine Comedy", which comprises Lower Hell.

Acestes or Egestes was the son of the Sicilian river-god Criniscus by a Dardanian or Trojan woman named Egesta or Segesta. This woman was sent by her father, Hippotes to Sicily, that she might not be devoured by the monsters which infested the territory of Troy.

When Egesta arrived in Sicily, the river-god Criniscus in the form of a bear or a dog sired with her a son named Acestes, who was afterwards regarded as the hero who had founded the town of Segesta.

Fames is the personification of hunger, who can arouse an insatiable appetite. She was often said to be one of the several evils who inhabit the entrance to the Underworld.

Libitina, also Libentina or Lubentina, is an ancient Roman goddess of funerals and burial.

Libera was the female equivalent of Liber Pater, protector of plebeian rights, the god of wine, male fertility and liberty, equivalent to the Greek Dionysus.

Jábmiidáhkká also Jabme-akka is the female ruler of the underworld Jábmiidaibmu in Sámi shamanism. Jábmiidaibmu wasn't a bad place but the dead missed their relatives, so Jábmiidáhkká sometimes allowed them to cause diseases on the living. If the dead managed to catch the soul of a living person and drag it down to Jábmiidaibmu, the person would fall into a coma or a fatal illness. Jábmiidáhkká could allow the soul to return if sufficient offerings were made. Black animals were sacrificed to her by burying them alive, especially cats and roosters, the latter which were buried under a pile of stones.

Veles, also known as Volos, is a major god of earth, waters, livestock, and the underworld in Slavic paganism. His

mythology and powers are similar, though not identical, to those of among other deities Hades, Loki, and Hermes.

Resheph was a god associated with war and plague. He was associated with the goddess Adamma, who was his spouse. An omen text describes him as the doorkeeper of the sun goddess, Shapash.

Ọya is one of the principal female deities of the Yoruba pantheon. She is the orisha of winds, lightning, and storms, and is the only orisha capable of controlling the Eggun spirits of the dead, a power given to her by Babalú Ayé. She was believed to have the power to shape-shift into a buffalo, as such, the buffalo serves as a major symbol of Ọya, and it is forbidden for her priests to kill one. She is known as Ọya Ìyáńsàń-án, the mother of nine, because of the nine children she gave birth to with her third husband Oko, after suffering from a lifetime of barrenness.

Nga was the god of death, as well as one of two demiurges, or supreme gods. The world threatened to collapse on itself, to try to halt this cataclysm a shaman sought the advice of the other demiurge, Num. The shaman was advised to travel below the earth, to Nga's domain and call upon him. The shaman did as told and was wed with Nga's daughter. After that point he began to support the world in his hand and became known as The Old Man of the Earth.

The **E**dimmu are the ghosts of those who were not buried properly. Considered vengeful toward the living and might possess people if they did not respect certain taboos, such as the prohibition against eating ox meat. They caused disease and inspire criminal behaviour in the living, but could sometimes be appeased by funeral repasts or libations. The Edimmu were completely or nearly incorporeal, wind spirits that sucked the life out of the susceptible and the sleeping most commonly the young.

Lugaldukuga lord of the holy mound was a Mesopotamian god a no longer active inhabitant of the underworld.

Enmesarra Lord of all mes was a Mesopotamian god associated with the underworld. He was regarded as a member of an old generation of deities, and as such was commonly described as a ghost or resident of the underworld.

Enlil and his wife, Ninlil was in charge of the determination of fates. A late hymn states that Ninlil was the ruler of both earth and heaven, and that Enlil made no decision without her. Kings from the Third Dynasty of Ur considered both of them to be the source of earthly royal authority. Nergal was entrusted with the underworld.

Bitu's primary function is that of a gatekeeper. He could also be addressed as the great gatekeeper who could compel demons and ghosts to return to the underworld.

'That's the last one of these pages, but you said infinite, well I guess this will do, and now I feel like another walk before supper.' Jane said closing the book. This time they walked up Church Street and strolled around St Mary's church yard, on the way back they cut down Turn Lane and sat in the peace of the Quaker cemetery for a good 20 minutes.

They were sitting in the drawing room enjoying a sherry before supper.

'Well, if you are now ruler of all Hells, you must be the Devil.' said Jane Smith,

'If so, you are Queen of the daemons, you must be Satan.' replied Catherine Mulberry.

They both took a sip of sherry when a knock came at the door, both now knew who and Catherine Mulberry why.

CHAPTER 37: INTERMEZZO, THE BODY IN THE LIBRARY.

Catherine Mulberry opened the front door of the house on Cumberland Street, facing her was Professor John Challenger and two other gentlemen, all dressed in 1950s men's suits, Challenger wearing an open raincoat and trilby hat, the other two hats but carrying their raincoats. The all wore waistcoats white shirts and ties, Challenger's a bright green and red stripe, the others a deep navy blue. Behind her stood Jane Smith. There was a long silence. The two other gentlemen's clothes looked a tad odd, too clean, too smart for that kind of material.

Catherine Mulberry eventually spoke after looking the two strangers up and down.

'I suspect this is to do with some material in that Victorian Hall we visited for your lectures, you may enter the house and we will visit it. However not you two gentlemen, if you turn right and into the playing fields you will see a door in the fence which will take you into the garden. There you find the hall, you may go in, but I would not advise going anywhere else.'

'Follow me.' she said to Professor Challenger and led him into the drawing room. She offered him a seat, he looked worried.

'Don't worry we will arrive before your friends.' she said adding, 'I know they are not your friends, Jane give the Professor a sherry.'

This Jane did, then sitting next to Catherine Mulberry who gave the professor a look.

He began awkwardly,

‘I became into possession of some sensitive material, though I couldn’t translate it, translation is one of my other interests. I needed somewhere that I could guarantee its safety in the event I needed it. The hall in your garden is I think,’

He was searching for the right word,

‘invulnerable?’

‘Quite so,’ said Catherine Mulberry, ‘I had some help with this.’

Jane looked quizzical, Catherine Mulberry whispered, ‘The boy.’ then in a louder voice, ‘I’m not happy with you doing this in secret, and yet firstly if you had asked your anticipated rejection was correct. However, your help with your explanations was and always is welcome. So now please explain, and who are these men?’

The Professor related the story of the two colliding galaxies, explaining the three types of civilizations. That these were Type III and hidden, that collision between them was potentially dangerous, that the material he had placed in the Victorian hall could be used by one galaxy at the expense of the other, or even worse a physical pre-emptive response could occur. An inter-galactic war. It seemed the material he had been given incriminated him, that the galaxy, UT3-6 was under threat and that he, the professor was the main suspect, he did not know how, these people were highly advanced. He then went off topic explaining it was unlikely they were people, he dealt with avatars, like the two who had accompanied him here. Most likely they existed a sub-atomic field of high energies. Catherine Mulberry gave him a look and

he returned to the subject. To the effect apart from his own welfare an inter-galactic war was something to be avoided. Catherine Mulberry agreed and said,

‘Finish your sherry and we will go to the hall and await the two others, Jane, could you row please.’

Jane nodded a yes and led the other two through the house and into the garden. There with Catherine Mulberry and Professor John Challenger sitting side by side on the stern seat, she set the skiff off and rowed them around the lake, sure enough there was the Victorian church hall. They entered, now in the centre was a large, polished mahogany table with five chairs placed around it.

‘Professor, if you could retrieve the said material and we will sit.’

The professor went to a cabinet, opened it and return with a small silver box. He placed it on the table, all three were now sitting waiting.

The two avatars then entered the room, and Catherine Mulberry gestured them to sit, which they did.

Professor Challenger began to speak but was interrupted by one of the avatars,

‘We represent what Professor John Challenger calls UT3-6 which he designates as a Type III civilization, these of course are translations for your understanding only as are these two forms.’ The avatar gestured to himself and his colleague. As he did this the colleague whispered into the avatar’s ear, who then continued,

‘Before I continue it seems we are unable to communicate with our home galaxy or even with each other, yet we made provision to do so?’

‘Quite so,’ said Catherine Mulberry, and smiled.

The avatar waited, but when no response came continued,

‘We believe the Professor was responsible for removing that device which contains what we will call for your benefit only “source code”, and its use by others could be detrimental to our civilization.’

At this point Catherine Mulberry interrupted,

‘It’s “The Body in the Library”, of course Professor Challenger did not remove it, it has been in his possession for sometime prior to the collision, it was placed in his environment to incriminate him, and you should not look therefore in the first instance at Professor Challenger’s actions, realising his difficulty he removed the device to here, without I may say my permission.’

She slid the box across the table,

‘You should now return and check that this device is not the stolen source code. And when you retrieve the real stolen source code you will see this too is not genuine.’

Jane was smiling, the other three looked grim. Then the two avatars rose,

‘You accompany us.’ said one to the professor.

All three left, and as they were leaving Catherine Mulberry spoke,

‘Don’t worry Professor, you will return and the mystery will be solved, I think Agatha Christie has the solution to the Body in the Library with a hint of the ABC murders.’

They were gone.

Now Jane spoke to Catherine Mulberry,

‘Please do not explain, this is exciting, reading through all those daemons became a tad boring and anyway I’m starving, roast Chicken and vegetables, apple pie and custard, back to the skiff and a fine supper.’

‘You forgot to mention the wine.’ said Catherine Mulberry with a smile.

It was another fine meal, and another fine evening so afterwards they sat in the garden for a time and watched the stars.

‘Tell me about the Agatha Christie story of the body in the library?’ asked Jane.

‘Well in the story a young man finds the dead body of a young girl in his living room. He is drunk so places it in the library of a retired Colonel who he thinks pompous. Thus, this young man becomes the chief suspect, like Professor Challenger. But the girl is not the girl who is identified but another to give the murderer an alibi. The intended victim is found dead and horribly burnt so can’t be identified. I suspect there is a twist in this case like that in the ABC murders where a random event hides an actual purposeful murder.’

‘Of course,’ said Jane, ‘John Malkovich as Hercule Poirot in the ABC Murders, the BBC series and like the Jack Reacher movie. So will the professor and the two avatars return?’

‘Tomorrow morning for sure.’ was Catherine Mulberry’s reply.

‘And colliding galaxies, I read about those, and the Omega point.’

‘Omega point?’ asked Catherine Mulberry.

‘Oh, I was talking about it way back once when we were in the garden, but you had left, I think to try the Ouija board. I said I was into science.’

‘And Omega point? Can you explain please.’

‘It’s a theoretical idea in which the universe is manipulated in such a way as when it ends in a singularity it is fashioned into an infinite computer which becomes timeless. The idea is that of some Professor Tipler, this future computer has infinite power, and knowledge, so can create virtual realities and resurrects everyone, in fact makes all possible worlds.’

‘If it has infinite power and is God-like, creation of things would just be by thinking, for the thoughts of a God are perfect they must then exist. All possible worlds, both good and evil, and exist as long as it does.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘That sounds not good if these worlds last forever.’ Jane said.

‘It’s not good.’ was the reply.

CHAPTER 38: THE FIRST DÉNOUEMENT.

They were just finishing their second coffee at breakfast the following day when there was a knock at the door.

‘That will be them, if you row, we will take all three around the island to the hall.’ said Catherine Mulberry, standing and leaving the kitchen.

Jane heard Catherine Mulberry’s greeting and then saying ‘... please follow me.’ Seeing Jane in the hallway adding, ‘Jane you lead the way I’ll follow with the Professor.’

Jane led the way, the two avatars following, as they entered the garden Jane looked around to see Catherine Mullberry and Professor Challenger emerging from the red door in the hallway.

‘Odd?’ she thought, and then no more of it.

The two avatars sat in the bow, Jane rowed and Catherine Mulberry and Professor Challenger sat on the seat in the stern. Entering the hall, they took their places around the fine mahogany table.

An avatar spoke, the one that did most of the talking. ‘We have found another box containing the source code, and another we have obtained from the other galaxy involved in the collision. It seems the Professor’s story is probably true. We think the box in the other galaxy was sent from a watcher in our own, and now have it back, we have two suspects, but why the third box found in our galaxy, we fail to understand why.’

‘So, you have two suspect watchers?’ asked Catherine Mulberry.

‘Yes.’ replied the avatar.

‘They claim innocence.’

‘Yes.’ replied the avatar.

‘Who found the third box in your universe?’ asked Catherine Mulberry.

There was some confusion between the two avatars.

‘Go outside to talk in private, it’s important I know who, I do not need to know anything about the other galaxy or how you retrieved it.’

If an avatar could look puzzled both did, they left and after ten minutes returned, now the other avatar spoke, it seems he was superior to the first speaker who had so far done all the talking.

‘It was I who found the third box.’

‘And your position in the galaxy, say in the hierarchy of the Earth?’ asked Catherine Mulberry.

‘Vice president. You see how important this is.’

‘And you are?’

Asked Catherine Mulberry of the other avatar.

There was a pause then, ‘Something like head of intelligence, the police or the military.’ was the reply.

Catherine Mulberry gave a long ‘Mmmmm, very interesting.’ At which no one paid much attention except an almost undetectable frown on this avatar’s face. Then she said, ‘I see, can you all return here this afternoon, use the gate from the playing field, bring the two watchers and yourselves and perhaps two or three security people. You can leave now, by the gate, but not the Professor, he will stay with us. No objections.’

There was a silence, then the two avatars left.

‘How do you know who and how the second box was sent and retrieved, and why does the professor have to stay.’ asked Jane.

‘The box was never sent to the other galaxy, so was never returned, and the professor I imagine would like to stay alive.’

The professor gave a worried smile; Jane was grinning with excitement.

‘It’s going to be like the final scene in an Agatha Christie thriller where all the suspects are gathered together and then Poirot exposes the villain.’ Jane was saying.

‘Only here it will not be Poirot or Miss Marple but me, Catherine Mulberry.’ said Catherine Mulberry, adding, ‘Now a walk along the Deben and a light lunch.’

After lunch the three took the skiff to the hall, they sat at the table and not long after the two avatars entered, both Jane and Catherine Mulberry could now distinguish the two, they were accompanied by who they suspected was the two watchers, all sat at chairs around the table. The watchers

looked worried. Three others, obviously “security” entered the room, they did not sit.

Purely for the drama Catherine Mulberry rose and slowly walked around the room. She began,

‘First the watchers, they seem prime suspects except the box containing the source codes planted on Professor Challenger was done before the collision, and by someone of high rank. Then there is the other box containing the source codes that was sent to the other universe and retrieved. By whom?’

‘I Myself.’ said the Vice President. The Head of Intelligence nodded agreement.

‘And who discovered the box from your own universe?’

‘I Myself.’ said the Vice President. The Head of Intelligence again nodded agreement.

‘So, it could not have involved the watchers or Professor Challenger.’ continued Catherine Mulberry, ‘And,’ she said addressing the Head of Intelligence, ‘as I asked you to, you checked all three, the first two proved to be fakes, did they not?’

The Head of Intelligence nodded a “yes”.

‘The last one the real thing.’

Another nod of “Yes”.

At this point a confused Professor Challenger spoke out,

‘I don’t understand how anyone could contact the other universe and arrange to send the code box, and for that matter retrieve it.’

‘They didn’t, I suspect you made contact with the other galaxy as I asked, and they proved no contact was made, no box delivered and no box returned. And no evidence that they knew anything of any of this.’

Catherine Mulberry was addressing The Head of Intelligence who yet again nodded a “yes”.

Then said addressing Catherine Mulberry, ‘I did as you asked.’

‘How did you ask.’ This was now a worried looking Vice President.

‘You may not have noticed at the end of the mornings meeting, I hesitated in replying, sounded like “Mmmmm,”’

‘Yes’ said Jane, ‘you did, very unlike you.’

‘Well to me it was a clear instruction to check and make contact with the other galaxy, as was the instruction to examine carefully the boxes and keep the result secret.’ said The Head of Intelligence.

‘And the first two were fakes, the last box was for real, and so now I’ve worked this out but you Ms Mulberry should have that honour.’

‘Thank you,’ she said, ‘very gracious. One would need to be in a senior position to arrange for a box containing fake code to be made, maybe part of a training exercise?’

At this yet again The Head of Intelligence nodded a “yes”.

‘And a means of delivering it to Professor Challenger, maybe arrange somehow an enquiry about translation in the event of a collision.’

‘Why yes.’ said Professor Challenger.

And before he could continue Catherine Mulberry spoke, looking at the Vice President,

‘So, you arranged to make a box, or boxes, two fakes, one you planted on the professor, the other you kept, then made the story of it being sent by a watcher, and somehow that you managed to retrieve it. And the third, a genuine box you would use in any collision to fabricate a data leak. Why, well to discredit The President, and thus become The President yourself.

The plan went wrong, now your only hope was to make it appear that all three boxes were fake...’

‘Now I see it, like in the ABC murders, four seeming random murders to disguise one purposeful one.’ Jane interrupted.

‘Quite so?’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘And I doubt without being told to examine the boxes carefully we would have assumed all three were fake, thus no motive behind them. None could cause a data breach, but the genuine one obviously could, and so your plan to usurp the Leader.’ The Head of Intelligence couldn’t help completing the picture.

The security guards escorted the Vice President, the two watchers were now at ease, The Head of Intelligence thanked Catherine Mulberry again and they all left.

The next to speak was Professor Challenger,

‘I must look into the work of Agatha Christie, and thank you again for your help, if there is anything I can do in future.’

‘Actually, there is,’ said Catherine Mulberry, ‘we, that is Jane and myself need to get to the end of time, could you help?’

There was a pause, the Professor scratched his head,
‘Impossible, theoretically possible, but practically not, you would need infinite mass and energy and cease to exist. And why anyway would you want to go to the end of time.’

Jane looked at Catherine Mulberry and she looked back smiling.

‘Say we meet next week, for the time being I think we all need a break.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘I’ve worked it out.’ said Jane.

‘Do tell.’ was the reply.

‘I suspect you took the Professor into The Hall of the Mountain King.’

‘Yes, quite right.’

‘I imagine you asked him how you could communicate with just one of the avatars, the security guy.’

‘And.’ said Catherine Mulberry,

‘He said something to the effect that he spoke a dialect the other did not know. And he taught you enough to speak it.’

‘In a few seconds?’ questioned Catherine Mulberry.

‘Time is different in the Hall.’ said Jane, ‘So Mmmmm was your questions.’

‘Well, you got the inflection wrong, but the idea absolutely correct.’ replied Catherine Mulberry.

CHAPTER 39: THE LAST POSSIBLE DÉNOUEMENT.

The following week Catherine Mulberry, Jane Smith and Professor John Challenger were sat around the large mahogany table in the Victorian church hall on the other side of the island in the garden in Cumberland Street.

‘Time is a very complex notion...’ began the Professor, ‘there are any number of theories, and as we saw there is one in which, to keep things simple, there is an infinity of “nows”. There are theories such as the Block Universe where time is another physical dimension, Julian Barbour’s timeless physics and of course Einstein’s “Space Time” where time is relative. All difficult ideas, and then there is of course the philosophies of time. But your question is I think much more simple, if we think of the drawings I made of the rectangles of time each being a “now” then the end of time would be an empty rectangle.’

‘All we have to do then is go to a location, one of the special worlds created by an individual, and from there move to an empty time frame.’ This was Jane, she paused, thinking.

‘But of course we are already in such a world, one created by Catherine Mulberry of Woodbridge in the 1950s.’

The Professor raised his eyebrows, Jane continued,

‘But how do we find an empty time frame?’

‘We jump into nothing.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘As I said last week, Impossible, theoretically possible, but practically no, you would need infinite mass and energy, and

you would if successful cease to exist. And why anyway would you want to go to the end of time.'

'Why would we go to the end of time, to stop the Omega point and the creation of all possible worlds.' replied Catherine Mulberry.

'The Omega point?'

Jane explained the Omega point to the Professor.

'A theoretical idea in which the universe is manipulated in such a way as it ends in a "Big Crunch" but one where the singularity is fashioned into an infinite computer which becomes timeless, or rather has infinite time. Using a c-boundary, time like curves that extend infinitely into the future without terminating. Or maybe another method of using the physicist Freeman Dyson's eternal intelligence.'

'Where did you get all this from?' asked the Professor.

'She claims to have read it in a magazine, but I suspect the detail might have come from elsewhere.' said Catherine Mulberry.

'And what is the problem?' asked the Professor.

'An Omega point would have omniscience, all knowledge, be omnipotent, have all power, be omnipresent, be everywhere. If the Omega point is omnipresent then we wouldn't be here, nothing would apart from it. The Omega point would be everywhere for all eternity. If we ignore that, the Omega point would materialise by having the notion, all possible worlds, good and bad which would exist for all time.'

'Those are very big problems.' said the Professor.

‘None bigger.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘OK, so we leap into the void.’ said Jane.

They found themselves in a field in high summer, somewhere that looked like the rural Midlands of England but was not. Bordered on one side by a stream where two people were fishing. A typical English country scene in high summer, a blue sky with a few white clouds, hedgerows with hawthorn, rosebay willowherb, wild garlic and butterbur and tall oak and ash trees. Emily Clarke was sitting in the corner of a field sketching whilst nearby Catherine Mulberry was writing a poem.

This Catherine Mulberry looked up, the other spoke.

‘I guessed as much, you are my doppelgänger and have become a God, and these also.’

The other Catherine Mulberry replied, ‘Well actually you are my doppelgänger, look you need a real imagination to become a God, but you slogged away and so became the supreme Devil, which of course is needed for equilibrium. And these others are Gods too, and two more across the road. I suspect your friend will help to keep the equilibrium. Please sit we need to solve a small problem.’

Catherine Mulberry and Jane sat.

‘Less confusing if I did the talking from our perspective.’

‘Agreed.’ said both Catherine Mulberrys.

‘What of the big problem of the Omega point?’ asked Jane.

‘Obvious,’ said Catherine Mulberry, ‘we as a collective have those attributes, so denying the Omega point the absolute.’

‘What then is the small problem?’

‘Perfect balance, and immortality, a looped time or an end. Death, or eternal life.’

There was silence, a slight breeze.

‘Well, the problem of the Omega point is solved, that other one I think is solved by indeterminacy, but how we achieve this I’m not sure.’

With which they returned to the church hall and Professor Challenger.

‘So, you are going to leap into the void.’ said the Professor.

‘We just have.’ said Jane, Catherine Mulberry continued, ‘I guess leaping into and out of nothing would not be detectable, but we have, there is no Omega point and can’t be. But a problem or problems, perfect balance, and immortality, a looped time or an end. Death, or eternal life.’

‘Tricky,’ said the Professor, ‘but I expect you two will solve it, quite the detectives in the case of the missing source code,’ he laughed, ‘quite the transcendental detective agency. And so, I’ll bid you adieu.’

With which he left, leaving a bemused Catherine Mulberry and Jane Smith.

‘You better row me back home.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

CHAPTER 40: THE TRANSCENDENTAL DETECTIVE AGENCY.

The next morning Catherine Mulberry was having her usual scrambled eggs and smoked salmon, Jane Smith hers of home-made granola, rolled oats, pumpkin, sunflower, sesame and linseeds, pecans, almonds, desiccated coconut and dried cranberries mixed with maple syrup and sunflower oil.

They were in conversation discussing the previous few days.

‘What should we do now?’ asked Jane.

‘You mean should we stay here, or go back to the supposedly real world, might we get bored here?’

‘Yes perhaps, and the need to find indeterminacy, how on earth do we find that?’

‘Yes,’ said Catherine Mulberry, laughing, ‘it’s very much an automatic contradiction.’

She poured a second cup of coffee,

‘Did you hear that noise in the night?’ Jane asked.

‘No what noise?’

‘Sounded like someone was at the front of the house.’ said Jane.

‘Well, my bedroom is at the back of the house so no I did not.’

said Catherine Mulberry, continuing, ‘So you think we might be bored here so I suppose...’

She was interrupted by the sound of a bell.

‘The doorbell.’ said Jane.

‘But I don’t have a door bell, never have.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

It rang again, the two left the kitchen, in the hallway Catherine Mulberry was looking up at a bell, frowning, it rang again.

‘Better answer the door then.’ said Jane and did so.

There was no one there, ‘Someone’s playing a trick.’ she said stepping out of the house, Catherine Mulberry now in the doorway.

‘Who? There is no one here save ourselves.’

Jane turned to answer but paused,

‘Look at that, who put that there, oh! The noise in the night, that explains it.’

She was staring not at the bell-push, that wasn’t there before last night, but the shiny brass plate above it etched in capitals,

“THE TRANSCENDENTAL DETECTIVE AGENCY”

With underneath in smaller letters, “Please ring for service.”

Catherine Mulberry was standing looking at it too.

Now both were looking up and down the street to see who it was that rang the doorbell.

‘There!’ Jane was pointing to a small man who was running away. The two watched as he disappeared down Cumberland Street in the direction taking him out of the town. He was very small and wearing a top hat.

The rest of the day was uneventful, they walked and talked, did some reading. Jane rowed Catherine Mulberry around the lake, again uneventful. They ate a light lunch and a good supper.

It was the next morning as they were finishing breakfast that the doorbell rang again. This time Jane was quick to open the door, and this time to see the strange figure a few yards away running for all its worth. She tried to chase it, but it was far too fast, so Jane returned back to the house, out of breath to a bemused Catherine Mulberry.

‘Tomorrow I’ll wait by the door.’ she said. The day again passed without incident but the two had a sense of nervous anticipation. The next morning Jane looked out from her bedroom window, the street was empty. Downstairs she went to the front door, opened it and checked the street, it was still empty. Now joined by Catherine Mulberry. As soon as the bell rang Jane stepped out, the little man startled turned to run but instinctively Jane grabbed him, he screamed loudly a struggled free and was gone.

‘Dam!’ said Jane, ‘Next time, just wait, next time.’ Catherine Mulberry couldn’t help a smile, and smiling said, ‘I’d love to know what this is all about, and I’m sure you’ll catch him tomorrow.’

The morning of the next day came, now Jane was inside the hall, the door unlocked and was holding her head to it. As soon as she heard a sound, she flung the door open catching the man full on, he fell flat on the pavement, Jane now had straddled him, he writhed and kicked and screamed. Slowly his screaming and writhing subsided, eventually he was just breathing deeply, this slowly calmed. Meanwhile Catherine

Mulberry had retrieved the man's top hat, dusted it off and was now standing next to the two.

The man spoke, 'Oh thank you, thank you very very much.'

Both were bemused, he continued,

'Thank you, at last I can stop, and stop the others.' Jane stood freeing the man. Catherine Mulberry passed him his hat, he put it on his head, thanked them again and walked slowly away, occasionally looking back and giving a smile and a wave.

Back in the kitchen over their normal breakfasts they were in silent thought when eventually Jane spoke,

'Well, what do you make of that?'

'Absolutely no idea.' was Catherine Mulberry's reply.

'We have to wait until tomorrow.' said Jane.

'Absolutely.' was the reply.

The next day they waited as before but nothing happened. Oddly both felt somehow disappointed but didn't say so. There had been an anticipation all the previous day and evening. As before they amused themselves but over supper decided it might be good to go back to the real Woodbridge the following day.

However, the following morning as they were finishing their breakfast the doorbell rang, their first thoughts were both the same, 'He's back!'

They didn't rush to answer the bell, both thought the little man would be gone by the time they reached the door and opened it. But the ringing didn't stop at two or three rings, it

kept going. Jane opened the door, there was another small man, in a suit as had been the other, but wearing a cap, not a top hat. He continued ringing the bell as the two women watched, ringing it over and over. Eventually Catherine Mulberry pulled him away from the bellpush, he turned to face her, touching his cap he said, 'Thank you Mam.' Which was not odd, what was is he repeated the action, touched his cap and said, 'Thank you Mam.' And again, touched his cap and said, 'Thank you Mam.' And again, touched his cap and said, 'Thank you Mam.'

Both of the women now stood back watching this.

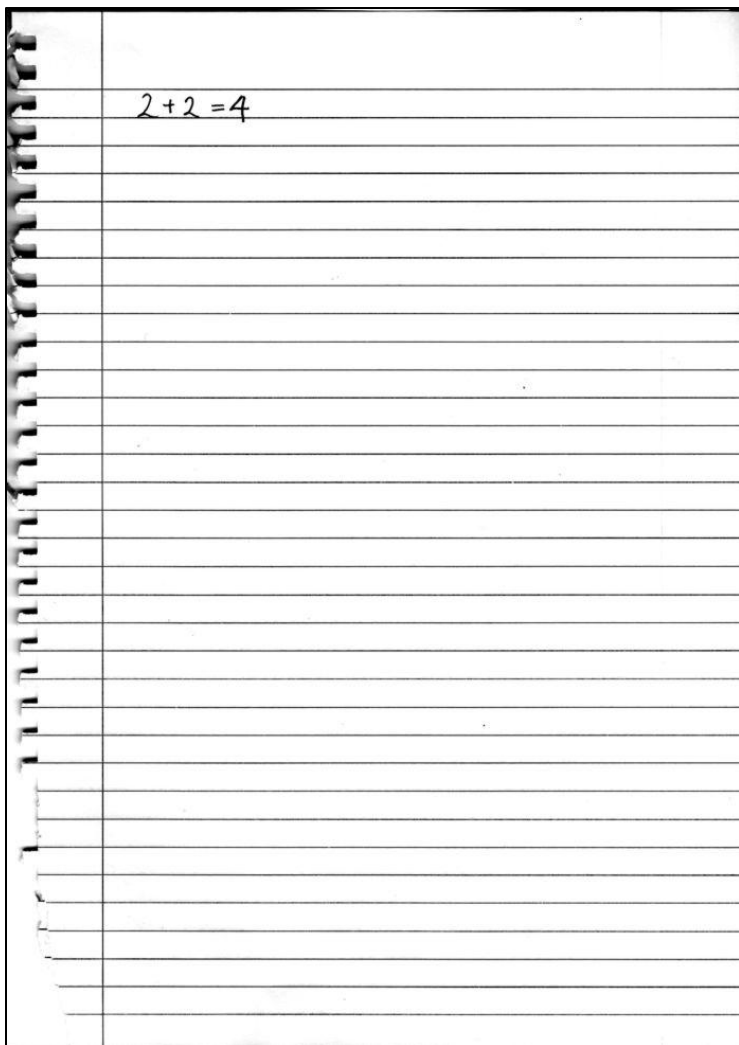
'He's just repeating himself.' Jane said.

'That's it.' said Catherine Mulberry, 'Bring him into the kitchen, I've an idea.' She then walked into the house, down the hall and into the kitchen, Jane followed pushing the man who was still touching his cap and saying, 'Thank you Mam.'

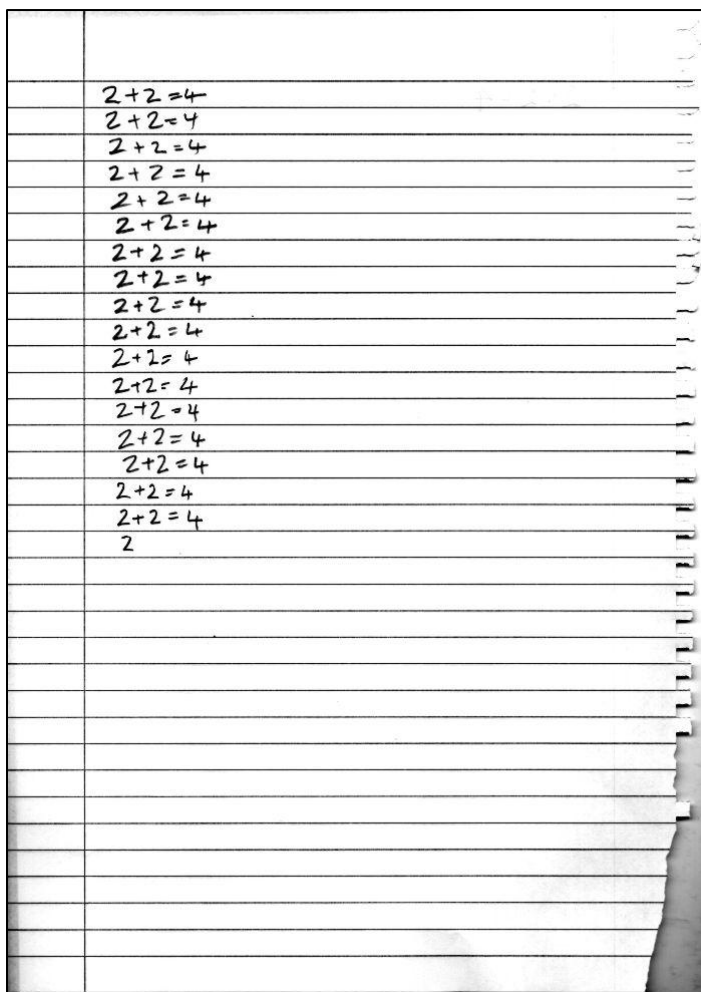
Catherine Mulberry was now sat at the table with two sheets of note paper taken from an A4 note pad.

'Sit him next to me.' This Jane did, then Catherine Mulberry picked up a pencil and wrote on her sheet.

The little man stopped his "Thank yous" and picked up the pencil and began writing. Jane watching spellbound.

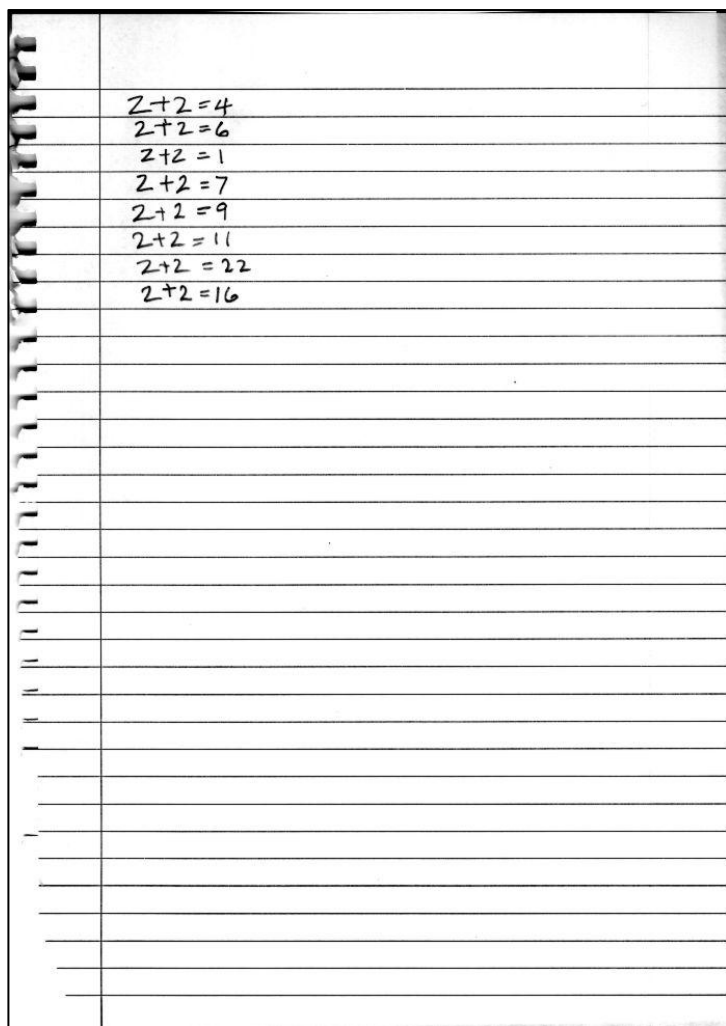


Catherine Mulberry wrote this.



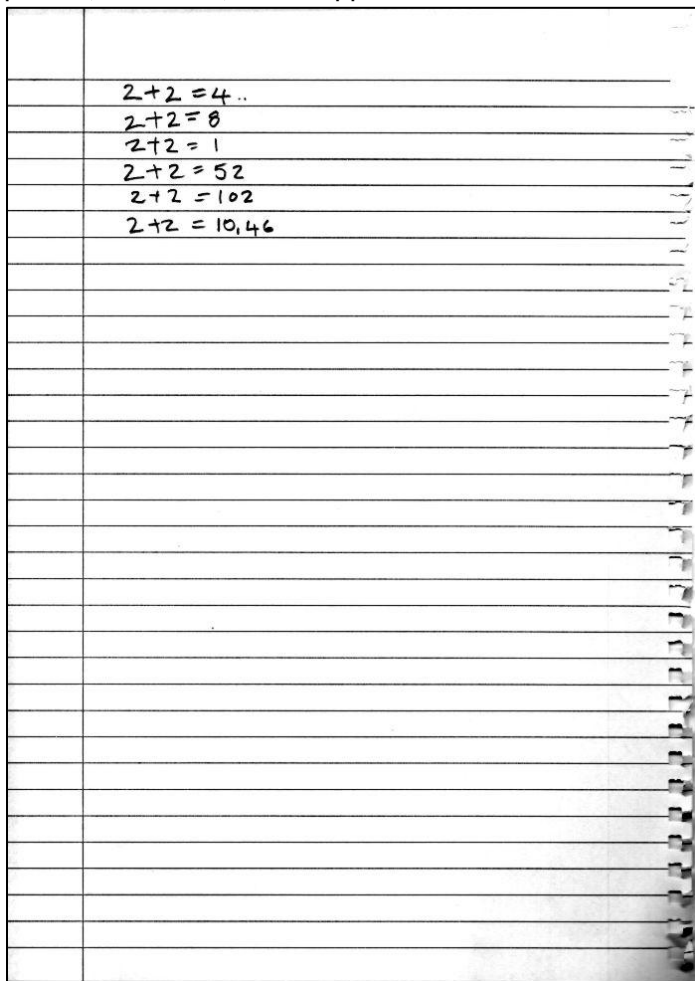
The little man wrote this until he was stopped.

At this point Catherine Mulberry said to Jane, 'Hold his hand.' She took a new sheet of paper for herself and one for the little man, he watched as she wrote.



Catherine Mulberry wrote this.

‘Now let go of his hand.’ She did, he wrote $2+2=4$ then paused, continued, then stopped and smiled.



The little man wrote this and then stopped.

‘Thank you very much, no I won’t repeat myself again.’ He did touch his cap and skipped down the hall closing the outside door with a slam.

‘Well, I think I know, compulsive behaviour, right?’ said Jane.

‘Part right, both had compulsive behaviour, but also repetition, dogmatic repetition. And this solves our problem with perfect balance, and immortality, a looped time or an end. Death, or eternal life.’

‘How?’ asked Jane, and then answering her own question, ‘Mistakes, errors, the man in the cap, he had to copy, but how do you copy an error, a perfect copy is not an error, and a bad copy, a mistake, is not a perfect copy. You are brilliant!’

She added. ‘We will go back to Woodbridge today, and tonight I will buy you a curry in Shapla’s’

‘And tomorrow we will go to the end of time, again.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

They went for a set meal, 4 Popadums, Chicken Tikka, Lamb Tikka, Sheek Kebab, Onion Bhajee, Chicken Dansak, Lamb Balti, Chicken DOPIAZA, Chicken Tikka Masala, Vegetable Bhajee, Bindi Bhajee, 2 Mushroom Pilao, Egg Fried Rice, Peshwari Nan and Keema Nan, and Mango Ice cream plus a bottle of red wine.

CHAPTER 41: THE LAST POSSIBLE DÉNOUEMENT AGAIN.

They decided after breakfast the next day, their normal, to once again leap into the void at the end of time.

They found themselves in an English field in high summer. Bordered on one side by a stream where two people were fishing. A blue sky with a few white clouds, hedgerows with hawthorn, rosebay willowherb, wild garlic and butterbur and tall oak and ash trees. Emily Clarke was sitting in the corner of a field sketching whilst nearby Catherine Mulberry was writing a poem.

They approached, Jane whispered to her companion,

‘It’s the same drawing...’

The Catherine Mulberry writing the poem looked up, the other spoke.

‘We have to somehow get you out of a loop...’

The other Catherine Mulberry replied, ‘Well actually you are my doppelgänger, look you need a real imagination to become a God, but you slogged away and so became the supreme Devil, which of course is needed for equilibrium. And these others are Gods too, and two more across the road. I suspect your friend will help to keep the equilibrium. Please sit we need to solve a small problem.’

Catherine Mulberry and Jane sat.

‘You said the same as before, with being absolute at the end of time there is no real time just a loop.’

‘Agreed.’ said the other Catherine Mulberry.

‘Seems you are answering the questions from our first visit.’
said Jane.

‘Obvious,’ said Catherine Mulberry, ‘we as a collective have those attributes, so denying the Omega point the absolute.’

‘What then is the small problem?’ Jane continued.

‘Perfect balance, and immortality, a looped time or an end.
Death, or eternal life.’

There was silence, a slight breeze.

‘Well, the problem of the Omega point is solved, that other one I think is solved by indeterminacy, but how we achieve this I’m not sure.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘I do know how,’ said Catherine Mulberry, ‘Let me show you.’
said Catherine Mulberry. She took out her pen and picked up the notebook Catherine Mulberry had been writing her poem in and crossed out every other word.

‘Really,’ said Catherine Mulberry, ‘that was uncalled for.’ then caught the sense of her own words, adding, ‘only a Devil could do such a thing, let’s see the others.’

And having said this she strode over to where Anne and Jack were fishing, first took the rod out of Anne’s hands and threw it into the stream, then did the same to Jack. At first, they froze in shock, then the same thing dawned on them as it had on Catherine Mulberry the poet, writing the same poem, how many times tens, hundreds, and how many times had the two fished, catching nothing, maybe the same. Their shock turned to a sigh of relief at being freed from a recurring nightmare.

Whilst this was going on the other Catherine Mulberry had taken the sketch of Emily Clarke's and thrown that into the river too. This had the same effect of being awoken from a nightmare.

Now the tricky part, the naked God Thor and Maria the silver female robot who looked like the robot in the Fritz Lang movie Metropolis.

'I'll do this.' said Jane, 'I can run fast if needed'.

So, she walked to the gate and onto the lane followed by the two Catherine Mulberrys, Emily, Anne and Jack who had all achieved a God like status only to be frozen in time. The bar of the Inn was now crowded. Jane simply went up to the God Thor who had just placed his flagon down, she picked it up and poured it over his head, she then turned and emptied the rest of it over Maria. Thor at first looked very angry, then as the God realised, he'd been released from being trapped in timelessness he beamed, Maria simply said 'Thank you.'

The group wandered outside the Inn, all deep in thought, here was the summer lane, trees and dappled sunlight across the lane from the horse chestnut tree.

'It's beautiful.' said Jane.

'This is the problem,' Maria was speaking, 'logic, logically a perfect mind wants, creates the perfect, and perfection cannot change, time ceases or repeats identically. We being Godlike will do this, you being Devil like...' she was referring to the other Catherine Mulberry and Jane, 'are imperfect. And our perfection prevents the horror of the Omega point. And you are like Eris, the discordant, you allow us to repeat, and as you are discordant, we need to repeat with difference.'

‘Eris the discordant, I remember the Trojan Horse and another conversation, “we can use non-standard causality to do this, to gain access to standard causalities, and then there are timeless causalities such as the universe of the boy.” Why not contact this boy.’

A Catherine Mulberry then had to explain about the boy, a boy with blonde hair who looked like he was maybe nine or ten years old and lived in a strange world he had created, like Woodbridge, but of a working-class district of Birmingham set in a time which resembled the late 1950s. And that there time was very strange, that he lived there with an Aeon, Sophia, who was an immortal.

CHAPTER 42: NOT THE END.

‘The boy in Birmingham seems to figure in all of this from near the beginning. For instance, I think it was he who had a hand in making The Hall of the Mountain King, and time does act very strangely in his world, he might be of help, I think we should go see, go to Birmingham and enter his world.’ said a Catherine Mulberry.

‘How do we get there?’ asked Jane.

‘Via Birmingham, that is the real Birmingham, then across into the other world.’ said a Catherine Mulberry.

‘Well, I think it would be OK in an inhabited modern Birmingham for us six, despite having twin Catherine Mulberrys, but Maria, like the silver female robot in the Fritz Lang movie Metropolis and a naked seven-foot God might stand out a little.’ Jane said very ironically.

‘We can go via the door in the Hall of the Mountain King.’ said a Catherine Mulberry, ‘There’s a secret door in the Hall that leads to the back of number 85, in that of the strange 1950s world. Using the bookcase is perhaps a trifle dramatic but it works.’

‘And how to get to the Hall from here.’ asked the other Catherine Mulberry.

‘Via my Woodbridge world and my house in Cumberland Street.’ said the other Catherine Mulberry.

‘And how to get to your house in Cumberland Street.’ asked the other Catherine Mulberry.

‘Well, we simply jump back.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

‘But we didn’t simply jump here.’ said the other Catherine Mulberry.

‘But surely you are all powerful?’ said Jane.

‘All powerful enough to get into The Supreme Devil’s world.’ said the other Catherine Mulberry with extreme irony.

There was a silence then Jane snapped,

‘We, Catherine Mulberry, the other one, and I jump back, then I can use the skiff from Woodbridge to get here and take you all back, it would take two trips but should work.’

‘Now who is the genius.’ said a Catherine Mulberry.

It took two trips then the assembled group went from the garden of the house and into the hallway and through the now red painted door to The Hall of The Mountain King.

They all arrived in The Hall, and a Catherine Mulberry pushed a bookcase. It opened onto an alleyway between two gardens with paling fences. The group walked to the end, then took a left dogleg, and opened the gate onto the back garden of 85 Colonial Road.

So, they walked towards the house. As they approached the French doors, one opened, an old lady wearing a dark dress and pinafore of maroon paisley patterns was standing in the doorway, she spoke,

‘He’s been waiting with the dog.’

‘She is actually the Aeon Sophia. I think she just looks like the boy’s grandmother, but I’ve no idea why.’ A Catherine Mulberry told Jane.

In the hallway was the blonde-haired boy with a black dog. They followed him and the dog out of the front of the house along a path through a garden and out onto Colonial Road as it was in the late 1950s, still with gas street lights. Turning right and the strange group of eight followed the boy and his dog. Walking up the hill, then taking another right onto Whitacre Road, a short distance to a footbridge.

‘A strange shop?’ Jane who was looking at a shop on the corner of Churchill Road and Whitacre Road.

‘It’s what we called an “Outdoor”, the boy said.

They crossed the London to Birmingham railway line by a footbridge. Walking down Ludlow Road. It was a road of older Victorian terraced houses, the one in Colonial road built between the two world wars. They crossed Alum Rock Road, a main road with shops, down Farndon Road of more Victorian terraces, right a few yards down Hazelbeach Road and onto Ward End Park Road. Here they entered the park, they saw no living humans, only birds. Across the railway line via a footbridge, they turned left towards the boating lake.

A Catherine Mulberry began to speak, Ward End Park is a large park in east Birmingham, was once medieval open fields and then, later, formed the grounds of Ward End Park House, which dates back to 1759. In the late 1800s Birmingham Corporation bought the land, and the park was laid out and opened to the public in 1904. Later, a large boating lake was dug out in the winter of 1908 to 1909. Ward End has “occult”

associations, myths about the park and the prior estate had been forgotten, but strange events occurred, mostly ignored. Being a working-class area in Victorian times these events were put down to “drink”. Yet in late 1981 and into 1982 the residents of five houses on Thornton Road informed the police that stones had been thrown against their windows at night. The stones had no fingerprints, so a night-time surveillance using infrared cameras and image-intensifiers was set up. The stone-throwing continued even though no human activity was seen. Eventually the West Midlands Police CID gave up and left the case open.

In late 2004 and early 2005, there were rumours that a man had bitten several people on Glen Park Road; described as being black and in his mid-20s, he was dubbed the “Birmingham Vampire”. However, the police had received no reports of any attack, and the hospitals had received no bite victims. The local press was inundated with calls from worried residents in Ward End and the surrounding area. The case has been dismissed as an urban legend. In 2006 a list of Britain’s “spookiest roads” was published with Drews Lane in Ward End coming tenth. Invisible cars are frequently heard on the road.’

‘Maybe this is too much information,’ said Jane, ‘to the effect that just to say this place is weird?’

‘Transcendental.’ said the other Catherine Mulberry.

There by a boat house were the skiffs, long row boats moored floating on the lake, each with a rear seat.

‘We just row around the lake and our memories change, fade, become less real, but we never forget everything.’ said the boy.

The group looked at each other, ‘Shall we give it a try said Emily?’

‘I’m not sure said Anne, I don’t want to forget who I am.’

‘You won’t’, said the boy, ‘just one trip around doesn’t do much, more like just relaxing.’

‘OK, one circuit to try.’ After some discussion the boy and dog got into the bow of a skiff, Thor took the oars and Emily, Anne and Jack sat in the rear seat. In the other skiff Jane took the oars and Maria and the two Catherine Mulberry’s the rear seat. So, the strange flotilla set off.

‘Any particular direction, clock wise or anticlockwise?’ asked a Catherine Mulberry, the boy in the other boat seemed to shrug a “doesn’t matter”.

Both were good rowers, Jane skilful, Thor just using brute strength, but the pace was slow. The lake had two islands; there were a few mallard ducks on these and in the water. Tall sycamores grew on the islands and around the pool, it was a mild sunny day with a few clouds, the trees in full leaf creating dappled sunlight across the lake. It perhaps took a few minutes to circumnavigate the lake, yet difficult for those on the skiffs to know how long. As they approached back at the boat house where the other skiffs were moored the two rowers slowed then stopped. Anne was first to speak, she after all had been the most vocal concerning the idea.

‘Wow, that was really good, really relaxing, and seemed so long, It’s hard to explain.’

‘Like all the sharp edges of the mind are smooth, it seemed to last, I don’t know, five, ten maybe more minutes.’

‘Good, very good.’ said a Catherine Mulberry, adding ‘I’d like one more circuit.’ There was a general agreement so another circuit was taken and then it was decided that would be enough for a first time. They moored the skiffs and disembarked.

The truth is then more like alethia and although its antonym is lethe, which literally means “forgetting”, “forgetfulness” this is required for eternal existence, and the shades of lethe is present in alethia to differentiate it from the cold logic of dualism, true or false.

‘You can come here whenever, you know the way from Colonial Road.’ said the boy, ‘I’m normally just on my own or with Sophia, but always now with the dog. You needn’t go through the house though, but can if you wish, but the alley will take you onto the road, it’s smart like that.’

They took a slow walk back to Colonial Road. From there the pathway from the back garden to The Hall of the Mountain King and from there to Catherine Mulberry’s house and garden. Jane rowed the six back to the lane next to the Inn. It took two journeys and she noticed on her last trip there was now a red door on the end wall of the Inn.

The six explored their new world outside of the field and Inn, walking up the hill they came to a small village, it had some houses gathered round a Church next to which was a fine Georgian vicarage at the end of a line of mature walnut trees.

It had a pub of its own called the Wagon Load of Lime and a few inhabitants. Altogether a strange place. Jack and Anne found one of the empty cottages that were clustered around the church and moved in. Thor found that a vacancy for a live in bar-man was wanted, his nakedness didn't seem to matter. And he attended the church every Sunday, and despite this nakedness and that he was a great pagan God the Vicar didn't seem to mind. As for Emily, Catherine Mulberry and Maria it seemed that they were the landladies of the Inn, whose full name it seems was 'The Dog Inn.'

Jane Smith and "her" Catherine Mulberry decided to return to the actual Woodbridge and the house in Cumberland Street. All was as before except now there was to the side of the front door a shiny brass plate with etched in capitals,

"THE TRANSCENDENTAL DETECTIVE AGENCY"

With underneath in smaller letters, "Please ring for service."

And a bellpush underneath.

EPILOGUE: THE MISSING CAT.

Cathrine Mulberry and Jane Smith were now living in the modern-day Woodbridge. It was early April and a mid-afternoon on a Sunday when the doorbell rang. Jane Smith answered the door. Standing outside in the street was a girl with red hair, she looked about seven or eight years of age, and had obviously been crying. She pointed to the sign and said,

‘Please I can’t find my cat, she’s been missing for days, can you find her for me, her name is Clippy.’

Jane shouted for Catherine Mulberry, who was not pleased to be called to the door by a shout. She told Catherine Mulberry about the problem and a description was given. Catherine Mulberry was dressed in her 1950s attire, she used it when she attended church, it seemed proper, in fact no one seemed to mind or notice. Jane was wearing Jeans and a sloppy jumper.

‘I’ll fetch my pendulum.’ said Catherine Mulberry. She returned a few minutes later, put a coat on and shoulder bag, Jane didn’t bother with a coat and so all three set off in the search following the route given by the pendulum. It led them down Quay street.

‘Sorry to bother you on your Sunday.’ Jane was saying to Catherine Mulberry, ‘Not at all, this is important.’

As they walked the girl asked Jane a question,

‘Excuse me if you don’t mind me asking but who is the person you are talking with?’

‘Oh, sorry I should have introduced you; It’s my friend Catherine Mulberry.’ said Jane looking at the girl, who was called Elizabeth, then at Catherine Mulberry.

‘But there’s no one there.’ said the girl.

‘Don’t be silly, of course she is, look.’

‘I can’t see anybody.’ the girl said.

They were standing by the glass front of the Quay Street church.

‘Look,’ said Catherine Mulberry, ‘look at the reflection. I’m not there.’

Jane looked and reflected in the glass was just herself and the girl.

‘What...’ she said, and before she could continue Catherine Mulberry was speaking, ‘Of course it’s the clothes, from the 50s, no one can see me, that explains why no one notices me when I wear these to church, they can’t see me, I’m invisible. Tell Elizabeth I’m invisible.’

So, Jane did, and they continued. Elizabeth explained she too had an invisible friend. It made both the women give a laugh.

At the bottom of the road the pendulum led them left along Quayside, then right into Tide Mill Way. Just inside on the right are a set of eight garages, which is where the pendulum led them.

‘Ah,’ said Jane, ‘I think I know where Clippy is.’ There was no lock on the second garage door, the type that swing up. Jane turned the handle and swung up the door, there was the cat

covered in cobwebs, it miaowed when it saw the girl. Jane smiled. But not Catherine Mulberry. What she saw was a tall woman in black, sure with feline features, and the garage was not a dusty empty space but filled with very high-tech equipment.

Catherine Mulberry gave a shocked expression as did the cat woman. Seems both were not expecting to see what they saw.

‘Got stuck with the door.’ said the cat woman, which to Jane and Elizabeth was the meow, at which Elizabeth picked her up as she became a black cat.

The girl said, ‘Thank you very much.’

‘You should take her home now.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

Jane realised the girl didn’t hear this so repeated, ‘You should take her home now.’

They, Catherine Mulberry and Jane Smith were standing on the plane of immanence. It was perfectly flat so there was no horizon.

‘Back to back.’ said Catherine Mulberry.

They stood back to back, the Omega point split into two, it’s form ever changing but always both holding swords.

Surrounding these covering the vastness was the infinity of demons, devils and evil spirits. Above them where the sky should be another plane, at its centre the six Gods, and surrounding them an infinity of angels.

The two women were seemingly defenceless, but Catherine Mulberry had a resolute expression. She thrust a hand into her own chest and pulled out a rib, Jane seeing this did the same. They both now brandished these as weapons. The whole of the infinity of demons, devils and evil spirits at this knelt. The Omega points lifted their swords to strike, Catherine Mulberry and Jane Smith struck first with their own ribs, slicing through the swords and cleaving the two Omega points in half. They then placed the ribs back in their own chests. Meanwhile now the whole host of heaven knelt. Then slowly the scene dissolved back into the garages on Tide Mill Way.

"And verily, what I saw, the like had I never seen. A young shepherd did I see, writhing, choking, quivering, with distorted countenance, and with a heavy black serpent hanging out of his mouth.

Had I ever seen so much loathing and pale horror on one countenance? He had perhaps gone to sleep? Then had the serpent crawled into his throat—there had it bitten itself fast.

My hand pulled at the serpent, and pulled:—in vain! I failed to pull the serpent out of his throat. Then there cried out of me: "Bite! Bite! Its head off! Bite!"—so cried it out of me; my horror, my hatred, my loathing, my pity, all my good and my bad cried with one voice out of me.—

Ye daring ones around me! Ye venturers and adventurers, and whoever of you have embarked with cunning sails on unexplored seas! Ye enigma-enjoyers!

Solve unto me the enigma that I then beheld, interpret unto me the vision of the loneliest one!

For it was a vision and a foresight:—WHAT did I then behold in parable? And WHO is it that must come some day?

WHO is the shepherd into whose throat the serpent thus crawled? WHO is the man into whose throat all the heaviest and blackest will thus crawl?

—The shepherd however bit as my cry had admonished him; he bit with a strong bite! Far away did he spit the head of the serpent—: and sprang up.—

No longer shepherd, no longer man—a transfigured being, a light-surrounded being, that LAUGHED! Never on earth laughed a man as HE laughed!

'Also Sprach Zarathustra' - Friedrich Nietzsche.

