

TOWARD A THELEMIC NATION OF LOA
The New Orleans Voodoo Tarot
Research Report #3; December 11, 1993
Submitted by Louis Martinie

Archives

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This is the third report to Technicians of the Sacred, The International Religious and Magical Order of SOCIETE, La Couleuvre Noire, and the Neo-African Network, and Ordo Templi Antiqua concerning the generation of a metaphysical ground on which a nation of thelemic loa may securely walk.

Report #1 consists of the article THE NEW ORLEANS VOODOO TAROT which appeared in SOCIETE; Vol.3, No.2; 1991.
In this report, order members were invited to "share in the project through comment." I would like to personally thank all of those practitioners who shared their currents with the voodoo tarot project.

Report #2 consists of the publication by Inner Traditions in 1992 of the book and deck which comprise the NEW ORLEANS VOODOO TAROT (NOVT).
The project is deeply indebted to Courtney Willis for his generous review of NOVT. It is through his influence and that of others that NOVT has enjoyed wide distribution. The loa wished to have their likenesses and names more widely spread throughout the northern countries. NOVT is presently available in mainstream book stores and has been chosen as a selection by the mainstream QPB Book Club. The loa are being well served in this respect.

Report #3 will look at assumptions and technical elements of a thelemic nation of loa particularly as presented in NOVT.

As always, I know well my flaws as a vessel for the loa.
Perhaps in working together there will be stronger service to lemarasa, lemo, and lemiste.

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Two basic assumptions were made before beginning work with the loa concerning a thelemic nation. These two assumptions are identified and their defense as well as counter indications are presented below.

A) FORMS OF VOODOO MAY CHANGE WITH THE PROGRESSION OF THE AEONS

Voodoo walks in the grand retinue of the Aeons as a part of their Great Procession. The cadre of ancestors grows over time...over Aeons. From the ranks of the ancestors and from the changing conditions of the Visible World, new loa arise and new rites to honor these loa are performed. The root loa remain the same...always have been and always will be. It is as if the Winds of time blow upon and ripple the face of the Waters through which the loa are seen. The loas reflections as we perceive them shift with these Winds. Within the deep waters where the loa themselves abide, there is stability.

Considerations:

The basic question addressed is, "Does voodoo change with time?" Do the loa show themselves differently at different times and, since time and space are intimately related, in different physical spaces? I assert that the loa do change, at least in terms of outer raiment, with the flow of time and the movement of space. The Barons are a good example of this. The Barons carry within themselves ancient African wisdom concerning the dead and their place in the scheme of things yet their aspect is frequently quite modern with their top hats and dark glasses.

The Progression of the Aeons is a long established model used to measure approximate change within the spiritual powers that effect this planet. According to the Aeonic model we are in or are

very nearly about to be in the Aeon of Horus or, by alternate name, the Age of Aquarius. Whatever the Aeon or Age is called, there is great change in the air.

Aleister Crowley claimed to have caught the essence of this great change when he and Rose Kelly received a transmission called Liber L in 1904. Crowley offers various proofs for the validity of Liber L but, as with most metaphysical documents, the acceptance or rejection of a specific piece of work is primarily dependent upon the predilection of the individual practitioner.

If the characteristics of the loa do change with time, and if an Aeonic structure can be used to discern changes within the mystical currents encircling this planet, and if Liber L does represent an understanding of the present Aeon; then a thelemic nation of loa is likely to evolve.

B) IT IS POSSIBLE FOR ALEISTER CROWLEY TO ACT AS AN ANCESTOR

The ancestors are not a static force. Their voices are not fixed within the past. They constantly speak through the Waters and clear the roads for the practitioner.

This is an important point in relation to this report and it is a point which is widely accepted within the community of voodoo's technicians.

Aleister Crowley is regarded as an ancestor and his help and guidance were actively sought through out the writing of the book section of NOVT.

Considerations:

If Aleister Crowley is viewed as a powerful Magus who lived and died and left a body of sacred work and writings which are to be consulted as sole arbiter of his enlightened stance on matters of the Spirit, then he can be of no, or very limited, use in the present project. If Aleister Crowley is seen as a distinguished member of the body of ancestors, an ancestor ready and willing to assist the living in their endeavors; then it is reasonable and desirable to enlist his support in the acknowledgement\creation of a thelemic nation of loa. Through omens, through possession, through the various means of divination Aleister Crowley can communicate with the living (as an aside, it is interesting for me to note that as I typed the letters of Aleister Crowley's name in the last sentence, a function of the keyboard which had been not working for the last four weeks apparently fixed itself. Even if this doesn't help to make my point, at least it saves me a repair bill).

There is growth and learning in the Invisible World of the ancestors as there is growth and learning in the Visible World of the still living. Therefore it is possible and even probable that the words which Crowley speaks in 1993 amplify or contradict words which he spoke or wrote in 1939.

Aleister Crowley, upon passing into their Invisible World, may have left only an "empty" shade of the "Demon Crowley." This possible objection to working with the spirit of Crowley presents little in the way of practical problems. If the "Demon Crowley" can provide such depth of insight into both practical and philosophical concerns as has been provided to me; then the working definitions of angel and demon have been obscured; they have lost practical meaning. Demon has translated itself into Daemon.

Aleister Crowley may have reached such an attenuated state of spiritual development that he left no remaining shade to join the ranks of the ancestors. If this is true, then all the communications (including the fixed keyboard) are, to say the least, grossly suspect. But Crowley had, sometimes in spite of himself, a great concern for humanity and its evolutionary path. It is difficult for me to see him as exiting the arena.

Aleister Crowley, due to the depth and force of his attainments, ceased to exist; concentrating himself into his WORD. This may be true and of great importance, but it is irrelevant to the present project. One need only insert THE WORD OF into statement B.

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TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The following few pages address six technical issues. The "technique" of the voodooist/magician consists of words/concepts/practices and the use to which they are put. The root "teks" refers to weaving or fabricating. Thelemic Voodoo is a weaving together of traditional Voodoo and traditional Thelema.

- 1.) The Tree of Life, extensively used in Western Magics and Thelemic speculation, is woven together with the Voodoo spirits.
- 2.) The number 93 of Thelemic import is examined within a Voodoo context.
- 3.) Z'ETOILE is looked at from the standpoint of Thelema and Voodoo.
- 4.) The Master Of The Head is likewise examined.
- 5.) The Ti Bon Ange is examined in terms of the magickal Will.
- 6.) The Gros Bon Ange is examined in terms of magickal Love.

At this point in time I had hoped to be further along in my research. A good number of rituals have been performed which address Thelemic Loa. The results of some of these ceremonies are interesting but I feel that more ground work is necessary before reporting the results of these experiments.

It was a pleasure working with Sallie Ann Glassman in the rituals and on the art and book which comprise NOVT. I look forward to any contact from members of SOCIETE interested in the present stage of the project.

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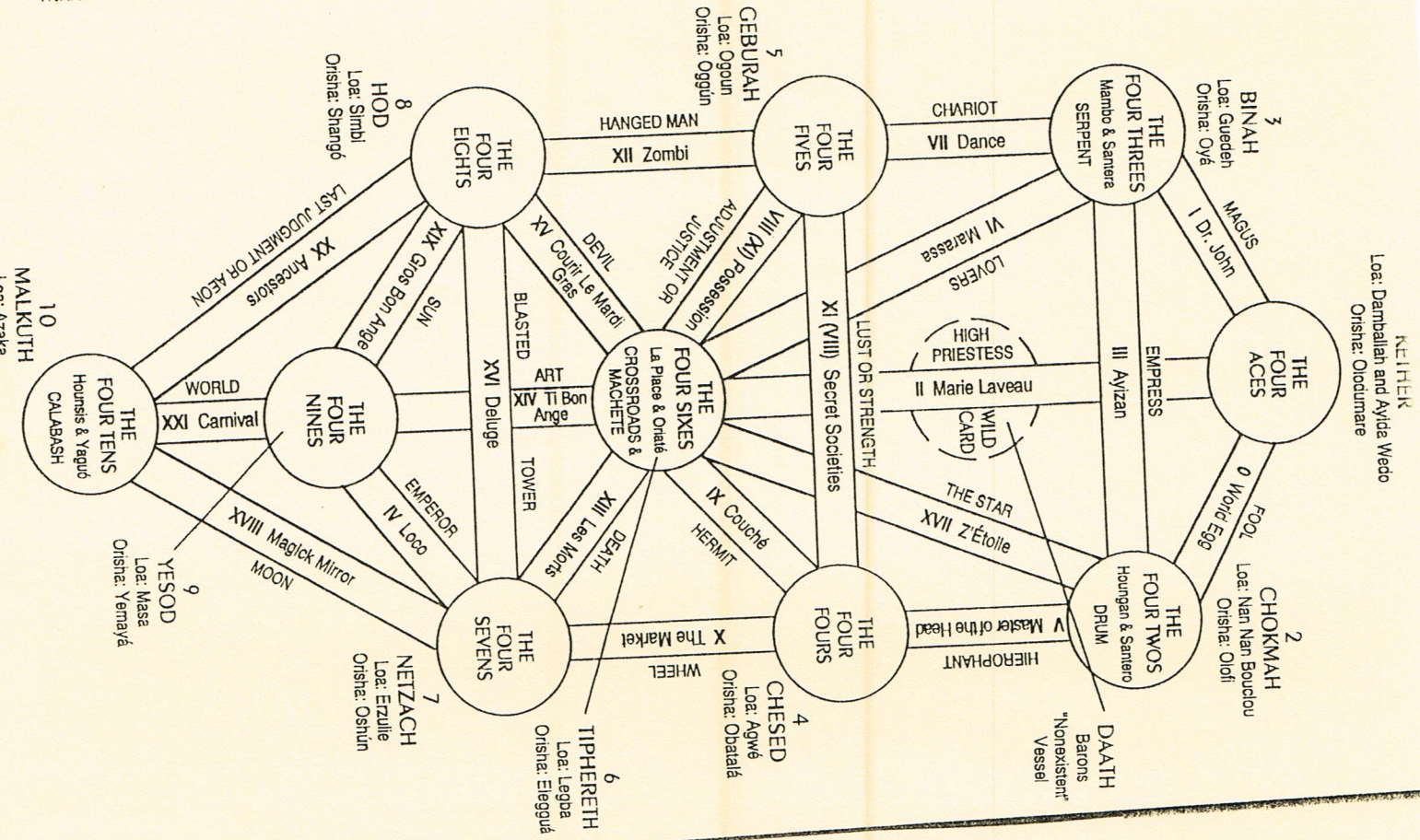
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ASSIAH
Active
MANIFESTATION

YEIZIRAH
FORMATIVE
MANIFESTATION

BRIAH
CREATIVE
MANIFESTATION

ATZILUTH
ARCHETYPAL
MANIFESTATION



At first glance this diagram looks very complex, but with a few hours of study and meditation, the Tree will begin to show a divine and forthright simplicity. If you are versed in Western kabalistic mysticism, this diagram will allow for rapid understanding of this deck. Ninety-three is a number of great significance to the Thelemic community. Numerologically, 93 is the number of the Greek words thelema (will) and agapé (love) (Crowley, 1929-30, p. 260). Will and love are key words of the Thelemic Gnosis as described by Crowley. There is at present a good deal of interest in Voodoo on the part of those who work within the Thelemic and other primarily Western esoteric traditions. The letters of the three crosspaths of the Tree add up to 93 (conversation with Mishlen Linden, 1989). It may be of use to those who follow the paths of both Thelema and Voodoo to make special note of the cards attributed to these crosspaths in the present deck.

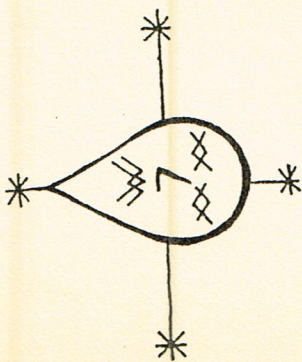
Hebrew Letter (& translation)	Number	Thelemic Card	Voodoo Card
Daleth (Door)	4	Empress	Ayizan
Teth (Serpent)	9	Lust	Possession
Pé (Mouth)	80	Tower	Deluge

These crosspaths are like rungs of a ladder one may use in climbing the Tree to greater understanding.



MASTER OF THE HEAD

(SELF • THE HIEROPHANT)



The Master of the Head is the Self on an exalted plain. The Master is the loa that expresses and embodies the highest qualities of an individual. Here the meaning of "master" is not that of an external force controlling an individual, as a term like

"schoolmaster" implies. The Master of the Head is the loa capable of integrating the various qualities of the mind and personality into a coherent, directed whole.

This is a great card of initiation. To know and be aligned with the Master of one's Head is to function according to one's own unique place in the universe. One of the most powerful occult axioms is

"know yourself" and to know the Master of your Head is to know yourself in a deep and abiding sense.

The aspect of this card is that of a man drumming to bring on full contact with the Master of his Head. As he plays, a face forms on the drum. Mists swirl from the face on the drum's head and become a spirit that kisses the man's upturned forehead.

Attributes of this card include a profound realization of self in an inclusive sense. The union of Love (Ayizan) and Will (Loco), in measure particular to the individual, produces the road upon which the Master of the Head walks.

CONTEMPLATION

True service is always to the Self.

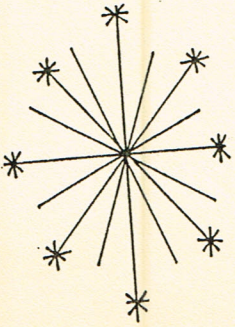
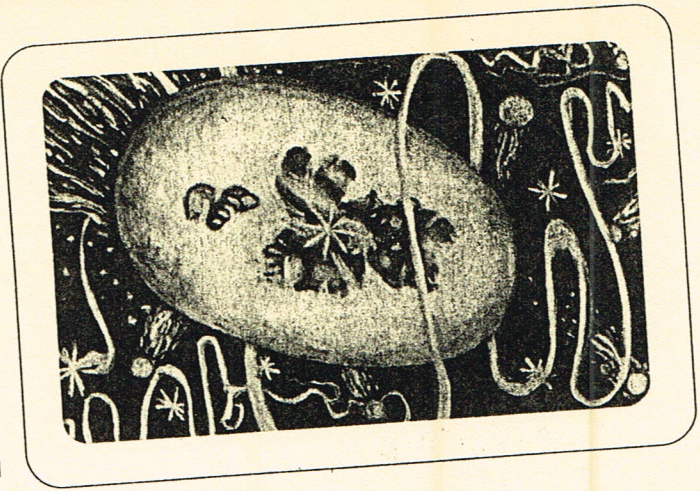
DIVINATION

Realization of purpose, initiation, teachings, assistance from forces perceived as highly placed.

XVII

Z'ÉTOILE

(A CLEAR ROAD • THE STAR)



In the day there is but one light; in the night there are many. Every man and every woman is a star (Crowley, 1938). Fate upon fate, destiny upon destiny revolve across the Heavens as distant pinpoint of light. Night's abyss serves as the womb of magical

birth. As above, so below . . . Every man and every woman is a star. In the day our sun provides equal light to all; the night is the time of subtle influences. Our star holds our destiny. Here the reference is not so much to the physical entity that roams the distant skies, but to the interplay between the light cast by a particular star and the light emitted by a zone of power situated at the top of the head (called in the east the Crown Chakra). The link between the light of the Star

and the light that emanates from the top of the head appears as a tube or tunnel, which allows direct communication with the reservoir of our destiny (conversation with Mishlen Linden, 1989).

The star can be visualized as a calabash, or large hollow gourd, containing our destiny. The great African oracle Ifa is composed of descriptive readings known as *odu*, which can be understood as "big calabash" (Gleason, 1973, p. 11). In this sense, Ifa presents our destiny as contained within the calabash. It is as if these *odu* in the form of stars trace the brilliant lines of destiny across the face of the night sky.

The "dark night of the soul" occurs when sight of the Star and sense of connection with the Star is lost. Then the practitioner is seemingly cut off from his or her destiny. The road is blocked. Efforts to break through end in failure or drag on into repetition, devoid of result. If Z'Étoile is positioned in a reading to cross the questioner, this dark night can be expected. Experience teaches that the dark night is most likely to yield benefit if it is viewed as a form of communication between the universe and the self. Look where the blockages lie; see if they leave a trail leading back to actions or lack of action that offended the loa or ancestors. Perhaps sacrifice is called for, perhaps a change of action.

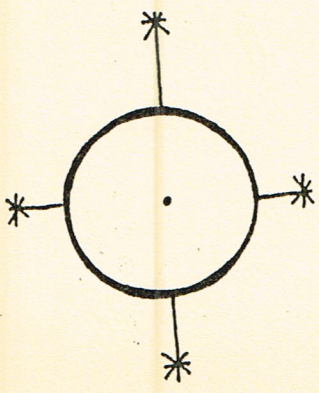
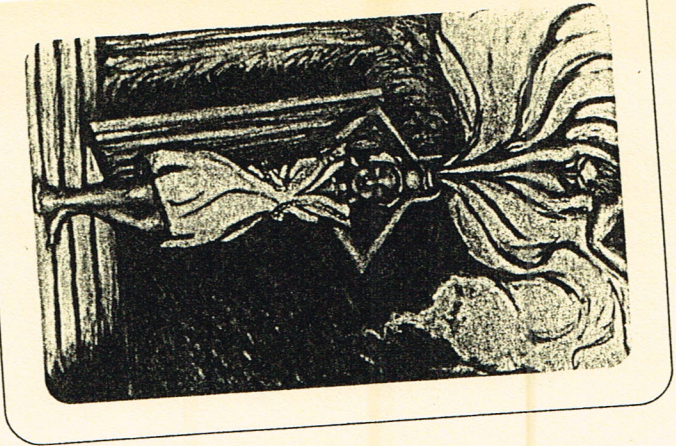
The aspect of the card is that of a babe in an egg, sucking his or her thumb as the egg floats in the black of outer space, or the womb. Streamers of light swirl around the egg and careen into the darkness. These streamers are the basis of the connection between the head and the star. Attributes of the card include the search for an understanding of one's destiny. Doubts drop away and the road is clear.

CONTEMPLATION
Look into the night sky, star upon star, system upon system. Feel for the star that carries your fate.

DIVINATION
Coming to terms with one's fate and obtaining the clear sight and strength this action brings, dedication to a lifework. The road is clear, the Star in sight.

XIV

TI BON ANGE (WILL • ART, TEMPERANCE)



The Ti Bon Ange (small good angel) is clothed in robes of light. The angel stands on a high point and casts a guiding radiance over the dark waters. Ever homeward this light beckons. Remember who you are. Remember the Great Oath taken when nought

became two. Turn and return; follow this light into the heart of the Star. There your Name dances upon tongues of flame. The voice of the Ti Bon Ange has been likened to the conscience. A person's individuality is in many respects defined by the roads or paths he or she chooses. The ability to make this choice emanates from the Ti Bon Ange. This is the core element of the individual, which is trapped and held back when a Zombi is created.

The Ti Bon Ange may be given shelter in a *canari*, clay jar, which is entrusted to the care of a priest or priestess and may be retrieved at any time. This provides a measure of protection from the dangers of malevolent magicks and the vagrancies of chance. This is very similar to the common new-world practice of sorcerers entrusting a talisman containing their essence to a loved one before going on a dangerous etheric expedition. The magical personality of the sorcerer, if destroyed on the expedition, can be rebuilt from the essence.

The aspect of this card is that of a woman walking from a hut carrying a clay jar upon her head. The Ti Bon Ange is diving into the jar hands first. This jar can be likened to the vessels in the Art or Temperance cards of traditional Tarot. The door of the hut from which the woman walks is open.

Attributes of this card include the exercise and development of will. WYll has been described by Aleister Crowley as the factor that points in the direction of the most proper placing of energies, to an individual's unique place in the universe—that place where you are doing what you and you alone can do (1929-30, p. xxii).

CONTEMPLATION

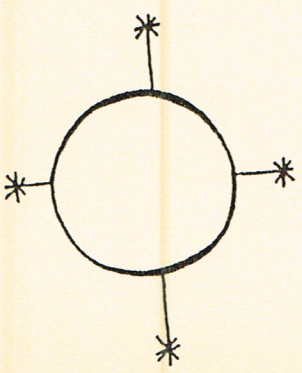
Do what thou wilt, shall be the whole of the Law.

DIVINATION

A call to action based on who you are and your place in the world; assertion of self; discovery of the True Self; an overcoming of obstacles to the expression of the True Self.

XIX

GROS BON ANGE (LOVE • THE SUN)



Honor and respect to the night. Outside the city's bright veil, all sleep secure in bed and house. The roads are empty and clear, save for those who walk in darkness. First light breaks, and all begin to stir.

- Praise to You whose rays warm the Marrassa in their play.*
- Praise to You whose touch is sweet to Twins.*
- Praise to You twice blessed with fire and fury.*
- Praise to You Grand Road of old Legba.*
- Praise to You upon whose point Legba walks.*
- Praise to You whose light streams through open door.*
- Praise to You who shone upon our ancestors.*

- Praise to You by whose light our ancestors walked.*
- Praise to You in whose light all dead once walked.*
- Praise to You in cloak of forty colors.*
- Praise to You in whose fires the sacred names of Spirits dance.*
- Praise to You bright eye of the sky loa.*
- Praise to You whose fires warm the Waters.*
- Praise to You who walk in brilliance.*
- Praise to You born of the womb of night.*
- Praise to You of grace freely given.*
- Praise to You brightness of the Orient.*
- You are the tongues of flame which speak the Spirit's most Holy Name.*
- You who unite all in common chorus, Your praise names we sing.*
- In this and evermore, your tidings we bring.*

Outside the city with its entertainment and constant diversion, darkness holds the land. Solitude—what business has someone under a neighbor's window or in a neighbor's yard? The dark of night is a time of privacy, of individual prerogative. This is the time of magick. This is the time when the secret societies take to the streets. With the coming of light, the phantasmagoria of the night settles into more regular patterns. Day is a time of community. The individual will join in action with that of the group.

As Z'Étoile is destiny and the Ti Bon Ange is will, so the Gros Bon Ange is love. This love (union) is the stuff of existence. As the Sun shines on both good and bad, so this love is unconditional; it wraps and holds all things. Equally beneficent is this love; it gives its all to each without thought of time or place, right or wrong. As such it is not dependent upon personal traits. The Gros Bon Ange carries the grace of the spirit. The Ti Bon Ange holds within itself the ability to choose to employ this grace. Love is the road that WILL walks, guided by the Star.

The aspect of this card is one of dynamic movement. The sun is depicted against a purple background. Yellow rays containing small figures swirl out from the central orb.

A primary attribute of this card is energy. The sun provides the

energy necessary for physical life on our planet through the process of fission, the breaking apart of atoms. The Gros Bon Ange supplies the energy for the spiritual life of the individual through the power of love or the uniting of dualities (Marassa, the Twins). Here again, as in a mirror, the processes of the Invisible World reflect those of the Visible World in reverse fashion.

CONTEMPLATION

Love is the road that Will walks, guided by the Star.

DIVINATION

Influx of helpful energy; success possibly earned by effort or possibly not. Love freely given without regard to object; happiness, joy. Universal rather than particular love.