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"PHILOSOPHICAL ROMANCE": THEORIES OF TIME AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO GENRE IN THE FICTION OF JOHN CROWLEY

by

MARK ELLIS

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in memory of my father

Russell Edgar Ellis

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Introduction

An attempt to study John Crowley's fiction as a cohesive whole would seem to be difficult if not impossible. Although thematically his five novels are bound together by a number of recurring symbols and philosophical motifs, generically they are characterized by their promiscuity and conjoining of seemingly disparate modes--and not merely collectively but also individually. His early works--The Deep (1975), Beasts (1976), and Engine Summer (1979)--are hybrid mixtures of fantasy, beast/biblical fable and science fiction; his more recent works--Little, Big (1981) and AEgypt (1987)--introduce fairies and legendary/historical types into modern settings, where they interact with contemporary persons with domestic and employment problems.

As a result of this inventiveness, Crowley has received high praise from reviewers and has attracted a large popular audience. In his 1977 review of The Deep, published in The New York Times Book Review, Gerald Jonas claims that "Paraphrase is useless to convey the intensity of Crowley's prose; anyone interested in the risk-taking side of modern science fiction will want to experience it first hand" (42). In an earlier review of Beasts for the Times, Jonas had described this work as "a memorable tale that ends too soon, leaving this reader at least eagerly awaiting a sequel" (67). Michael Bishop, writing for The Washington Post Book World, describes Engine Summer as "a strikingly original and involving book," and observes that "Like all meaningful quests, this one has a psychological dimension, which Crowley illuminates with uncommon sensitivity and grace" (6). In his 1982 London Times

review of Little, Big, Andrew Sinclair suggests that Crowley's work "has the inevitability of the mythological story and the oft-told tale," and later adds that "to read this tale . . . is to live again once upon a time that never was" (26).

Inherent in such praise of Crowley, however, is an undercurrent of uncertainty about how his works should be "classified," an uncertainty that John Clute makes explicit in his 1987 New York Times Book Review review of AEgypt; to Clute, Crowley's text "is neither fish nor fowl, neither fantasy nor conventional novel, while at the same time it adroitly mixes both modes together" (9). Similarly, in his review of AEgypt in the 1987 edition of Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction, Baird Searles frankly admits his puzzlement: "What the novel is about is another matter, and quite frankly I haven't the foggiest" (186).

My major objective in this thesis is to suggest that the key to Crowley's adroit mixture of modes is to be found in his deliberate use of various genres as indices of different attitudes toward time, and that his coordinating concern is with the interaction of historical, social, and personal/psychic aspects of change. Because this concern is also central to (modern) romance or mythic narrative, and since romance is characterized less by a rigid set of conventions and more by its modern expression of an a-historical (archaic) world view, I want also to suggest that romance is the most appropriate overall generic label for Crowley's type of fiction.[1] In the process, however, I hope to illustrate the way that Crowley's works increasingly add a new/old dimension to the genre, so that ultimately the best classification might be "philosophical romance."

In keeping with the paradoxical notion of progressive cyclicality--which I shall argue is at the core of Crowley's fiction--my study begins with a consideration of Crowley's most

recent novel. AEgypt is Crowley's most sophisticated and self-critical work, and in many ways it is an explicit articulation of the theory that informs the practice in the preceding works. A very multifaceted novel, AEgypt is unified by Crowley's view that human societies undergo periodic moments of intense cultural change, which radically alter the way in which individuals perceive the world and its history.

The remainder of the study has a three-part chronological structure. The first part focuses on The Deep, Crowley's first novel, which blends science fiction and fantasy in a depiction of a society which attempts to resist the forces of change. The next section examines Beasts and Engine Summer, works which use the perspective of science fiction as a means of portraying the possible transformation of our civilization, and the ultimate consequences for whatever new culture that might follow. Finally, the last chapter concentrates on Little, Big and its illustration of how moments of personal and cultural change may recreate the structure of myths and legends in society.

Because there have been no scholarly studies of Crowley's works, and because I am interested in the philosophic content of his texts, I use interdisciplinary materials in my discussion. Chief amongst these are Eliade's Cosmos and History, Turner's The Ritual Process, and Kuhn's The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. In addition, I draw upon theoretical studies of fantasy and science fiction, as well as fictional works which share Crowley's generic multiplicity. By utilizing such a variety of resources, I hope to overcome the difficulties which face any scholar who attempts to interpret the works of a contemporary and as yet uncanonized author.

Chapter I

AEgypt: Theories of Romance and the Archaic Mind

In AEgypt, John Crowley portrays a group of characters whose lives are bound together by meaningful coincidences, similar world views, and shared experiences of change. The most important of these figures are Pierce Moffett, a Professor of History, and Rosie Rasmussen, a young mother caught up in the process of a divorce. Pierce enters the narrative when a bus breaks down and strands him in the Faraway Hills, a fictional version of the north-eastern United States. By chance, Pierce encounters Spofford, an old friend and former student who has become a shepherd in the Faraways. Pierce becomes Spofford's guest and uses his stay in the Faraways as an opportunity to evaluate the recent collapse of both his academic career and a tempestuous love affair. Pierce's meditations renew a life-long interest in the mystical traditions of alternative histories and world-views which stem from the Renaissance. Having regained his sense of purpose, Pierce returns to his home in New York City with the intention of writing a book based on his theories concerning these shadowy traditions.

As Pierce attempts to change his life and articulate his thoughts, his struggles are mirrored by Rosie's attempts to transform her existence. The failure of Rosie's marriage corresponds to the failure of Pierce's love affair, and Rosie counterpoints Pierce's studies in history and philosophy through her avid interest in the series of historical novels by a recently deceased writer, Fellowes Kraft. Although they have a mutual friend in Spofford (who wants to marry her), Rosie and Pierce do not meet until he leaves the city and settles permanently in

the Faraways. Together, they investigate Kraft's old house on behalf of Rosie's great granduncle, Boney, and discover an unpublished, unfinished manuscript that anticipates Pierce's own projected work. Kraft's book clarifies the philosophic issues in AEgypt and completes the network of coincidences and fantastic events that binds Crowley's characters together.

Kraft's legacy not only completes the link between the lives of Pierce and Rosie, it also links the temporal settings of AEgypt. Crowley's work incorporates a number of distinctly different historical settings which break the text into several loosely related narratives. The most important of these temporal settings are the European Renaissance, the years of Pierce's childhood and adolescence in the fifties, the tumultuous years of the sixties, the early seventies, and a period in the mid-seventies which acts as the work's "contemporary" setting. For the reader, there is usually a clear relationship and smooth transition between the contemporary sections of AEgypt and those passages which focus on the fifties, sixties, and early seventies, because the latter take the form of Pierce's recollections. The portions of the text which depict the Renaissance, however, can not be presented in such a fashion, and Crowley overcomes this problem by "quoting" the works of Fellowes Kraft, his fictional twentieth-century redactor of medieval history. When Rosie reads one of Kraft's novels set in the Renaissance, or when Pierce reads Kraft's long-hidden manuscript (which also uses a sixteenth-century setting), excerpts from Kraft's work appear in AEgypt and thereby insert sixteenth-century characters and events into a twentieth-century context.

By bringing the past and the present together, Crowley challenges notions of linear

historical time and thus reveals his basic affinities with the perspective of romance. According to Evelyn J. Hinz, "in contrast to the novelist who, like modern man, is oriented toward history, the mythic artist, like archaic man, regards history as illusion, and the activities, institutions, and values associated with it as profane or symptomatic of man's fallen condition" (905). Accordingly, the entry into the time frame of romance typically manifests itself in the failure of the apparatus of modern historical time, and here Pierce's arrival in the Faraways constitutes a telling example. He enters this pastoral world when the breakdown of his bus causes him to miss an appointment for a job interview. This everyday occurrence becomes more significant when Pierce learns that his appointment was the product of a computer error, which sent him a false letter of invitation: "The position he had been invited to apply for was already filled, and had been filled before he left the city; even before he had received this ghost letter. . . . Why hadn't he checked? Why hadn't he checked? Pierce wandered out along the highway, letter still in his hand. Had it come to that, we all have to check now to make sure our business is real and not electronic leg-pulling in the dark? His own fault that he had trusted mail" (109).[1] As Pierce learns, the system of letters, schedules, and appointments which maintains our civilization's place in time cannot be trusted in the Faraways; indeed, years and dates are often uncertain in AEgypt, especially in the contemporary sections of the narrative. The reader's sense of passing time depends more on seasonal or personal events, such as the movements of Spofford's flocks or the progress of Rosie's divorce, than on specific references to historical time.

This challenging of modern conceptions of time appears not solely in the distrust of dates and schedules, however, but also in a recourse to cyclical models. In The Myth of the

Eternal Return, Mircea Eliade observes that the archaic belief in the continual, necessary regeneration of time within the context of the seasonal year was expanded by the early historical cultures into the concept of the "Great Year" (987). Furthermore, Eliade notes that archaic systems of expanded cyclical time were often associated with a periodic return to an earlier golden age: "Almost all these theories of the 'Great Time' are found in conjunction with the myth of successive ages, the 'age of gold' always occurring at the beginning of the cycle, close to the paradigmatic illud tempus. In the two doctrines--that of cyclical time, and that of limited cyclical time--this age of gold is recoverable; in other words, it is repeatable, an infinite number of times in the former doctrine, once only in the latter" (112). The concept of the "Great Year" or "Great Time," which organizes history into a series of recurring epochs, naturally reconciles the romancer's sense of eternal recurrence with his awareness of linear historical time.

Some of the most vivid manifestations of cyclical time in AEgypt appear during Pierce's recollections of the sixties. As a young professor in a small New York City college, Pierce had watched the decade's tumult transform the world around him: "There were transients everywhere, pilgrims in strange clothes, but Pierce's part of the city in particular resembled a medieval city on a fair day or high holy day, there were penitentes in orange robes and shaven heads chanting and whirling in St. Vitus's dance, there were Gypsies come to town camped in the littered squares. . . . Printing had been invented, and the bookstores were suddenly full of odd wares. There were new newssheets in lurid, smudgy colors, there were almanacs and books of prophecy, there were strange scriptures, ballads, broadsides" (80). In Pierce's eyes, the counterculture of the sixties takes on the appearance of the

Renaissance. This apparent return of the Renaissance in the modern world evokes the myth of the returning Golden Age; indeed, after participating in a discussion on the Age of Aquarius and the zodiacal shifts produced by the movement of the earth's axis, Pierce reflects on the adage of "Redeunt Saturnia regna: the old gold age that once was is come again" (86). Pierce's perception of the sixties juxtaposes two distinct historical moments within a single instance of cultural change, presenting the changes of the present as part of a much larger cosmic cycle.

Although Pierce's experiences might seem to suggest that the past can literally reappear in the present, he ultimately rejects this naive conception of time. Long after the end of the sixties, Pierce meets with Julie, a former lover who has become a literary agent, in order to sell the proposal for his book. Pierce describes his project as an investigation of false historical traditions, "a kind of archaeology of everyday life; a sort of scavenger hunt or paper chase, tracing backward these old persistences. Discovering them, though, first of all; discovering old mythical religious ahistorical accounts of the world in their modern versions, and then tracing the elements that compose them back to their earlier appearances, to their sources, to their first forms . . ." (192). Of all the mythical accounts of the world, the one which most concerns Pierce is the Renaissance's misreading of the history and thought of ancient Egypt, which fascinated him as a child:

> Because of the Hermetic writings . . . Egypt came to mean all things mystical, encoded, profound; ancient wisdom lost; old age of gold now perhaps able to be recovered, to enlighten degenerate moderns. . . . Somehow this intensely

> magical, other-worldly, imaginary country comes to me, is revealed to me, in Kentucky, through books of different kinds, through the goddamn air, somehow. But at the same time I knew about the actual historical Egypt too, about which real knowledge has been accumulating through the centuries. . . . So what it seemed like to me was that there were two different countries, somehow near each other or at right angles to each other. Egypt. and AEgypt.
>
> "And I was right! There are two different countries. The one I dreamt and thought about, it has a history too, as Egypt does, a history just as long but different. . . . You can trace the story of Egypt back, and back, and at a certain point (or at several different points) it will divide. And you can follow either one: the regular history-book one, Egypt, or the other, the dream one. The Hermetic one. Not Egypt but AEgypt. Because there is more than one history of the world." (190-91)

The concept of a shadow-history which parallels the accepted history of the world lies at the heart of Crowley's work, and its importance can be seen in the book's title, AEgypt. For Pierce, the dream-history of AEgypt provides a meaningful context for the resurgence in the sixties and seventies of mystical beliefs, thus allowing him to account for the apparent return of the past in the present without adopting a naive belief in the myth of the Golden Age.

Pierce carefully separates his imaginary country from the world of everyday experience, but he quickly discovers that Julie truly believes in the return of magic from the past. Julie's thoughts unsettle him, and after leaving their meeting he outlines a model of

cyclic repetition which emphasizes the values of progressive change:

> Time doesn't return, turn full circle, and bring back what is past; what turns full circle is the notion that time will turn full circle, and bring back the past. That was the secret Pierce knew, the one he must tell. Time turned not in a circle but a spiral, sleeping and waking; any Golden Age perceived to have dawned again, or sad decline repeating itself, or new millennium come, creates in the very perception all the past Golden Ages, or declines, or rebirths, or millennia that it seems to be repeating, Oh I remember, I remember: we ascend through the spheres that seem to hem us in. (200)

Pierce's spiral effectively reconciles the archaic sense of eternal recurrence with a forward movement in time. By regarding cyclic repetition as a product of human perception, Pierce also succeeds in placing the old notion of cyclical history within the relativistic universe of twentieth-century man. In doing so, he reflects the non-static or non-Platonic nature of romance: "Though the mythic artist perpetually struggles to liberate his narrative from history, his objective is not to escape from the material world into an ethereal one. Far from sharing the allegorist's implicit attitude toward this world, he is as critical of such a spiritual orientation as he is of a historic one . . ."(Hinz 912). For Crowley's twentieth-century audience, Pierce's spiral helps to bridge the gap between the material world and the imaginative world of the text.

Pierce's model of cyclic repetition implies that all experiences of cultural change are

related, if only in the minds of those who undergo crises of change; however, AEgypt's strongest comment on the unity and importance of transitional times in history appears in the introduction to Fellowes Kraft's unfinished novel;

> Once, the world was not as it has since become.
>
> It once worked in a different way than it does now; it had a different history and a different future. Its very flesh and bones, the physical laws that governed it, were other than the ones we know.
>
> Whenever the world turns from what it has been into what it will be, and thus earns a different past and a different future, there is a brief moment when every possible kind of universe, all possible extensions of Being in space and time, are poised on the threshold of becoming, before all but one pass into nonexistence again. . . . And just as the world is thus turning from the what-has-been into the what-is-to-be, and all possibilities are just for a moment alight and one has not yet been chosen, then all the other similar disjunctures in time (for there have been several) can become visible too. . . . (312)

Kraft's belief that transitional times are uniquely perceptible to one another justifies AEgypt's frequent juxtapositions of the Renaissance and the recent past, two periods marked by social change. More importantly, Kraft's suggestion that a time of world change can incorporate all possible states of being is in keeping with the romancer's evocation of the sacred. In mythic narrative the sacred "has nothing to do with morality or spirituality; rather it consists in the

sense of the sublime, the numinous, the awe-full . . ." (Hinz 906). In AEgypt, the numinous arises from the immense potential of a time of world change, which allows fantastic and commonplace worlds briefly to coexist.

Kraft's theory of time provides a means of understanding a series of parallels between the lives of different characters in AEgypt who experience similar moments of change. One of the most striking of these parallels occurs when Pierce finds that Kraft's manuscript is a fictional treatment of his own ideas concerning the world's many different histories. In a conversation with Boney, Pierce describes the coincidence: "'Well what's remarkable is,' he said, 'the things and the people in this book that are things and people I'd been thinking about and studying for a long time, in a completely different way. Doctor John Dee, for instance, the English mathematician. Giordano Bruno'" (329-30). Crowley prepares the reader for the correspondence between the thoughts of Pierce and Kraft by giving Fellowes Kraft a name which suggests that he is an artistic alter-ego for Pierce, and possibly for Crowley himself--a "fellow in craft." Kraft's own fictional characterization of the Renaissance philosopher Bruno deepens the similarity between the lives of Pierce and Kraft; Bruno had reacted to the return of old knowledge during the Renaissance in a manner which mirrors Pierce's response to the sixties. Separated by the barriers between fact and fiction, as well as by the limitations of historical time, the two figures respond to the sudden reappearance of old books with a single question: "Who was publishing these things newly? How did they know he needed them?" (81, 357). With these words, the lives of Pierce, Kraft, and Bruno merge, emphasizing the essential unity of their experiences of change, and thereby illustrating Kraft's belief in the special affinities between transitional times in history.

The feeling of wonder which accompanies the emergence of parallel lives in AEgypt is closely related to the effect produced by fantasy, which Eric S. Rabkin describes as "a quality of astonishment that we feel when the ground rules of a narrative world are suddenly made to turn about 180°. We recognize this reversal in the reactions of characters, the statements of narrators, and the implications of structure, all playing on and against our whole experience as people and readers" (41). Pierce's surprised reaction to Kraft's subject matter arises from the sudden collapse of the assumption that the thoughts and actions of distinct individuals are in some sense unique. Similarly, the shared thoughts of Pierce and Bruno overturn the reader's expectation that Kraft's unfinished novel will be a separate and self-sufficient narrative within the main body of AEgypt. In both instances the shock of the fantastic generates a shock of recognition--as dissimilar characters, thoughts, times, and events are revealed to be fundamentally alike. As these examples show, Crowley uses the strategies of fantasy to violate the barriers which isolate the past from the present, or fiction from apparent reality. Thus, the fantastic aspect of AEgypt reinforces Crowley's method of depicting cyclic repetition as it manifests itself in the interpenetration of moments of change. Furthermore, the quality of astonishment that accompanies fantasy complements the text's evocation of the numinous, underscoring AEgypt's function as a romance.

The fantastic in AEgypt is strongly associated with Kraft's unpublished book and its recreation of the life of Bruno; however, Bruno also plays an important part in introducing the perspective of modern science into Crowley's text. Bruno can serve as an almost ideal representative of science in the archaic and often fantastic world of AEgypt because, as a Renaissance figure, he stands between the death of the medieval world-view and the birth of

modern science. During his meeting with Julie, Pierce describes Bruno and the extent to which his thoughts and his historical position make him a transitional figure:

> Giordano Bruno, 1546 to 1600. The first thinker of modern times, really, to postulate infinite space as a physical reality. He thought that not only was the sun in the center of the solar system, but that other stars were suns too, and also had planets going around them, as far and far farther than the eye could see--infinitely, in fact; infinitely. . . . He was burned at the stake as a heretic . . . and since he had promoted the new Copernican picture of the heavens he's always been regarded as a martyr to science, a precursor of Galileo, a sort of speculative astronomer. But what he really was, was something much stranger. The universe he saw wasn't the one we see. For one thing, he thought that all those infinite stars and planets were alive: animals, he calls them. And they went around in their circles because they wanted to. (184)

Clearly, Bruno's vision of infinite space anticipates modern astronomy, but it also regards the stars and the planets with a mystical animism that evokes the archaic sense of the sacred. Bruno fuses science with romance by perceiving the numinous in an expansive, post-Copernican universe.

Bruno's world-view and historical position are not, however, the only means by which science enters the philosophic back-ground of AEgypt. Kraft's outline of periodic, world-altering outbreaks of cultural change strongly resembles Thomas Kuhn's model of scientific

progress. In The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Kuhn suggests that ordinary scientific research is directed by accepted models of scientific practice and theory, such as the Ptolemaic or Copernican systems of astronomy, which he labels "paradigms" (10). According to Kuhn, a scientific discipline changes or progresses when a new paradigm replaces an older view. This transition is revolutionary: "far from a cumulative process, one achieved by an articulation or extension of the old paradigm [it is rather] a reconstruction of the field from new fundamentals, a reconstruction that changes some of the field's most elementary theoretical generalizations as well as many of its paradigm methods and application. . . . When the transition is complete, the profession will have changed its view of the field, its methods, and its goals" (84-85). The periodic reconstruction of scientific paradigms corresponds to the periodic alteration of the world in Kraft's vision of time. Similarly, the open potential of a moment of world change mirrors the proliferation of new theories that accompanies the breakdown of an old scientific paradigm: "the scientist in crisis will constantly try to generate speculative theories that, if successful, may disclose the road to a new paradigm and, if unsuccessful, can be surrendered with relative ease" (Kuhn 87). Although the archaic perspective on time and change dominates AEgypt, the parallels between Kuhn's ideas and Kraft's model of cyclic repetition easily incorporate the process of scientific change within the mythic ethos of Crowley's work.

In much the same way, the psychological theories of C. G. Jung illuminate the individual characters' responses to change in AEgypt. Crowley's method of using parallel events as a means of depicting his characters' positions in moments of change evokes Jung's concept of synchronicity, which according to M.-L. Von Franz "may be defined as

simultaneity plus connection by meaning in contrast to synchronous events which only coincide in time. . . . A synchronistic event is thus a meaningful coincidence of an external event with an inner motive from dreams, fantasies, or thoughts. It must concern two or more elements which cannot for an observer be connected causally, but only by their 'meaning'" (223). In an earlier passage, Von Franz observes that synchronistic events "seem to occur only when an archetype is activated producing highly charged conscious or unconscious emotions" (222).

There are many synchronistic events in AEgypt, including Pierce's first encounter with Rosie, when Pierce discovers that Rosie has heard about the Renaissance magus John Dee, one of Pierce's interests, and has read the novels of Fellowes Kraft--the author who introduced Pierce as a child to the sixteenth-century world of Dee and Giordano Bruno. Rosie tells Pierce that Kraft lived in the Faraways while writing his book: "His country, and Fellowes Kraft's too: and if that was some kind of omen, he must suppose it was a good one, though he was yet unused to seeing his life in such terms. The warmth of simple glee was all he felt so far, and astonishment all that he was sure of" (305).

The most striking synchronistic event in AEgypt, of course, is Pierce's discovery of Kraft's manuscript. Kraft's anticipation of Pierce's themes has a fantastic quality, but the concept of synchronicity allows one to place this occurrence in a psychologically realistic context. Kraft's novel was probably written during the sixties, since Rosie tells Pierce that Kraft died "six years ago. I think. About 1970" (333). Because Pierce refined his own theories, similar to Kraft's, during the sixties, Kraft's book and Pierce's thoughts may be seen as the products of similar archetypal influences activated by the pressures of cultural change--

namely, the archetypes which manifest themselves in the conviction that time is a spiral and in the complex of myths and beliefs that make up the shadow-history of AEgypt. In this fashion, Jung's theories provide a means of explaining how the seemingly fantastic affinity between Pierce and Kraft may be contained within the more plausible framework of romance, just as Jung's idea that the meaningful component of an apparent coincidence stems from the human mind accords with Pierce's perception that cyclic repetition is a product of human perception.

The juxtaposition of individual and cultural experiences of change which plays such an important part in Crowley's work and gives it a romance orientation can also be elucidated in the light of anthropological studies of ritual, since ritual is the means by which the individual in an archaic society connects himself to the larger world of his culture and his cosmos. For archaic man, as Eliade observes, the ritual imitation of a primordial event projects the individual into the sacred time of myth, since "every sacrifice repeats the initial sacrifice and coincides with it. All sacrifices are performed at the same mythical instant of the beginning; through the paradox of rite, profane time and duration are suspended." The suspension of profane time applies not only to sacrifices and overt acts of worship in archaic cultures: "the same holds true for all repetitions . . . through such imitation, man is projected into the mythical epoch in which the archetypes were first revealed" (35). Pierce, Kraft, and Bruno enter a single shared moment of transitional time by repeating similar actions, just as individuals from archaic cultures enter a shared instance of sacred time by repeating certain primordial actions. For AEgypt's characters, the quest for old knowledge, the encounter with cultural change, and the attempt to write an account of hidden wisdom are a form of the

ritualized imitation of the sacred past.

At the same time, however, Crowley is very concerned to distinguish between authentic evidence of archetypes and the self-conscious attempts to recover the semblance of the historical past. The shared experiences of characters like Pierce and Kraft are compelling because this coincidence is presented as something unconscious and unplanned. In one instance, Pierce contemplates his possible future as a solitary thinker: "He had a poignant vision of himself, a different person in another place: self-sufficient, a confirmed bachelor, a careful pleasant gent no one can quite figure out. . . . And he an objet de vertu in his own right, seen walking into town for the Sunday papers, dressed dandily and peculiarly, plus-fours and a knobby walking-stick, a dog beside him" (233). As Pierce articulates his vision he is wholly unaware that his self-portrait will match a description of Fellowes Kraft that Rosie will eventually give him (307). The connection between the two men and their times is as clear as it is unself-conscious.

In contrast, Spofford deliberately sets out to replicate the past by becoming a shepherd. He tells Pierce that "Sheep used to be big around here, I mean it used to be a big enterprise. These hill pastures are perfect for sheep. I don't know why it went out. It could be big again" (49). Spofford is sincere, but his ambitions seem to be out of touch with the present and not fully connected to the past. A brief exchange with Pierce highlights the absurd quality of Spofford's lifestyle:

> You couldn't be a real classical shepherd, Pierce had told him, unless you ate acorns, and were in love.

"Well a bread made from acorns," Pierce said. "I guess not the nut itself."

"Uh-huh," Spofford said, sure that his leg was being pulled. Acorns. (386-87)

Spofford is in love, but he can not recapture the pastoral ideal in its original form; by trying, he fails to achieve the synthesis of an ideal past and a realistic present that is possible for someone like Pierce, whose twentieth-century lifestyle and career paradoxically lead him to enact an archetypal pattern.

The relationship between archetypes and their visible manifestations, in literature and in life, is clarified by the work of Leslie Fiedler. In "Archetype and Signature" Fiedler defines the two forces which unite to form works of art. Fiedler refers to archetypes as "any of the immemorial patterns of response to the human situation in its most permanent aspects . . . whether those patterns be considered to reside in the Jungian Collective Unconscious or the Platonic world of Ideas." Fiedler grounds this concept of the archetype by emphasizing the importance of "signature," which he defines as "the sum total of individuating factors in a work, the sign of the Persona or Personality, through which an Archetype is rendered, and which itself tends to become a subject as well as a means of the poem. Literature, properly speaking, can be said to come into existence at the moment a Signature is imposed upon the Archetype. The purely archetypal, without signature elements, is the Myth" (537).

For Fiedler, the terminology of archetype and signature applies to individual artists as well as works of art; "In deed as in word, the poet composes himself as maker and mask, in

accordance with some contemporaneous mythos of the artist" (536). Thus, the duality of archetype and signature can be applied not solely to the many texts represented in AEgypt--including Kraft's novels and Pierce's projected book--but also to AEgypt's characters. Pierce, Kraft, and Bruno evidence different signatures, and are widely separated in space and time, but they also share an archetypal profile which allows them to coexist as parts of a unified whole. Consequently, character or personality joins ritualized action and art as a means of abolishing the limitations of profane time, in a process best exemplified by Pierce's unconscious identification with the persona of Fellowes Kraft.

If Eliade's comments on sacred time in ritual, supplemented by Fiedler's analysis of art and artists, clarify the nature of transitional times in AEgypt, Victor W. Turner's studies of ritual further enable one to place the regular occurrence of these outbreaks of change within a broader anthropological context. In The Ritual Process, Turner examines the attributes of the liminal phase of ritual, which is the component of a ritual action that occurs outside the social barriers of everyday life. In his analysis, Turner describes a state of being associated with the liminal phase which he refers to as "communitas" (96-97). Communitas emphasizes a sense of statuslessness and fellow-feeling which creates a community of equals among the participants in certain ritual actions. Although this state is linked to ritual practices in archaic societies, Turner applies the principle of communitas to societies which have abandoned the archaic world-view: "Just as in preliterate society the social and individual developmental cycles are punctuated by more or less prolonged instants of ritually guarded and stimulated liminality, each with its core of potential communitas, so the phase structure of social life in complex societies is also punctuated, but without institutionalized

provocations and safeguards, by innumerable instants of spontaneous communitas" (137).

This sense of the cyclical recurrence of communitas resembles the pattern of cyclical change in AEgypt. Indeed, just as the contemporary moment of transition in Crowley's work centers on the counterculture of the sixties, so Turner uses the hippie movement of the sixties as an example of the emergence of communitas values in a modern context, observing that "the values of communitas are strikingly present in the literature and behavior of what came to be known as the 'beat generation,' who were succeeded by the 'hippies' . . ." (112). By focusing on the sixties as a period when the social values of the liminal state of ritual emerged in society, Turner provides a scientific justification for Crowley's vision of this time as a moment of significant cultural change.

Turner's analysis of the social manifestations of communitas also supports Crowley's conception of the transitory nature of true moments of cultural or personal change. In his comments on the cyclical emergence of communitas, Turner stresses that the values of communitas cannot perpetuate themselves indefinitely: "Exaggeration of communitas, in certain religious or political movements of the levelling type, may be speedily followed by despotism, overbureaucratization, or other modes of structural rigidification. . . . Communitas cannot stand alone if the material and organizational needs of human beings are to be adequately met. Maximization of communitas provokes maximization of structure, which in its turn produces revolutionary strivings for renewed communitas" (129).

The regressive aspect of this cyclical pattern explains the changing attitudes of Pierce's academic employer, Barnabas College in New York. In his recollections of the sixties, Pierce remembers that "Barnabas College, like a fast little yacht, had quickly tacked

with the new winds that were blowing. . . . The old standard textbooks were chucked, replaced by decks of slim paperbacks, often the students' own choices, they are after all (said Doctor Sacrobosco) paying the bills" (83). Although in the sixties Sacrobosco, the college's dean, had endorsed the period's breakdown of structure, in the contemporary section of the narrative his attitudes are quite different. In an interview with Pierce before Pierce's final departure from the city, Sacrobosco explains the college's reasons for rejecting a suggested new course:

> "We've already got a reputation to fight of being a fad school that gives a useless degree. Enrollment's down, transfers are up. We've got to have solid food here."
>
> "Readin', writin', and 'rithmetic," Pierce said.
>
> "All that stuff is coming back," Earl said. "It's a new age." (164)

Sacrobosco's newfound conservatism reflects the waning of communitas in society as a whole. Conversely, Pierce ultimately perpetuates the cycle described by Turner when he rejects the newly-structured conservatism of Barnabas College and moves to the Faraways, a refuge for liminal values.

Just as communitas is a part of the special nature of transitional time in AEgypt, so the necessarily brief life of communitas parallels the brief life of the awareness of change in Crowley's text. When Pierce finishes reading Kraft's manuscript, he finally understands and fully accepts his faith in the alternate history of the world associated with the old Hermetic

vision of AEgypt. Pierce's realization is tempered by an awareness that the foundation of his faith seems to be passing away with the change in the world: "For if this moment was a moment when it could be true, this moment was also fast passing; and when it had passed all this story of Kraft's would not only no longer be possible, it would not ever have been possible. There was no way, if the world kept rolling, to save these nested stories . . ." (389). The passing of the moment of change, with its multitude of possible realities, is as necessary as the fading of communitas.

Social and psychological processes--such as the cycle of communitas and the imitation of archetypes--create an atmosphere of "realistic" wonder and magical potential in AEgypt, but Crowley also uses references to totemic objects as a means of bringing a sense of the numinous into his text. One such object first appears in one of the two prologues. In "The Prologue in Heaven" Doctor John Dee--a historical figure who was a mystic, an early scientist, an astrologer, and an adviser to the court of Elizabeth I--records a medium's vision of angels seen in a seeing-stone (5-8). The magic of Dee's Renaissance reappears in the main narrative when Rosie learns that Boney now possesses Dee's stone: "Rosie had begun to feel a little odd. It's all true. As though the actors in a play were to drop their roles, and then turn out to be in fact the characters they played, and turn to face their audience for real. She watched Boney take from the drawer something in a velvet bag. . . . He held it up for Rosie to see. 'There were angels in this glass.' he said. 'Dozens of them. Doctor Dee talked with them. And all their names began with A'" (169).

The unexpected appearance of the artifact is a fantastic reversal of the rules of everyday life and creates a powerful sense of the numinous. The incident impresses Rosie

because she has been reading about Dee in one of Kraft's historical novels; the incident impresses the reader because the prologue has depicted the stone as a magical object. For both the reader and the character, the stone's association with the past is the source of the stone's magic and mystery. This perception that magical objects gain their potency from the past corresponds to the archaic belief that sacred power emanates from some infusion from the mythic time of the beginning.

The past is often portrayed as a time of marvels by twentieth-century romance-oriented writers including Canadian authors Howard O'Hagan and Jack Hodgins. In Tay John, O'Hagan frankly acknowledges his mythic treatment of the past by giving the title "Legend" to the first section of his novel, which describes a legendary past that precedes the appearance of the text's chief narrator. A number of fantastic events occur in this portion of O'Hagan's work, of which the most compelling is Tay John's birth in his dead mother's grave (36). Similarly, in The Invention of the World, Hodgins uses the perspective of legend and folklore to describe the youth of Donal Keneally, a charismatic figure who dies long before Hodgins' main narrative takes place. As a young man in Ireland, Keneally performs many feats of strength and magic; at one point, he transforms himself into a pair of twins (83). By referring to a mythic past, Hodgins and O'Hagan draw the numinous into the everyday world, just as Crowley uses references to the Renaissance as a magnet for drawing the numinous into the everyday world of the Faraways.

Although the evocation of a mythic sense of time provides the most important means of introducing the numinous into the ordinary world in AEgypt, Crowley also employs the spatial symbolism of the sacred center. According to Eliade, sacred places such as temples,

palaces, and sacred mountains participate in the symbolism of the Center (12). For the archaic mind, these spaces become part of the archetypal center of the universe, the meeting place of heaven, earth, and hell. In AEgypt, Glastonbury Tor is one of the most important incarnations of the Center. During a visit to Glastonbury with his son and his medium, Doctor Dee climbs the Tor and perceives a magical star-map laid out in the surrounding lands, which places the Tor in the metaphoric center of the heavens (279-80). Glastonbury's legendary role as the focal point of King Arthur's realm complements the star map by associating the site with the sacred time of myth, as well as the sacred space of the Center. As an inclusive symbolic landscape, Glastonbury also absorbs the world of science fiction, with its spaceships and alien visitors. When Pierce encounters a popular book that regards the star map as an alien creation (286), Glastonbury becomes another bridge between the Renaissance and the modern world, linking Pierce's America with Dee's England.

Glastonbury's role as a sacred center does not, however, conflict with its status as a tangible part of the English countryside. Indeed, Theodor H. Gaster's concept of topocosm suggests that the co-existence of the sacred and the profane are essential to a mythic world view. John J. Teunissen notes that Gaster's term refers to the sites of ancient rituals, "places made sacred by their association with the ancestors, divine and human" (57). The topocosm incorporates every feature of the environment of ritual, in time and space, and this inclusiveness gives the topocosm a dual nature. In Gaster's words, "the topocosm . . . possesses a two-fold character, at once real and punctual, and ideal and durative, the former aspect being necessarily merged in the latter, as a moment is merged in time. If it is bodied forth as a real and concrete organism in the present, it exists also as an ideal, timeless entity,

embracing but transcending the here and now in exactly the same way that the ideal America embraces but transcends the present generation of Americans" (24). In AEgypt, this conjunction of the ideal and the concrete manifests itself at Glastonbury, where the star map and the mythic legacy of Arthur's kingdom constitute the ideal entity which underlies the time-bound topography of the Tor and its surroundings.

Looking down on Glastonbury, Dee meditates on Arthur's ancient kingdom and concludes that its small size did not prevent it from containing the essential components of the world of adventure: "For one kingdom is all kingdoms: a hill, a road, a dark wood; a castle to come to; a perilous bridge to cross" (280). The archetypal kingdom contains all possible kingdoms, just as the archetypal Center accepts a multitude of sacred sites. Dee inverts this image later on, as his thoughts approach their conclusion: "And though it might be only here that such figures of earth . . . had been cut by wizard's hands, still the stars shine everywhere; and so it must be that in every place there is a star temple, impressed upon circles of earth, large or small. And inside every one of them must a grail be hidden" (282).[2] These words suggest that just as all places coexist in the Sacred Center, so the Center recurs endlessly in every place. This juxtaposition of all possible landscapes parallels the juxtaposition of all possible times in Kraft's theory of transitional time.

* * *

Structurally, AEgypt is Crowley's most fragmented work. The book contains several distinct fictions which merge and come apart without fully becoming a single, homogeneous

unit; moreover, the narrative focus shifts from one character to another, presenting the reader with several different views of the text's main plot and settings. Although AEgypt's internal multiplicity resists easy categorization, it is quite consistent with M. M. Bakhtin's notion of dialogic discourse: "The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized" (262). Crowley himself, moreover, gives the reader a model of this organizing artistic vision in an extract from Kraft's autobiography; after describing the ceiling painting in the Venetian church of San Pantalon, Kraft continues: "If I could . . . I would attempt one more book, a book like that ceiling; a book composed of groups ambiguous but clear, great solitudes that look on and look away from each other; a book solemn and darkly bright and joyous in its achievement, as that ceiling is joyous in the immense trick of its perspective; a book empty and infinite at its center. A book that would close the circle of my life as Bruno opened it; a book that I could die before finishing" (297-98). Kraft's unpublished manuscript partly fulfills his desire, because it is unfinished and composed of many distinctly different characters, concepts, and settings.

Similarly, the design of the church of San Pantalon applies to AEgypt itself. AEgypt's diverse modes and different points of view correspond to the solitudes of the church ceiling, and the book's inconclusive ending reflects the ambiguity of the painting's empty center. Yet like the church's solitudes, the components of Crowley's text are held in a harmonious balance, a balance that is maintained in part by the constant presence of a romance sensibility. As the most overtly theoretical of Crowley's works, AEgypt does not have the highly emotional appeal of a typical romance; nevertheless, as a book about the archaic world

view, it clarifies the role of the romance perspective in all of Crowley's works to date.

Chapter II

The Deep: Science Fiction and the Feudal World

The plot and setting of The Deep differ greatly from those of AEgypt, although both works focus on experiences of cultural change. The Deep begins with a nameless stranger's arrival in a turbulent feudal world. The stranger, variously known as Visitor, Secretary, or Recorder, is an android or cyborg who descends from the heavens and is damaged in a skirmish between warring factions. He suffers amnesia and becomes involved in the dynastic conflicts of two aristocratic clans, the Reds and the Blacks. The stranger becomes secretary to one of the world's feudal lords, the Great Protector Redhand. While the stranger slowly regains his memory and sense of purpose, Redhand assists another lord, Red Senlin's Son, in a successful bid to become king. As the narrative progresses, Redhand rebels against the new king, and the stranger sets off on a journey to the outer limits of the world, accompanied by a girl named Nyame or Nod. Nod is part of a shadowy group of rebels known as the Just, who attempt to overthrow the ruling aristocracy through assassination. The struggle between the Reds and the Blacks ends with the deaths of Redhand and Red Senlin's Son, allowing a new king, Sennred, to initiate a new era in the life of the book's small world.

The stranger's quest ends at the literal edge of the world, where he discovers both his purpose and the true nature of his surroundings. He learns that this world is not a natural planet, but rather a huge space station, created and maintained by alien beings of great age and power who intervene in the affairs of humans in order to prevent true cultural change or progress. Learning that he is a tool of these beings, the stranger rejects his mission and

returns to his maker, allowing the beginning of a new age in the world he leaves behind. The stranger's moment of self-discovery interacts with the cultural and personal changes which confront the human characters, drawing many distinct experiences of transition together in a single moment.

In keeping with the romancer's tendency to evoke a sense of the numinous, without denying the existence of the everyday world, in The Deep, the android visitor prevents the narrative, with its other-worldly setting and feudal conflicts, from losing contact with the modern reader's conception of reality. Science fiction constitutes the "realistic" element of the text because, as Donald L. Lawler observes, despite its imaginary character the genre appeals to the modern reader's world view:

> Unlike fantasy and the fantastic, science fiction seems to elicit something more than the kind of imagined belief that is limited to purely esthetic experience. The mythology of science is plausible for us in ways that traditional mythology is not. We can have a speculative belief in the reality of its objects, its characters and its actions. Its power is immanent in our culture. . . . Michel Butor has put the case succinctly: "SF represents the normal form of mythology in our time: a form which is not only capable of revealing profoundly new themes but also capable of integrating all the themes of the old literature." (6-7)

Certainly, traditional themes run throughout The Deep: the wars between the Reds and the

Blacks resemble the wars which pervade Shakespeare's history plays; the Just, who fight the rich on behalf of the poor, evoke the legend of Robin Hood; the stranger's journey to the edge of the world recalls the quests of medieval romance; and allusions to Job and Ecclesiastes add a biblical dimension. These elements of "the old literature" gain emotional power through their proximity to common science-fiction motifs such as the android (who is also a space traveller), the alien beings, the artificial habitat of the space station, and the notion of other worlds. In The Known and the Unknown: The Iconography of Science fiction, Gary K. Wolfe observes:

> it is the transformation of the unknown into the known, usually by breaching a symbolic barrier that separates the two, that I believe characterizes much of the narrative action of the popular science fiction of the 1940s and 1950s and accounts for its conventions and formulae. John Huntington goes so far as to suggest that these conventions reflect Kuhn's paradigms within which normal science operates: "In fact, insofar as the addict takes pleasure in exploring the 'unknown' in the context of the 'known', that is within the frame defined by the conventions, he is recapitulating in significant ways the activity of normal scientists." Conventions, in other words, provide science-fiction writers with a means of setting up barriers to the unknown and then breaching them. . . . This abiding concern in science fiction with the dialectic of known and unknown has not only evolved a structural pattern that is common to many science fiction works; it has also resulted in the development over the years of a

> number of recurrent iconic images that contain in themselves the dynamic tensions between known and unknown around which their narratives are likely to be structured. (15-16)

Wolfe lists several of the most important icons, including "mutations, alien beings, spaceships, cities, robots, the wasteland" (16). In The Deep, these icons become the focal points of experiences of change; they also serve as mediums through which the modern world view merges with an archaic sense of the numinous.

The nameless stranger plays an important part in the meeting of archaic and modern perspectives. To the people around him, the stranger appears to be a magical creature, gifted with unusual powers of sight, hearing, strength, and memory. After losing the services of his secretary, Redhand remembers the creature in terms of his numinous qualities: "The man, if man he had been, was so fey that in a sense Redhand felt he had not ever been truly there: this though he had saved Redhand's life, twice. Well, there was no help for it. Redhand felt less that he had lost a friend or even an aide than that he had misplaced a charm, lucky but possibly dangerous too" (118-19). Redhand and his peers regard the visitor as a manifestation of the spirit world, but this aspect of the character is tempered by the reader's awareness that the stranger is an android. The stranger's first appearance in the text reveals his essential nature, when two Endwives, or healers, discover his wounded, unconscious body: "it took them only a moment to discover that he was neither male nor female; somewhat longer to decide whether he was alive or dead. . . . Parts of him seemed made of something other than flesh, and from the wound at the back of his head the blood that flowed seemed viscous, like

oil. When the older of the two caught a bit of it on a glass, and held it close to the lamplight, she gasped: it was alive, it flowed in tiny swirls ever, like oil in alcohol, but finer, blue within crimson" (1). The stranger's oil-like blood and synthetic flesh associate him with the technological vision of science fiction; however, by provoking feelings of awe and wonder in other characters, these characteristics also identify the android as a source of spiritual power.

Just as the characterization of the android functions to join the perspectives of science and the archaic mind, so the creatures in The Deep serve to revive old mythologies in a modern form. One of these creatures, named Leviathan, lives beneath the feudal world. The human characters remember Leviathan in their myths and legends, but for most of the inhabitants of Crowley's fictional world Leviathan is little more than a name. Learned Redhand, Redhand's brother and a member of a monk-like order of scholars known as the Grays, dismisses Leviathan as "An imaginary god or monster" (59). Learned's attitude typifies the rationalist's antipathy to archaic myth, but this viewpoint is undermined by the stranger's journey to the edge of the world. Once there, the android confronts Leviathan and discovers that the feudal world's mythology contains a core of objective truth.

The great being who lives beneath the world is not simply a feature of the mythic structure of this particular society, moreover, but also refers outside the artistic frame to the traditions of the Bible. The name Leviathan comes from Job 41, where it refers to a primordial sea monster, and Crowley stresses the importance of this biblical source by using a passage from Job as the epigraph to The Deep. The space creature thus becomes a new incarnation of the biblical monster, and The Deep is in part a modern retelling of Job, with

the stranger serving as Job's counterpart. Like Job, the android protests against human suffering. After learning that his creator, Leviathan's "brother" (151), brought humans to the space station and created their rigid feudal society, the android asks "Does he know how men suffer?" (155).

In spite of their similar roles as spokesmen for humanity, however, Job and the android visitor differ in two important ways. Unlike Job, the stranger does not meet his creator; instead, he encounters Leviathan, the monster of the deep. This meeting resembles a common creation myth described by Eliade: "in certain archaic cosmogonies, the world was given existence through the sacrifice of a primordial monster, symbolizing chaos . . ." (20). By replacing Job's revelation of God, the creator, with the ancient struggle against the monster of chaos, The Deep emphasizes the residual archaic elements of the biblical myth. The second major difference between Job and the android concerns their responses to the presence of the sacred. In the Bible, Job responds to God's challenging words by falling silent (Job 40:1-5); in The Deep, the stranger responds to Leviathan's words by screaming (155). The contrast between these two reactions deepens when the stranger, called Recorder by Leviathan (150), prepares to journey to his distant creator with the resolution to "save one question. One question, over the whole length of his huge journey" (157). Recorder's insistence on keeping his question is an implicit rejection of the original Job's final submission through silence and, simultaneously, hints at both the more archaic myth of conflict underlying the biblical text and the modern response to the Old Testament insistence on subservience.

The various creatures in The Deep do not provide the only means by which Crowley

juxtaposes archaic, biblical, and technological world views. The setting of the work--an artificial world--is essentially an outgrowth of the science-fiction icon of the space ship, but it is also a literal representation of the Ptolemaic universe. Fauconred, one of Redhand's followers, describes the form of this physical model of the medieval cosmos: "The world is founded on a pillar which is founded on the Deep. . . . it is a great circle; its center is the like island called the Hub and its margins are waste and desolate. . . . Each day the sun rises from the Deep, passes overhead, and falls again within the Deep; each night it passes under the Deep and hastens to the place where it arose. Between the world and the sun travel seven Wanderers, which likewise arise and descend into the Deep, but with an irregular motion . . ." (11-12). Fauconred's reference to the movement of the sun is taken from Ecclesiastes 1:5, which comments on the lack of change or innovation in the world. This biblical allusion thus emphasizes the extent to which the space-age setting of The Deep duplicates the old Judaic model of a changeless universe, that is reflected in turn in the unchanging nature of its inhabitants' culture. By portraying a futuristic space station as a metaphor for the Ptolemaic system, Crowley conversely creates a paradoxical correspondence between his science-fiction narrative and the history of medieval Europe.

Because the initial setting of The Deep mirrors the world of medieval Europe, the changes which are set in motion by Recorder's rejection of his mission, and the resolution of the dynastic wars, parallel the social changes of the Renaissance. Crowley stresses this similarity by introducing a number of references to the cultural history of the Renaissance. For example, when Red Senlin's Son becomes king, the feudal world's only city renews itself: "Great houses long shuttered were opened and aired, streets were widened and new-

paved with bright stone. The City crafts, long in decline, suddenly had to seek apprentices to satisfy the needs of the great . . ." (63). This pattern of urban renewal resembles the growth and reconstruction of the great cities of Renaissance Italy.

Similarly, Red Senlin's Son has much in common with a Renaissance prince: "The King's appetite for shows, triumphs, displays grew larger; unappeased by the ragtail pageant-carts that on glum street corners gave shows everyone knew by heart, he commissioned his own, drawn out of ancient stories by eager young men, stories full of new wit and unheard-of spectacle. . . . He was, though, his own most striking show. With his crowd of young Defenders, all handsome, all proud, with a canopy over him and men-at-arms before him with fantastical pikes and banners, he rode through the City weekly . . ." (69). As a patron of the arts and a lover of spectacle, Red Senlin's Son readily calls to mind the popular image of the Medicis and their contemporaries. When Sennred succeeds his brother, he continues to promote the arts and sciences: "He had turned an old prison into a theatre. A scheme for making books without writing them out by hand, that Sennred little understood or cared about, he had fostered anyway" (174). Theatres and printing presses are inextricably linked to the Renaissance, and by drawing on these features Crowley presents the Renaissance as an expression of the archetypal experience of cultural change.

As a model for change, the Renaissance is particularly well-suited to science-fiction narratives such as The Deep, since not only printing technology but also modern science was born during this period. For Europe, the developing spirit of scientific inquiry expressed itself in the great voyages of discovery in the New World, which find modern parallels in voyages of discovery in space. Indeed, the setting of The Deep may be seen as a futuristic

variant of the "New World," with Recorder as its Columbus. The expansionist spirit of the Renaissance did not manifest itself solely through geographic exploration, however, but also through imaginative speculation. The Deep alludes to the Renaissance imagination when Red Senlin's Son discovers a strange drawing on the plans for his lover's tomb: "Down in the corner of a drawing that showed a mechanism for lifting stones, the architect had made another little sketch, a strange thing, something that had nothing to do with stones, it seemed. There was a diminutive figure, a man, strapped into a device of gears and pedals. Radiating out from the center of the device, made of struts and fabric, were the wings of a bird. A bird the size of a man" (159-60). The strange figure is taken from the drawings of Leonardo da Vinci, one of the greatest visionary thinkers of his time. Da Vinci's original drawing of a flying machine is a powerful symbol of man's yearning for flight; moreover, it is an early form of science-fiction art which allows the reader better to understand the natural affinity between Crowley's science-fiction tale and the Renaissance mind.

Although The Deep is strongly colored by the historical landscape of the Renaissance, Crowley's setting also evokes the archaic sense of sacred space. The geography of The Deep easily incorporates the archaic symbolism of the Center, since it features a number of sites which become part of the Center through their status, uniqueness, and physical position. The feudal world's single city, located "on the lake island called the Hub in the middle of the world" (12), is an obvious Center. There is a second Center within this city, of which it is "said that the center of its figured stone floor was the exact center of the world . . ." (24). The structure in question is an ancient rotunda, the oldest part of an old and complex citadel. The regions surrounding the city add to its status as a meeting place of the heavens, the earth,

and the underworld. The lake which circles the Hub is of an unknown depth, "un-plumbed" (22), and therefore represents the underworld. The heavens and the sacred mountain are in turn represented by Inviolable, the mountain retreat of the Grays: "The tower of Inviolable may be the highest place in the world. No one has measured, but no one knows a higher place" (128).

Eliade observes that the concept of sacred space is closely associated with the practice of ritual in the archaic mind: "Through the paradox of rite, every consecrated space coincides with the center of the world, just as the time of any ritual coincides with the mythical time of the 'beginning'" (20). Because ritual confers meaning on sacred places, sacred sites are always appropriate settings for ritual actions. As a landscape which contains the essential features of the Center, the giant space station in The Deep creates a ritual space which shares the essential function and significance of Glastonbury in AEgypt.

The mythic dimension of Crowley's science-fiction landscape becomes even more apparent when Nod and Recorder journey to the edge of the world. Without Nod, the android's journey would be very much like the solitary quests of medieval romance. Recorder's travels would also conform to a common science-fiction plot described by Wolfe:

> The formula may be simply stated thus: a young man is born into a society on board a starship. The society has long forgotten the original purpose of the voyage, but the young man, through some means, discovers this purpose and is regarded as an outcast and hounded by the elders of his society. Escaping into a hitherto unknown realm of the ship, he discovers the control room and . . . a

> giant window revealing the stars. With the aid of mechanical devices and ancient guidebooks, he steers the ship to a safe course home. (64-65)

It should be noted that this outline could also apply to Nod, if she had undertaken her journey without a companion. By having Recorder and Nod journey together, however, Crowley enriches the basic quest-plot of science-fiction and medieval quest narratives by adding the marriage-plot or love-plot that is a definitive feature of romance and the archaic ethos. According to Hinz: "The paradigmatic marriage for archaic man is the hierogamy, the sacred marriage, and the prototype of this sacred marriage is the union of earth and sky" (905). She later notes that "a recognition that hierogamy originally connoted a conjunction of opposing elements also helps to explain why the mythic writer is concerned with lovers who are inherently . . . different from each other . . ." (906). Nod and Recorder are perfectly poised to re-enact the sacred marriage, since Recorder is a space man, descended from the heavens, and Nod is "a waterman's daughter" (16), associated with the earth. For this reason, the couple's joint encounter with Leviathan, who is himself a mythic entity, naturally takes on the qualities of myth and ritual.

The marriage of Nod and Recorder is, of course, a symbolic one, because the android is genderless; the union manifests itself in the characters' behavior and in its consequences for the feudal world as a whole. Nod and Recorder begin their journey as antagonists, with Nod as Recorder's unwilling guide, but they grow progressively closer as they near their destination. The asexual Recorder finally realizes, just before leaving to meet his creator, that he has somehow fallen in love: "There was a part of himself, he knew now, that he had

invented; had had to invent because of the damage done him. There was a Truth that his invention had allowed him to discover, that he was not meant or made to discover. That invented part wanted him to take up the girl, hold her as he seemed to remember he once had, speak comfort to her. That invented part, which his maker could not have foreseen, wanted . . . it wanted" (156).

Although this discovery of love is emotionally satisfying for the reader, the true test of hierogamy in romance is its effect on the world: "hierogamy, the marriage of earth and sky, is no more an end in itself than is the consummation of the human lovers. The object of hierogamy is cosmogony, the regeneration or rebirth of the cosmos" (Hinz 909). In The Deep, the regeneration of the feudal world begins in earnest when Recorder, on the edge of the world, remembers and rejects his original mission: "With horror he remembered all. Who he was. What had made him. And why: he knew the whole Plot he had been made for, the reason for his hideous strength, the blood hero he was to have been, the long war that would never happen now . . ." (155-56). After Recorder's departure, Nod returns to the inner regions of her world and becomes a messianic figure who preaches against the world's gods (175). In this fashion, Nod becomes a force for progressive change and thereby validates the hierogamy.

The flash of insight that accompanies Recorder's experience of hierogamy is the culmination of a long process of self-discovery which begins with the android's memory loss in the beginning of The Deep. As Northrop Frye observes in The Secular Scripture, a loss of memory is a relatively common method of initiating a romance: "Whether romance begins with a hero whose birth is, as Wordsworth says, a sleep and a forgetting, or whether it begins

with a sinking from a waking world into a dream world, it is logical for it to begin its series of adventures with some kind of a break in consciousness, one which often involves actual forgetfulness of the previous state. We may call this the motif of amnesia. Such a catastrophe, which is what it normally is, may be internalized as a break in memory, or externalized as a change in fortunes or social context" (102). Recorder incorporates both forms of Frye's motif of amnesia, since he not only suffers a memory loss, but also arrives in the feudal world with no social ties to the people around him. Indeed, because Recorder enters the narrative as a blank slate, lacking gender, hair, identity, and speech, he is an almost perfect example of the displaced hero without a past who often appears in romance.

Recorder's androgyny, memory loss, and lack of conventional social status make him a liminal character. Victor W. Turner observes that "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (95). Because he has no past, no apparent purpose, and no identifiable gender, Recorder is the perfect outsider. His alien physiology, with its synthesis of the organic and the mechanical, conforms to the visual characteristics of liminal entities, who "may be disguised as monsters, wear only a strip of clothing, or even go naked . . ." (95). Recorder's liminal attributes suggest that his experience of individuation can be seen as a rite of passage. Such a comparison is particularly appropriate to a work of fantasy or romance, according to Jeanne Murray Walker: "Drawing on the romance conventions from which they are derived, modern fantasies frequently dramatize the passage from childhood through ritualistic death to a new social status--manhood (or in some cases, womanhood)" (189). The science-fiction element of The Deep makes this ritual framework explicit by

endowing the symbolic values of liminality with a literal, physical form--that of Recorder.

Further parallels between Recorder's adventures and the patterns of ritual may be seen by noting the structure of The Deep. The work is a three-part narrative, with chapters named after each of the android's three titles--Visitor, Secretary, and Recorder. This format resembles the outline of a typical rite of passage, since "all rites of passage or 'transition' are marked by three phases: separation, margin (or limen, signifying 'threshold' in Latin), and aggregation" (Turner 94).

The liminal qualities of The Deep and its related Renaissance echoes are also apparent in the actions and appearances of its human characters, who often put on masks and disguises. One of the most striking scenes in The Deep concerns a masked ball which is held by Red Senlin's Son at the beginning of his reign. During the ball, the king dresses as a stag and acts out a small play with his homosexual lover, Young Harrah, who wears the costume of a hunter (65-68). Young Harrah is a member of the Black faction, and the play is clearly meant to encourage a reconciliation between the Reds and the Blacks. Indeed, the scene ends as the king "has begun to speak again, of love, reconciliation, a new bright order of things" (68). As an attempt to usher in a new era, the play incorporates the full significance of liminality, since the liminal stage of a ritual action represents a transition from the old to the new.

Liminal entities are to be expected in the context of a play or a festival, but liminality also extends beyond narrow social boundaries in the feudal world of The Deep and pervades every aspect of the characters' lives. The Just, for example, lead lives of secrecy and adopt second names which mask their identities. They are guided by a strange being called the

Neither-nor, who personifies the ambiguities of the liminal state; in Nod's eyes, the androgynous figure "resolved in Its long, fragile body the contradictions that the rulers of this world . . . would keep at war: ruler and ruled; good and evil; chance and certainty; man and woman" (77-78). The Neither-nor is modelled after a being who was very much like Recorder: "That first Neither-nor had appeared out of nowhere, pure emanation of the Deep or the heavens . . . sexless, without orifice or pendants; birthless, without omphalos; deathless, who had only Departed and left nothing behind" (78). Clearly, the Neither-nor is Recorder's double; however, unlike the android, the Just's guide is trapped in the liminal condition and never truly changes.

The Just's aristocratic enemies also exist in a liminal world. Sennred takes on the appearance of a liminal entity when he escapes from a prison at night by disguising himself as another prisoner, the deposed ruler Little Black (137-42). As well, the homosexual relationship between Red Senlin's Son and Young Harrah can be seen as a manifestation of the sexual ambiguity of liminality. The prevalence of such beings in The Deep suggests that the entire work is in some sense a depiction of a liminal phase.

As a depiction of liminality, and in keeping with one aspect of romance, Crowley's narrative takes place outside historical or profane time, in space where dates and other conventional methods of marking time are meaningless. In this setting, an awareness of time manifests itself in spatial--rather than temporal--metaphors for transition and duration. Spatial metaphors for time are common in science fiction. In "Labyrinths in Time and Space," Ernest H. Redekop suggests that these metaphors are the natural outcome of the genre's concern with the importance and difficulty of perceiving time: "The preoccupation in science

fiction with the nature and effects of time arises out of the fact that time, more than space, differentiates ways of looking at the universe, and out of the fact that time, as a mode of perception, differs radically from space. Borges, Piranesi and Escher all prove, in one way or another, that it is impossible to articulate our sense of time except in spatial metaphor. Thus we have the Hearaclitean river, the Cretan labyrinth, the hallucinatory prisons of Piranesi, the labyrinths of Borges . . ." (107). Appropriately enough, labyrinths become important metaphors for time in The Deep. Sennred's prison is an old, dark mansion which acts as a confusing maze, and the citadel at the center of the world is a labyrinth of structures built at different times in the history of the feudal society. These environments perfectly capture the abstract, confused, and other-worldly atmosphere which characterizes the sense of time in Crowley's work.

The greatest spatial metaphor for time in The Deep is, however, the space-station world itself. This artificial world is a perfectly regular geometric construct composed of a series of concentric circles, with the world's single city at the center. As a series of closed circles, the topography of the feudal world mirrors its inhabitants' experience of time. Because the feudal culture is fundamentally stable, the actions of its inhabitants seem to occur within a closed circle in time. As Leviathan tells Recorder, human beings were brought to the artificial world by Leviathan's brother in order to fulfil their wish for just such a stable universe:

> That is the tale, Recorder. He came to them on his endless, busy way; he found them on the last undesolated shelf of some wretched ruined stone. They

worshipped him; that has always been his pleasure. He granted their desire.

What was their desire?

An end to Change. What other desire is there? "Take us away," they prayed, "to a new world, like the one our ancientist ancestors lived in, a small world where the sun rises and hastens to the place where he arose, where we can live forever and where nothing runs away." So I remember him telling it . . .

And he brought them here. Here.

They didn't know themselves. They made a bad bargain. We kept our part.

Did you?

They wanted eternal life; he gave them perpetual motion. It comes to the same thing, for such a race. (154)

In scientific terminology, perpetual motion refers to a state in which movement continues on forever without any interference or added energy. In The Deep, the stunted feudalism of the artificial world imitates perpetual motion by trapping the characters in a closed circle of time, in which identical dynastic and class conflicts are acted out again and again, perpetuating an un-changing way of life. Although the culture of this world might seem to be primitive, it actually differs from the archaic model in one important aspect--which paradoxically allies the archaic mentality and the modern scientific one. For archaic man, time renews itself through the periodic regeneration of the cosmos, just as perpetual motion is a scientific impossibility

by virtue of the law of thermodynamics.

Ultimately, however, Crowley does bring change to his fictional kingdom, and this moment of transition is dramatized by a "temporal" variation of an important image (i.e. spatial) pattern. In an early section of the book, two Gray scholars had engaged in restoring an old pattern on the floor of the ancient rotunda, which appears to depict a circle dance of tormented kings (28). This closed circle of pain provides a powerful symbol of the ceaseless, fruitless suffering which characterizes the feudal world. Crowley returns to this image toward the end of the work after the beginning of vital changes in this world. At this point in the text, the Grays have discovered that the pattern is "not a circle but part of a spiral, part of a History they thought, emanating from a beginning in the center to an end--where?" Sennred meditates on this discovery and considers it in terms of his own desire to initiate a change in his world: "Well, he was learning: would learn so well, would live here so long that he could perhaps begin to lead that spiral out of its terrible dance, lead it . . . where?" (176). The change from the image of a closed circle in the beginning to an open spiral at the end of the book indicates a movement toward a progressive vision of cyclical time in keeping with the archaic sense of periodic regeneration. The image of the spiral, like the circle, suggests repetition; however, the spiral offers repetition with variation and the possibility of change.

Significantly, Sennred and the Grays react to the newly-discovered pattern with similar, yet different questions. The Grays believe that the spiral will lead to a final point, but Sennred believes that the spiral will radiate outward from a central point of departure. Sennred's attitude is far more appropriate to the forward-looking spirit of the book's conclusion. His resolution to control the spiral of time and determine its direction reflects the

stranger's decision to change his fate and return to his maker with a question. For both characters, an unanswered question becomes a symbol for the acceptance of the freedoms and uncertainties of true progressive change.

Although The Deep reflects the archaic sensibility which is theoretically articulated in AEgypt, in some respects this early novel is closer to the world of fairy tales and traditional fantasies than Crowley's subsequent work. Successful as it is in coordinating a medieval and a futuristic ethos, this first work is also a bit too remote both geophysically and historically, just as the plot tends toward fable and the characters have an allegorical quality. In the books which follow The Deep, Crowley becomes progressively more of a romancer by accommodating his archaic world view to the landscape and culture of contemporary America.

Chapter III

Beasts and Engine Summer: Two Visions of a Future America

In Beasts and Engine Summer, Crowley continues the blending of science fiction and fantasy which characterizes The Deep. Whereas The Deep has an unspecified temporal and geographical setting, however, Beasts and Engine Summer are historically definable futuristic depictions of contemporary America. Beasts is set in the early twenty-first century and describes the collapse and transformation of modern American culture; Engine Summer explores a much more distant future, in which a subsequent society experiences a moment of change. In both of these works, the American landscape is clearly discernible and functions as the means whereby Crowley creates a dialogue between the past, present, and future of North America.

Beasts is a fragmented narrative which generally or initially lacks a single strong protagonist or point of view. In this respect, the structure of the work reflects the thematic implications of the setting, an American nation which has fragmented into a number of quarrelling independent states, or autonomies. The political turmoil in this fictional world is complicated by the existence of a new species of intelligent life, the "leos," genetically engineered from the cells of lions and men. A leo named Painter becomes the focus of the concerns and actions of the other characters, and thereby unites the different threads of the plot. Ultimately, Painter becomes a messianic figure who provides a naturalistic alternative to the materialistic, anthropocentric world view of the twentieth century. As the story progresses, Painter gradually attracts a small group of followers: Caddie, a young woman who

becomes his lover; Meric Landseer, who leaves an immense, isolationist commune to become a John-the-Baptist figure for Painter; Sten Gregorius, the son of an assassinated politician and now a potential king; and Loren Casaubon, a naturalist who tutors Sten. These individuals are brought together by the schemes of Painter's counsellor, Reynard, a unique hybrid of human and fox, who is totally amoral. Throughout the course of the narrative, Reynard's actions shape the destinies of the other characters and propel the plot forward. Reynard plans the death of Sten's father, an event that overthrows the government and precipitates the human world into chaos. Later, Reynard betrays Painter to the remnants of the federal authorities and then devises the leo's rescue. Beasts concludes when Reynard's schemes gather the chief characters together at an old shot tower, where they can begin the transformation of their world.

Engine Summer, unlike Beasts, focuses on the perceptions of a single individual, "Rush that Speaks." Rush is a young man who tells the story of his life in a dialogue with a woman whom he calls Angel. In Rush's culture, angels are people associated with the technological cultures of the past. Rush grows up in a community called Little Belaire, among the truthful speakers, who have learned the art of communicating their true emotions and intentions through everyday speech. While growing up in this community, Rush falls in love with a girl called Once a Day, only to lose her when she runs away from Little Belaire. Rush's loss strengthens his desire to become a saint, which in the terms of his culture is a person who is remembered through the story of his life. Rush leaves home in order to become a saint, re-discovers Once a Day, loses her again, and slowly matures as an individual. In the process, he travels through the ruins of a world which was even more

technologically advanced than our own, and discovers the answers to the questions of his youth.

Rush's most important discovery concerns a lost glove and ball and a secret about the angels' greatest creation, dead men who were also somehow alive. Blink, a saintly hermit who becomes Rush's friend and teacher, describes the dead men as "a plan for immortality" (94). According to Blink, this plan resulted in the creation of "Five clear spheres without any openings and with, it appeared, nothing at all inside them. Attached to four of these five were angel-pictures, gray and shiny, of four faces" (94). The narrative gradually reveals that the spheres are mechanisms which can preserve a record of an individual's personality long after death. By wearing one of these devices, a living person can briefly become an incarnation of the recorded personality. Rush first learns about the glove and ball when they appear in one of his grandmother's stories about the past (7). The lost glove and ball, which were briefly possessed by the truthful speakers, are in actuality the controls for one of the spheres. When Rush recovers the ball and glove, a man named Mongolfier comes to him from the angels' last refuge with one of the spheres. Mongolfier records Rush's persona within the device and brings the sphere to the angels' floating city in the sky. The conclusion of Engine Summer reveals that Rush has been telling his story in the angels' city, through the medium of the sphere, six hundred years after the events of the narrative (208). In this fashion, the sphere fulfils Rush's desire to become a saint by perpetuating the story of his life. The angels' device also creates an effective sense of closure in the text by connecting the end of Rush's story, which describes the recording of his persona, with the beginning of his dialogue in the airborne city.

As in The Deep, traditional science-fiction motifs play an important part in Beasts and Engine Summer. In Beasts, Painter and Reynard are scientific creations which, however, draw on a long literary tradition of transformed humans and intelligent aliens, evoking what Gary Wolfe describes as the icon of the monster: "The image of the monster is probably the oldest and simplest symbol of transformation in science fiction, and the one in which the individual most directly confronts the forces of the unknown in an 'I-thou' relationship that suggests the view of nature embodied in primitive mythology" (185). Painter and Reynard are embodiments of the unknown and create an indefinite opposition to the world of men; they are the result of a coordination of technology with mythic tales of beast-men. Human characters respond to these figures with awe, dread, curiosity or indifference. The range of emotional responses to the Beasts reflects the creatures' depth as symbols, as well as the extent to which they can mean different things to different people, depending on the angle of perception.

Painter and Reynard possess qualities which associate them with the liminal figures of the Neither-nor and Recorder in The Deep. Neither human nor animal, Painter and Reynard are marginal figures who exist outside the known boundaries of cultures. Painter's statuslessness manifests itself when a policeman attempts to make out a standard report on the leo: "'Distinguishing marks.' The sergeant was a methodical, stupid man. He pondered this. Did they mean distinguishing him from others of his kind, or from men? He had seen others, in films and so on, and to him they all looked pretty much alike. . . . The form just didn't fit the prisoner" (121). Just as Painter fails to fit the descriptive categories of the police, so Reynard bypasses the rules of protocol when he visits Sten's father: "The guards at the door

neither stopped him nor saluted him, though they did stare. They had been instructed that it wasn't protocol to salute him; he wasn't, officially, a member of the Autonomy's government. They didn't stop him because he was unmistakable . . . and that also was why they stared" (47-48). The puzzled wonder of the policeman and the guards resembles Redhand's uncertain response to Recorder in The Deep.

Marginality is not the only liminal attribute of Painter and Reynard, however. Their physical appearances evoke the masks which are often worn by liminal people, and their non-human nature endows them with the sexual ambiguity of the liminal state. Painter and Reynard are androgynous in slightly different ways; Reynard is sexless like the Neither-nor, while Painter is portrayed as a sexual being. For Crowley, androgyny is associated with a wealth of potential and creative power. Accordingly, Painter's sexual union with Caddie is a sign of change and growth similar to the union of Nod and Recorder in The Deep.

Although the liminal aspects of Reynard and the leos associate them with the archaic world, these characters are also allied with the world of fantasy. They often take on the appearance of the anthropomorphic animals of beast-fables, fairy tales, and the fantasies of writers such as C. S. Lewis. During a meeting between Reynard and an imprisoned Painter, for example, an agent of a federal organization watches the strange pair: "From the window of the consulting room, Barron looked down on them. Like a scene from some antique cartoon or fairy tale, seeing them together. Hideous, in a way. Misdirected ingenuity. Frankenstein" (189). The allusion to Mary Shelley's Frankenstein is an appropriate addition to the fairy tale reference in this scene because Shelley's monster, like Painter and Reynard, is a scientific creation that escapes the control of its human creator. Barron uses references to

Frankenstein and fairy tales to express his distaste for Painter and Reynard, whom he would like to control and repress. By contrast, Reynard uses the imagery of folklore and legend in a much more instructive fashion to express his own sense of the origins of his personal identity: "There was no way for Reynard to conceive of himself except as men had conceived of foxes. He had, otherwise, no history: he was the man-fox, and the only other man-fox who had ever existed, existed in the tales of Aesop and the fables of La Fontaine, in the contes of medieval Reynard and Bruin the bear and Isengrim the wolf, in the legends of foxhunters. It surprised him how well that character fitted his nature; or perhaps, then, he had invented his nature out of these tales" (57). Thus Reynard, the product of a possible future, is also an embodiment of ancient beliefs. In this way, Crowley uses fantasy to qualify the science-fiction aspects of Beasts.

Crowley also strengthens the interaction of the old and the new in Beasts with allusions to medieval and Renaissance Europe. The book begins and ends in a space which is dominated by an abandoned shot tower. The tower represents a fragment of old Europe set in America: "It should have been a purely utilitarian structure, a factory for the making of lead bullets. . . . But the builder had been unable to resist the obvious romantic associations his tall, round, granite tower had, and in fact has made a castle keep, grimly Gothic, with narrow, ogive arrow slits and a castellated top. It was a fake feudal keep in a new world, whose only true affinity with real castles was its reason for being: war" (2). The absurd presence of a feudal keep in the American countryside is fantastic in Rabkin's sense of the word, because the tower overturns the reader's expectations of what should constitute a contemporary or futuristic American landscape. More importantly, the tower acts as an important symbol of

time and change. By manifesting the prevalence of war in diverse cultures and times, the tower unites the past, present, and future, emphasizing the unity of time. The shot tower is also an index to change, however, because it "had been long supplanted by more horrid ingenuities" (2). The tower's obsolescence reconciles the persistence of the past with progressive change.

As a medieval construct, the shot tower relates the political and cultural climate of Beasts to the fragmentation of feudal Europe. At one point in the text, Loren pointedly describes the political quarrels of the autonomous American regions in such terms: "They quarrelled endlessly among themselves, and also with the stub of Federal government that still remained, supposedly as an arbitrator but in fact as an armed conspiracy of old bureaucrats and young technocrats desperately trying to retain and advance their power, like a belligerent old Holy Roman Empire intent on controlling rebellious princedoms" (7). For contemporary readers, the historical setting of the Holy Roman Empire is the natural background for traditional fantasies and fables. By re-creating this past in the context of the future, Crowley thus displaces the temporal frame of folklore and fantasy. By associating the turbulent future with the historical past, Crowley also exhibits a sense of cyclical time similar to that of The Deep.

Where Beasts and Engine Summer differ from The Deep, however, is in the way Crowley takes images from the past or hypothetical future and grounds them in a distinctly familiar environment. As a result, whereas the archaic aspect of The Deep has an "exotic" quality, in Beasts and Engine Summer Crowley is engaged in the type of primitivism defined by James Baird in Ishmael: A Study of the Symbolic Mode. According to Baird, literary

primitivism begins with an artist's sense of cultural failure, a state marked by the loss of an authoritative or vibrant system of religious symbolism (16). For Baird, the loss of a symbolic authority in art can be overcome by the articulation of new symbols, which is actually a two-fold renewal process. First, the artist's awareness of cultural failure takes the form of a reversion to the past; second, the artist integrates his atavistic experiences with those of his own culture. Thus the process involves the recovery of "archetypal concepts in the making of new and 'personal' religious symbols" (18). Baird refers to the personal content of the symbol as the autotype: "The autotype is fused with some archetypal emblem from atavistic reversion, and thus determines the primary elements of a symbol" (18).

This concept of autotype and archetype is similar to Fiedler's notion of signature and archetype. Baird's perspective, however, is broader, since to him the artist goes outside the boundaries of his/her own culture for the material of symbols. Baird's particular interest is with the primitivist's attraction to the Orient, since in his terms "the journey to the Orient is the quest for the material of new symbols to serve the need of the Protestant mind" (17). The quest for new symbols can also be regarded as a mental journey, however, and it is in this context that Baird's ideas apply to Crowley's work, just as Crowley adds a new dimension by suggesting that the trip can be into the future or back again to our own time.

In Engine Summer, the interaction of different points in time creates a sense of wonder similar to the fantastic dimension of Beasts. Whereas Beasts draws on the imagery of the past as a source of the marvellous, Engine Summer transforms the artifacts of contemporary America into objects of wonder. Although Crowley also employs futuristic technologies in this work, the magical element of Engine Summer derives from the

characters' mystical responses to commonplace objects such as a freeway which Rush visits with his father (20-22), or an ancient crossword puzzle that fascinates Blink, of which Rush observes that "I understood why he had spent so many years at it: to have been hidden so well, what at last appeared in the boxes must be of vast importance" (88).

Rush's misconception of the puzzle's original purpose and importance derives from a misinterpretation of the past that characterizes an important sub-genre within science fiction, which consists of stories of post-apocalyptic worlds in which the relics of the reader's present become magical, mysterious objects. Walter M. Miller, Jr.'s A Canticle for Leibowitz is one of the best examples of this sub-genre. Miller's work portrays the slow reconstruction of civilization in the years following a nuclear war, as seen through the eyes of an order of monks who are dedicated to the preservation of knowledge. In his comments on Miller's book, Wolfe observes that "the familiar is rendered as the unknown; a simple scribbled message such as 'can kraut, six bagels--bring home for Emma' becomes a sacred document to future monks unable to decipher the allusions to the trivia of our own age. . . . this aspect of history--that it only selectively remembers and distorts the past--becomes a continuing theme in the book . . . that assures us that the reconstruction of civilization will not result in quite the same civilization we know because of these corruptions" (138). Wolfe's comments on the misunderstood shopping list in Miller's work can be applied to the misunderstood puzzle in Engine Summer, in order to suggest that Rush's perception of the past is not simply a means of introducing a sense of wonder into the text, but is also an affirmation of Crowley's belief that true change does exist and prevents a literal return to the past.

By depicting a future which re-interprets the culture of the present, Engine Summer

not only creates a sense of wonder and an awareness of change, but also incorporates archaic values into a setting which is both futuristic and distinctly American. The manner in which everyday objects and actions become laden with archaic meaning in Crowley's text may be seen in a passage concerning Rush's first encounter with money. Although Little Belaire trades through barter, Rush and Once a Day, as children, are taught about the use of money and commerce in the days of the angels. Afterwards, Once a Day gives Rush an ancient coin:

> She took my hand and placed the disk in it. It was warm from her flesh. "If I give you Money," she said, "you must do what I say." She closed my fingers around it. "You've taken it now," she said. Painted Red had said people had once given others Money to do their bidding. I felt as though I were participating in a sin as old as the earth. But I didn't want to refuse the money in my hand. "What," I said . . . "What do you want me to do." (34-35)

This exchange seals a powerful emotional bond between Rush and Once a Day which fulfils itself in the love plot of the work. The emotional resonance of the passage restores the significance of the act of payment, which has become trivialized in the commercial society of contemporary America, by endowing the simple transfer of a coin with the function of ritualized oath of fealty. By doing so, Engine Summer evidences the compensatory function

of romance, since Rush's concern with the consequences of his actions creates a sharp contrast to the unthinking materialism of twentieth-century culture and thereby reminds the reader of the duties and desires which underlie the concepts of payment and service.

In mingling the past, present, and future, the fictional worlds of Beasts and Engine Summer run the risks of futuristic fiction described by Mark Rose in Alien Encounters:

> Stories of the near future tend to be extrapolations, extensions of selected factors from the present. Quite properly, much in these worlds remains familiar. Stories of the far future, however, encounter an imaginative problem analogous to that of narratives that attempt to describe the alien, for the truly new is no less inconceivable than the truly alien. Stories of aliens get caught in the problem of anthropomorphism; stories of the future get caught in the problem of repetition. Hence the common phenomenon of primitive, classical, or medieval futures. . . . Rather than claiming to portray true or even possible futures, fictions can subvert this problem by acknowledging their futures as metaphors. . . . Alternatively, a story can, like Solaris in its incorporation of the problem of anthropomorphism, take repetition for its subject. (110-11)

Beasts and Engine Summer do adopt the latter strategy to the extent that they explore the

limits imposed on repetition by a progressive system of cyclical time. Crowley addresses the subject of repetition most directly in Engine Summer, when Rush and Angel discuss a crystal which is being used to record Rush's story. In answer to Rush's questions, Angel explains that the recording is meant "to see how strong you are. I mean whether the story will change. . . . Depending on who tells it." According to Angel, with each new repetition Rush's story does change "In small ways" (173). The small changes which appear in the stories told by successive incarnations of Rush's persona suggest that no story or experience can be exactly repeated, due to the constantly changing circumstances of the future. Because the main narrative of Engine Summer is presented to the reader as Rush's story, which is endlessly retold in the floating city, change within repetition becomes a central concern of the work.

In both Beasts and Engine Summer, personal and cultural experiences of change are integrated in the experiences of messianic characters. As an archetypal figure drawn from the collective unconscious, the figure of the redeeming hero unites the social and individual spheres of existence. In "The Messianic Hero," John Weir Perry describes the psychological function of this figure in the integrative process: "the reforming hero represents one's motivation to participate meaningfully and effectively in the great social issues of the times. As he is activated and takes the lead in the psychic drama, one finds one's social orientation becoming involved in the integrative process. . . . The redeeming hero as an image describes not the specific part one is to play in life, but the potential and the motivation to fulfil it" (187). Although Perry is primarily concerned with the means by which the image of the messianic hero connects the individual to his society on the psychological level of existence, the redeeming hero can also function as a religious figure who joins the spiritual and material

worlds. Insofar as the Incarnation is concerned, Christ symbolizes this aspect of the redeeming hero, and to this effect Crowley frequently uses such comparisons to suggest the messianic roles of his protagonists. To the extent that Christ symbolizes the triumph of the spiritual over the material world, however, he is also a primary symptom of cultural failure. Accordingly, Crowley's redeeming heroes are typically engaged in a quarrel with Christianity and simultaneously function as re-energized religious figures.

A specific case in point in Beasts is Painter, who in speaking to his human companions, exhorts them: "Make me a trapper. I will make you hunters of men" (206). Painter's words are similar to those of Jesus to Peter and Andrew, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). The substitution of hunting for fishing reflects Painter's predatory nature, and associates the leo with the natural world which the Judeo-Christian tradition often rejects. To this effect, Meric had earlier explicitly contrasted Painter and Jesus:

> Jesus was two natures, God and man, the godhead in him burning through the flesh toward his worshippers, burning out the flesh in them. Painter was two natures too: through his thin, strained voice pressed all the dark, undifferentiated world, all the voiceless beasts; it was the world . . . Jesus promised to free us from, the old world returned to capture us, speak in a voice to us, reclaim us for its own. It was as though the heavy, earth-odorous Titans had returned to strike down at last the cloudy scheming gods, as though the circle had closed that had seemed an upward spiral, as though a reverse

messiah had come to crush all useless hope forever. (105-06)

Meric correctly observes that Painter opposes the spiritual orientation of Christianity by embodying the older world of nature; however, Painter is not as regressive as Meric's words suggest. Although the leo would restore the old relationship between man and nature, he is also a product of innovation, as Loren notes; "Half-man, half-lion, the magazines and television always said. But Loren knew better, knew there are no such things as half-beasts: Painter was not half-anything, but wholly leo, as complete as a rose or a deer. An amazing thing for life to have thrown up; using man's ceaseless curiosity and ingenuity, life had squared its own evolution" (205). As a wholly new type of species, a product of the life-force working through science and imagination, Painter represents a movement forward as well as a movement backward; by resurrecting the past he leads the way to the future.

Unlike Beasts, Engine Summer does not portray an explicit conflict with traditional Christianity because the work is set long after the transformation of our civilization. The spiritual and cultural orientation of Rush's America is primarily communal, matriarchal and nature-oriented. This sensibility contrasts with the dominant ideologies of earlier periods, and Crowley emphasizes this contrast by attaching new meanings to traditional Christian terms, such as saint or angel. The vitality of these new beliefs becomes apparent when Rush describes his childhood teacher, Painted Red, as a holy person and explains his use of the term: "I knew then that Painted Red was very holy; possibly she was a saint. . . . Blink told me once that in ancient times they said a thing was holy if it made you hold your tongue. We said a thing was holy if it made you laugh. That's all" (12). The transition from silence

to laughter serves as a model of the shift in perception which has occurred in this future America. In Beasts, Painter appears in opposition to Christ because he represents the process of Christianity's transformation. This particular process of change precedes the events in Engine Summer, removing the necessity of defining Rush's role as a redeemer in negative Christian images. Rush shares the messianic archetype with Christ and Painter, but his specific form as a redeemer has a new signature.

Rush becomes a messianic figure through the mechanism of the sphere. Engine Summer presents the act of wearing the sphere and becoming, briefly, a container for another's personality as a revelatory experience. Before meeting Mongolfier, Rush is given the opportunity of wearing a sphere, which contains the recorded persona of a test animal, a cat named Boots. Recalling the effects of his experience, Rush states that "I couldn't have known, wouldn't have guessed, that to be absent for a time, to be for a time inhabited by a creature simpler, less confused, more simply wise than I, could so alter me, could so alter the world that I am made of: but with growing joy I learned. I learned . . . to let the task be master: which is only not to choose to do anything but what has chosen me to be done" (168). Just as Boots alters Rush's conception of the world and his life in it, so Rush transforms the angels who adopt his persona or listen to his story. As Angel tells him, however, Rush has an even greater effect on the individuals who wear his sphere "because though Boots has no memory, you have" (205). From Angel, Rush learns that over the years his story and his persona have influenced the inhabitants of the floating city to the extent that Angel can say: "You've taught us. We are truthful speakers too now, Rush" (206). In effect, Rush redeems the floating world of the angels with his ability, through the medium of the

sphere, to endow others with his sensibility as a truthful speaker.

As an unchanging entity which is repeatedly incarnated in different individuals over a long period of time, Rush's recorded persona resembles the Christian model of the Holy Spirit. It should be noted that the transparent globe which houses Rush's personality recalls an earlier work of science fiction which also attempts to transfer Christian religious concepts into a futuristic setting. In "The Fire Balloons," Ray Bradbury portrays a group of priests who travel to Mars in order to preach the gospel to a strange race of Martians described as "round luminous globes of light" (182). The priests create an open-air church which features a glass sphere containing a light, which is meant to symbolize Christ for the Martians. When the priests attempt to hold a service in their church, the light-creatures come to them and explain that they have no need for the priests' message: "Once we were men, with bodies and legs and arms such as yours. The legend has it that one of us, a good man, discovered a way to free man's soul and intellect, to free him of bodily ills and melancholies, of deaths and transfigurations, of ill humors and senilities, and so we took on the look of lightning and blue fire. . . . We have put away the sins of the body and live in God's grace" (191-92). Later, as the priests leave their church and prepare to go to the human settlements on Mars, one of the group comments on the glass sphere, saying "It's Him. It is Him, after all" (193). Clearly, Bradbury's representation of an alien type of Christ anticipates the imagery of Engine Summer, allowing one to conclude that Crowley is drawing on a science-fiction tradition of transforming old religious ideas into futuristic, alien, or technological forms.

Although his distinguishing characteristics as a messianic hero are grounded in science fiction, Rush evokes an archaic sensibility by fulfilling the truthful speakers' understanding of

what it means to be a saint. Painted Red explains the purpose of the saints of Little Belaire to Rush, not long before Rush begins his travels:

> The circle of a saint's life, all its circumstances, is contained in the story of his life as he tells it; and the story of his life is contained in our remembering it. The story of his life is a circumstance in ours. So the circle of his life is contained in the circle of our lives, like circles of ripples rising in water. . . . They're saints not because of what they did, especially, but because in the telling of it, what they did became transparent, and your own life could be seen through it illuminated. . . . Without truthful speaking there could be no transparent life. And in transparent life, the saints hoped that one day we might be free from death: not immortal, as the angels tried to become, but free from death, our lives transparent even as we live them . . . transparent in their circumstances: so that instead of telling a story that makes a life transparent, we will ourselves be transparent, and not hear or remember a saint's life but live it. . . . (66-67)

Painted Red's model of transparency resembles the archaic imitation of archetypes which is described by Eliade. In archaic cultures, while engaging in important activities individuals identify themselves with heroes of myth. This identification allows the individual to escape the restrictions of profane time and the limitations of his own existence in order to enter the sacred, meaningful realm of myth (27-35). Because the individuals who wear the sphere

which houses Rush's recorded persona literally become Rush for a brief period of time, Rush's experience becomes a physical representation of the relationship between archaic man and his archetypal models. Simultaneously, Rush acts as the perfect saint, whose life can be directly experienced by those who hear his story. It is this aspect of Rush's role as a messianic hero that distinguishes him from Painter, because Painter, despite his importance as a leader, symbol, and focus of change, never becomes a figure of absolute identification in the manner of Rush.

Another significant difference between Beasts and Engine Summer manifests itself in the differences between the two works' plots. Both works contain the quest plots, but the absence of a single dominant pair of lovers in Beasts prevents an effective hierogamy from taking place. Beasts introduces several male/female pairs such as Caddie and Painter who could constitute a hierogamous couple, but the fragmented quality of the narrative shifts the reader's attention from each pair before an emotionally satisfying bond can be formed. In Engine Summer, however, Rush's quest for sainthood is inextricably bound up with his love for Once a Day. Although Rush loses his love, the conclusion of his quest still brings about a satisfactory hierogamy. During a pause in the narrative, the reader learns that Rush is telling his story through the medium of Angel's lover. When Rush asks Angel first "Will you tell me about him, the one who I am? Is it a man?" and then "Do you love him?" (173), Angel answers both questions in the affirmative. Later, just before the sphere which carries Rush's persona is withdrawn from Angel's lover in order to end Rush's story, Rush asks Angel to make a pledge which becomes a restoration of the broken bond between Rush and Once a Day:

> Listen: The one who I am, you must be gentle with him, angel, when he returns, remember. Here, take my hand, take his hand. Yes. Don't let go. Promise.
>
> Yes. I promise.
>
> Stay with him.
>
> Ever after. I promise. Now close your eyes. (209)

Earlier, Once a Day had used the words "Ever after" in a promise to remain with Rush (42), and the repetition of this phrase connects the two pledges. The setting of the floating city also suggests the concept of hierogamy by creating an image of the meeting of earth and sky.

Although Beasts and Engine Summer address similar issues--such as androgyny, cultural change, and the role of the messianic hero--each features a different generic blend. Both works rely on the conventions of science fiction, and both have a fantastic component; in Beasts, however, the emphasis on ecological-political issues gives the work a moralistic quality, whereas Engine Summer is resonant with emotion and gaiety. At the same time, these works do comment on each other, and to this extent they reflect Rush's observations on the stories of his childhood: "all those stories were in some way one story: a simple story about being alive, and being a man; a story that, simple as it was, couldn't itself be told" (55). As two different, yet closely related visions of America's future, Beasts and Engine Summer are also fragments of a single story which Crowley weaves together in his subsequent masterpiece, Little, Big.

Chapter IV

Little, Big: The Transformation of Two Worlds

The plot of Little, Big links personal and cultural experiences of change within a world pervaded by enchantment. The book begins with the courtship and marriage of Smoky Barnable and Daily Alice Drinkwater. The personal and social focus of this marriage-plot expands outward, however, when Smoky discovers that the Drinkwater family has a special affinity for the numinous. The Drinkwaters literally believe in fairies, and the history of their family reflects the shaping influence of these magical beings. Through passages dealing with Daily Alice's great-grandparents, John Drinkwater and Violet Bramble, Crowley portrays the beginning of the family's involvement in the history of the fairies, often referred to as "the Tale." When Smoky enters the ongoing tale he finds that he cannot adopt his bride's open faith in the fairy world, but he accepts the presence of the mysteries which surround him, assuming a position on the margins of belief and disbelief. Smoky's son, Auberon, grows up to share his father's scepticism and uncertainty. Ultimately, however, Auberon does accept and enter the world of the fairies, when he falls in love with a girl named Sylvie who possesses a mysterious destiny.

Auberon's childhood and growth into maturity coincides with a transformation of American society. The setting of the novel is futuristic and depicts an American nation which falls into political fragmentation and an economic decline. This future history, which resembles the settings of Beasts and Engine Summer, merges with the history of the fairies when a strange leader named Russell Eigenblick becomes president. Eigenblick is actually

the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, revived from an enchanted sleep by the fairies in order to preside over the decline of America. The histories of the fairies, the Drinkwaters, and the political world of Eigenblick arrive at a mutual conclusion when the human characters enter fairyland, replacing its original inhabitants and thereby regenerating the world of myth and fantasy. In this way the fantastic presence of the fairies becomes the medium which joins a personal family history with a cultural experience of change.

In Little, Big, Crowley's characteristic blending of fantasy and realism takes on a form which distinguishes this text from his earlier works. Whereas the artificial world of The Deep and the potential futures of Beasts and Engine Summer have a self-contained and fictive quality, in Little, Big Crowley begins with a recognizable contemporary American setting. Although he avoids specific references to dates or places, the novel does begin with a specific time frame: "On a certain day in June, 19--, a young man was making his way on foot northward from the great City to a town or place called Edgewood . . ." (3). Similarly, his detailed description of places and everyday events clearly associate "19--" with the present and "the great City" with New York. The New York setting becomes apparent when Smoky, just after meeting Daily Alice for the first time, "stood for a long time on the stoop . . . sniffing the wind which had turned, as it infrequently does in the city, and flew in from the ocean. He could smell tide, and shore and sea detritus. . . . And realized that the great City was after all a sea island, and a small one at that" (14). The fantastic landscape of fairy-tale time enters this vision of America and comes to dominate it, but it does not wholly undermine Crowley's portrait of the everyday world. By introducing fairies into a realistic American landscape, Little, Big becomes what C. S. Lewis describes as "that sort of book in

which we begin by saying, 'Let us suppose that this everyday world were, at some one point, invaded by the marvellous. Let us, in fact, suppose a violation of frontier'" (47). In Little, Big the entrance of the fairies and their world results in a dialogue between the fantastic and the everyday which preserves the essential integrity of both worlds.

One of the ways Crowley prepares the reader for the invasion of the marvellous involves portraying a number of traditional figures of myth and folklore as literal realities in Little, Big. These figures often appear in the midst of everyday activities, such as family holidays and celebrations. The Drinkwater family, for example, have a Christmas Eve tradition of writing letters to Santa Claus. As a part of this tradition, the family follows the old practice of burning the letters to transmit their messages to Santa: "Down in the study they had gathered with eggnog and their letters. Doc had his folded like true correspondence, its backside pimpled with hard-struck punctuation; Mother's was torn from a brown bag, like a shopping list. The fire took them all, though. . . . When he received these communications, Santa drew the claws of his spectacles from behind his ears and pressed the sore place on the bridge of his nose with thumb and finger" (193-94). The shift from the common family ritual to a literal, objective representation of Santa Claus introduces the world of fairy-tales into everyday life, and in the process regenerates the emotional validity of the legend in a manner which resembles the ritualized treatment of money in Engine Summer.

In a similar manner, by placing figures drawn from European folklore in a contemporary American environment, Crowley gives universal archetypes a distinctly American signature. The transformation of Frederick Barbarossa into Russell Eigenblick best illustrates this process. Barbarossa belongs to the tradition of sleeping heroes who will

awaken at the time of their nation's greatest need. Ariel Hawksquill, a wizard and a distant Drinkwater cousin, describes this heroic tradition and observes that it has no true American counterpart: "We as a people are too young to have cultivated stories like those told of Arthur, and perhaps too self-satisfied to have felt the need of any. Certainly none are told of the so-called fathers of our country; the idea that one of those gentlemen is not dead but asleep, say, in the Ozarks or the Rockies is funny but not anywhere held" (401). A form of the myth of the sleeping hero exists in the story of Rip Van Winkle; however, Washington Irving's character is not a national saviour like King Arthur. Barbarossa's reign as Eigenblick provides a means of bringing the archetype of the sleeping hero to America. When Eigenblick is mysteriously carried off to the fairies' world to join the other human characters, vanishing from a moving train (592-93), his sudden disappearance becomes the subject of a popular legend: "Whether in the Smokies or the Rockies, deep in a crater lake or far beneath the ruined Capital itself, he lay only asleep, with his executive assistants around him, his red beard growing longer; waiting for the day (foretold by a hundred signs) when his people's great need should at last awake him again" (594). Thus the legend of Frederick Barbarossa and the legend of Russell Eigenblick are presented as different manifestations of a single archetype. By depicting Barbarossa himself as a character who journeys, suffers, and changes, Crowley also provides a type of naturalistic explanation of the transmutation and recurrence of archetypal symbols.

In Little, Big, the character of Eigenblick similarly seems to link Crowley's future America and the Holy Roman Empire. In Beasts, the vision of a fragmented America was correlated with the strife-ridden realm of Barbarossa, but this comparison was brief and

superficial. By contrast, the metaphoric relationship between Barbarossa's European and American kingdoms becomes a literal identity in Little, Big. Again a quasi-naturalistic explanation is provided, this time by Ariel Hawksquill who contends that "The Holy Roman Empire did not pass away. . . . It continued to exist. It continued, like an amoeba, to shift, crawl, expand, contract; and that while Russell Eigenblick slept his long sleep . . . it has crept and slid, shifting and drifting like the continents, until it is now located here, where we sit. How exactly its borders should be drawn I have no idea, though I suspect they may be identical with this country's. In any case we are well within it" (402). Hawksquill's description of the migrating Empire which absorbs different places at different times serves as a spatial model for Crowley's sense of cyclic time and for the interpenetration of moments of change.

Crowley's sense of space in Little, Big also reflects the archaic attitude toward space as an indefinite number of physical places which may coincide with the sacred center. The values of ritual endow space with numinous power, over-coming the limitations of profane physical geography. In Little, Big, Violet Bramble enters this region where physical boundaries lose their meaning when she travels to America. Although she fears that she has lost contact with the fairies and spirits of her native England, after arriving at John Drinkwater's estate, Edgewood, Violet discovers that she can re-enter the fairy world. The process is explained when she meets and questions an old friend among the fairies:

> "Then tell me truly," Violet said. "How do you come to be here?"
>
> Mrs. Underhill started in surprise. "I?" she said. "Whatever do you

mean, child? I've been here all the time. It's you who've been in motion." (62)

The world of the fairies remains constant in the face of changes in profane space. Like the sacred center of archaic myth, it can be accessed from more than one location in time and space.

The fictional exploration in Little, Big of the mythological bonds which connect different cultures and times reflects the ideas of D.H. Lawrence in his observations on the nature of the American psyche. In an early version of the essay "The Spirit of Place," Lawrence describes his belief in the shaping influence of cultural homelands: "Every people is polarized in some particular locality, some home or homeland. And every great era of civilisation seems to be the expression of a particular continent or continent region, as well as of the people concerned. There is, no doubt, some peculiar potentiality attaching to every distinct region of the earth's surface. . . . There is some subtle magnetic or vital influence inherent in every specific locality, and it is this influence which keeps the inhabitant stable" (20). Lawrence elaborates this theory by suggesting that major shifts in patterns of trade, exploration, and human migration occur when the currents of influence between cultural poles change, as in the Renaissance: "The old stability of Europe was gone, the old circuit of vital flow was broken. It was then that Europe fell directly into polar unison with America. Europe and America became the great poles of negative and positive vitalism" (21). Lawrence's concept of changing patterns of cultural interaction resembles the dialogue between Europe and America in Little, Big. For both writers, historical processes become

visible through spatial movements of people and their cultures. For Crowley, the fairies become the visible manifestation of Lawrence's "circuit of vital flow."

Although the fairies illuminate broad movements of social change in Crowley's work, they are also inextricably linked to the growth and development of individuals. Daily Alice and her sister Sophie, for example, grow up on intimate terms with the fairies. As children, poised on the brink of puberty, they make frequent expeditions to the woods near Edgewood with their great-uncle Auberon Drinkwater. The elder Auberon, whose name is eventually given to Daily Alice's son, uses the occasions to take nude photographs of the children--not for sexual or purely artistic reasons, but to use the children as mediums to attract the fairies, whose existence Auberon suspects but cannot prove. Although Auberon never succeeds in perceiving the fairies directly, his young companions do enter the fairy world: "And they would hear Auberon behind them somewhere and be unable to answer him or show him, though it was he who had brought them here, he who had spun them like tops, tops that then walked away from him, walked their own way" (99). The girls' encounters with the fairies are magical, supernatural experiences; however, Auberon's photographs of the sisters also capture the natural, biological process of maturation, presenting "The two girls opening through time like the magic flowers of nature films . . ." (182). Because the transforming power of the fairies is set beside the transforming power of adolescence in Auberon's photographs, the girls' growth into adulthood acquires the emotional resonance of a magical metamorphosis, just as the magical component is grounded in the "real" world.

Physical and mental transformations often appear in much more direct and fantastic forms in Little, Big. Violet Bramble's son August is transformed into a fish as a young man,

and Sophie's daughter, Lilac, is stolen by the fairies and replaced with a changeling. The Drinkwaters and their friends undergo a number of subtle and extreme alterations when they enter the world of the fairies in the final chapters of the novel, and the touchstone for such changes is alluded to when Smoky begins to pack for the journey into fairyland, taking with him "A little onion-skin Ovid, from the bedside table. Metamorphoses" (616).

The role of metamorphosis in Crowley's work can also be elucidated by Bakhtin's comments on the subject in "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel": "Metamorphosis or transformation is a mythological sheath for the idea of development--but one that unfolds not so much in a straight line as spasmodically, a line with 'knots' in it, one that therefore constitutes a distinctive type of temporal sequence" (113). As Bakhtin's words suggest, the fantastic aspect of metamorphosis derives from seeing development in spatial terms, just as the spasmodic element can be related to Kuhn's model of paradigm change in science.

The numerous metamorphoses which occur in Little, Big express a sense of multiplicity which is also manifested in a number of architectural constructs. Of these, the most important is the Drinkwater estate, Edgewood, which assumes the symbolic resonance of the sacred center by serving as a bridge between the fairy-tale world and everyday reality. The house's narrative function as a meeting-place of different worlds is embodied in its physical form. The building's appearance changes when it is observed from different angles, and Daily Alice explains the unusual structure which produces this trick of perspective: "See, it's a house of all fronts. It was built to be a sample. My great-grandfather? Who I wrote you about? He built this house to be a sample, so people could come and look at it, from any side, and choose which kind of house they wanted; that's why the inside is so crazy. It's

so many houses, sort of put inside each other or across each other, with their fronts sticking out" (34-35). By containing many potential buildings within a single form, Edgewood becomes a structural model of the generic multiplicity of Little, Big.

Real as it may be, however, Edgewood is also presented in such a way that it begins to appear as a fantastic construct. The interior of the Drinkwaters' house is a maze of rooms, stairs, and corridors. Although some of the rooms on occasion are labelled as imaginary, such as the "Imaginary bedroom" or the "imaginary study" (33), these rooms are generally presented as physical spaces, and the oddity of their names does not stand out in the eccentric environment of Edgewood. Paradoxically, however, Crowley questions the reality of these rooms by introducing the concept of a truly imaginary room in the case of Auberon and Sylvie. The two share a small room in the city and Auberon responds to the lack of space by creating an imaginary study. He tells Sylvie that "There were lots of imaginary rooms at Edgewood where I grew up" (366), and describes the imaginative process of make-believe which he intends to use in creating his own imaginary room: "'The idea is,' Auberon said, 'that when I say "I'm going into my study, babe," and then sit down in this chair, then it's as though I've gone into a separate room. I shut the door. Then I'm alone in there. You can't see me or hear me, because the door is closed. And I can't see or hear you. Get it?'" (366-67) Auberon's association of his make-believe study with the imaginary rooms of his family home suggests that Edgewood too might be an uncertain region which exists partially within the imaginations of its inhabitants. This suggestion that the Drinkwater estate is both the fantastic component and a subjective phenomenon at once contrasts with and provides the rationale for the narrative's presentation of Santa Claus and Mrs. Underhill as parts of an

empirical reality.

The tension between subjective and objective perspectives in Little, Big also manifests itself in the text's treatment of the imagery of the Ptolemaic Universe. The ancient vision of a cosmos composed of concentric spheres plays an important part in Crowley's works: it influences the structure of the artificial world in The Deep, and it is closely associated with the life of Giordano Bruno in AEgypt. In Little, Big, the Ptolemaic system serves as a model for the relationship between the fairy-tale world and the everyday world. Violet's father uses this model in an attempt to create a scientific description of the fairies' world: "It is another world entirely, and it is enclosed within this one; it is in a sense a universal retreating mirror image of this one, with a peculiar geography I can only describe as infundibular. . . . I mean by this that the other world is composed of a series of concentric rings, which as one penetrates deeper into the other world, grow larger. The further in you go, the bigger it gets" (50).

Ariel Hawksquill also pictures the world of the fairies as an infinite series of nesting realms; however, unlike Violet's father--who regards fairyland as a physical space--Hawksquill places the other world within the self, as the garden of the Immortals (586-87). For Hawksquill, the Ptolemaic system functions within the individual mind, where it can bind the individual to the cosmos through the ancient practice of using objects or spaces to structure one's memory: "And the Art of Memory: had not the art introjected into the finite circle of her, Hawksquill's, skull the mighty circles of the heavens? And did not that cosmic engine within then order her memory, thus her perception, of things sublunar, celestial, and infinite?" (291-92). Hawksquill's intellectual manipulation of the Ptolemaic cosmos contrasts

with the literal scheme of Violet's father, but both characters draw on a common pattern of imagery in an attempt to relate the fairy-tale world to everyday experience.

The fairies' presence in the commonplace world of Little, Big, whether regarded as an empirical or subjective phenomenon, reflects a belief in the power of small things. Hawksquill, after contemplating the imaginative mind's ability to contain the entire cosmos, observes that "Every schoolboy (in the schools that had schooled Hawksquill) knew small worlds were great" (292). The greatness of small worlds manifests itself in the characterization of the fairies, who are often represented as small yet powerful beings. Mrs. Underhill, for example, is first described as "Tiny, bent Mrs. Underhill, who was mostly shawl-bound head and great slippered feet . . ." (61). Her true power becomes apparent, however, when she turns her attention away from Lilac--who has come under Mrs. Underhill's care in the fairy world--and returns to her normal tasks: "the last of the year still unburied, and the rains that were to bury it (and a million insect larvae, a million bulbs and seeds) yet un-poured; the floor of heaven unswept of dirty cloud and its winter lamps still to be lit. . . . She sighed, turned away, and (growing huger and older and more puissant than Lilac had ever supposed, or could imagine or even dream her to be) she expended upward and outward toward these tasks . . " (495).

Lilac also exemplifies the power of the small in Little, Big. She never grows beyond childhood in the fairies' world, and her association with childhood is strengthened when Auberon Barnable invents an imaginary playmate named Lilac, who strongly resembles his vanished cousin. Despite her youth and stature, Lilac ultimately becomes a powerful figure in the closing chapters of Little, Big, when she returns to the Drinkwaters in order to guide the

family into fairyland. Like Mrs. Underhill, Lilac is small yet important.

Like the magical characters in Little, Big, so Crowley's settings often embody the paradoxical notion that small things can also be great. One of the most important of these settings is a small park, built by John Drinkwater, which is explored by Auberon Barnable and Ariel Hawksquill:

> . . . she walked with him along the curiously curving paths that seemed always about to lead them deeper within the park but in fact always contrived to direct them back to its perimeters. . . . The paths, though they didn't seem to, led them in to where a sort of pavilion or temple--a tool shed in fact, she supposed--stood at the park's center. Overarching trees and aged bushes disguised its miniature size; from certain angles it appeared to be the visible porch or corner of a great house; and though the park was small, here at the center the surrounding city, by some trick of planting and perspective, could hardly be perceived at all. She began to remark on this.
>
> "Yes," he said. "The further in you go, the bigger it gets. . . ." (408)

Like Edgewood, the park is both a tangible, commonplace space and a site pervaded by the numinous. The park's mystical qualities stem from the spatial inversion described by the phrase "The further in you go, the bigger it gets"--an expression which is used by Violet's father, and which frequently reappears in the text in association with the fairies and their world. The effects of the park's inversion of space are all the greater because they are not

produced by magic, but rather by tricks of perspective.

By confusing the large and the small, settings such as John Drinkwater's park violate conventional attitudes toward spatial relationships, thereby evoking an archaic sense of space. For archaic man, as Eliade notes, "Neither the objects of the external world nor human acts, properly speaking, have any autonomous intrinsic value. Objects or acts acquire a value, and in so doing become real, because they participate, after one fashion or another in a reality that transcends them" (3-4). When objects gain value from a transcendent reality, their relative physical sizes become meaningless: a pebble may be more important than a boulder, and a small city park may be more important than a forest.

The archaic disregard for external proportion which underlies the treatment of size and distance in Little, Big also reflects current thinking in psychology. In "The Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairy Tales," Jung comments on the power of small figures in fairy tales, visions, and dreams:

> I have often encountered motifs which made me think that the unconscious must be the world of the infinitesimally small. . . . It seems to me . . . that this liking for diminutives on the one hand and for superlatives--giants, etc.--on the other is connected with the queer uncertainty of spatial and temporal relations in the unconscious. Man's sense of proportion, his rational conception of big and small, is distinctly anthropomorphic, and it loses its validity not only in the realm of physical phenomena but also in those parts of the collective unconscious beyond the range of the specifically human. The atman is smaller

> than small and bigger than big," he is "the size of a thumb" yet he "encompasses the earth on every side and rules over the ten-finger space." . . . In the same way, the archetype of the wise old man is quite tiny, almost imperceptible, and yet it possesses a fateful potency.

Where the notion of "little, big" also prevails, Jung then goes on to note, is in the area of physics: "The archetypes have this peculiarity in common with the atomic world, which is demonstrating before our eyes that the more deeply the investigator penetrates into the universe of microphysics, the more devastating are the explosive forces he finds enchained there. That the greatest effects come from the smallest causes has become patently clear not only in physics but in the field of psychological research as well" (79-80). Thus the concept of the power of littleness is as much a part of twentieth-century physics and psychology as of the archaic conception of the value of objects.

In Crowley's text, the psychological dimension of the paradox of a small world which expands as one enters its borders is best exemplified in the "small" chapter which has the same title as the "larger" work. In "Little, Big," Crowley presents a simple, commonplace portrait of Smoky, Daily Alice, and Sophie watching the stars on a late summer night. As Daily Alice watches the sky, she experiences a sense of disorientation which evokes the numinous power of a star-filled sky:

> Daily Alice couldn't tell if she felt huge or small. She wondered whether her head were so big as to be able to contain all this starry universe, or whether the

> universe were so little that it would fit within the compass of her human head. She alternated between these feelings, expanding and diminishing. The stars wandered in and out of the vast portals of her eyes, under the immense empty dome of her brow; and then Smoky took her hand and she vanished to a speck, still holding the stars as in a tiny jewel box within her. (207-08)

Alice's sense of containing the universe does not depend on the actions of the fairies or the arcane practices of Ariel Hawksquill. She experiences the multiplicity of reality, as reflected in her shifting sense of size, without moving beyond the common personal experience of observing the stars with friends. Her response to the night sky seems fantastic, but it does not actually overturn the rules which govern the material world. Thus, although Daily Alice's subjective experience implicitly recalls the transformations in Alice in Wonderland, Crowley does not subvert realism in the interest of fantasy, but rather evokes the numinous within a personal experience of everyday life.

Although Crowley continues to explore the fantastic potential of everyday experience throughout the course of Little, Big, the narrative's conclusion centers on the literal regeneration of the world of the fairies. This transformation of the world of myth and folklore occurs when the old fairies retreat into a deeper sphere of existence, leaving the Drinkwaters and their companions to assume the fairies' places. The Drinkwaters' journey into fairyland culminates in a banquet which takes place in a pastoral forest (620-24). This setting resembles the characteristic space which Northrop Frye associates with narrative conclusions in romance: "Romance has no continuing city as its final resting place. In

folktales and fairy tales the chief characters live in a kind of atomized society: there is only the most shadowy sense of a community, and their kings and princesses are individuals given the maximum of leisure, privacy, and freedom of action. . . . The same disintegrated society reappears in the cells of hermits, the caves of ogres, the cottages hidden in forests; in the shepherds of pastoral, the knights errant who wander far from courts and castles . . ." (172). This model of a vaguely defined society of individuals is also a characteristic feature of Crowley's other works: for example, the final gathering at the shot tower in Beasts and the balloon festival in AEgypt. By repeatedly returning to a single form of concluding space, Crowley's works evidence a common structure which complements their thematic integrity.

As a closing device, the banquet in Little, Big focuses on the fairy-tale world and the social dimension of change, but this selective focus is balanced with a chapter that closes the personal and everyday elements of the text. In "Land Called the Tale," Smoky dies before reaching the fairy-tale world. Because Smoky never becomes fully integrated into the fantastic landscape which surrounds him, his death on the margins of the commonplace world appears to be a natural consequence of his ordinary mortality. Smoky accepts his death, however, and gains a clear understanding of his life and its meaning in the moment of his death. He watches his family set off on their journey to the inner world of fairies and myth, realizing that the essential substance of their goal is a product of their everyday lives:

> The Tale was behind them. And it was to there they journeyed. One step would take them there; they were there already.
>
> "Back there," he tried to say, unable himself to turn in that direction;

> back there, he tried to tell them, back to where the house stood lit and waiting, the Park and the porches and the walled garden and the lane into the endless lands, the door into summer. (619)

On a superficial level, Smoky's belief that the Tale of the fairies is somehow located in Edgewood simply reflects the estate's attributes as a sacred center. Yet Smoky's dying revelation also carries a deeper meaning which comments on the relationship between myth and ordinary experience. By suggesting that the family's life at Edgewood is the true form of the Tale, Smoky implies that the ultimate core of any mythology rests in the lives of ordinary people. Thus, the fantasy of the fairies becomes a metaphor for a family history when it is seen through the eyes of a single dying man.

Smoky's death also dramatizes the special nature of his relationship with Daily Alice. When Smoky dies, the two are split apart into separate spheres of existence: Smoky becomes inextricably linked to the tangible world of everyday mortal life, while Alice becomes an earth-goddess figure in the numinous realm of the fairies. The great difference in the characters' fates gives their marriage the characteristics of a hierogamy, since the distance which ultimately comes between them is as great as the distance between the earth and sky or the sacred and profane. Moreover, the marriage of Alice and Smoky acquires the cosmogonic significance of a sacred marriage within the text because it is an essential part of the fairies' Tale. Before their marriage, Alice tells Smoky that their meeting was foretold by the fairies when she was still a child (16-20). Later, Smoky looks back on their marriage as he feels death overtake him on the borders of Edgewood:

> On his wedding day, he and Daily Alice had gone among the guests seated on the grass, and many of them had given gifts, and all of them had said "Thank you." Thank you: because Smoky was willing, willing to take on this task, to take exception to none of it, to live his life for the convenience of others in whom he had never even quite believed, and spend his substance bringing about the end of a Tale in which he did not figure. And so he had; and he was still willing: but there had never been a reason to thank him. Because whether they knew it or not, he knew that Alice would have stood beside him on that day and wed him whether they had chosen him for her or not, would have defied them to have him. He was sure of it. (618-19)

For Smoky, his marriage to Daily Alice is both a necessary part of the fairy world's regeneration and the fulfilment of a very personal love affair; consequently, the marriage-plot in Little, Big unites the fantastic and commonplace elements of the text.

Although Smoky's death and the banquet in fairyland bring Crowley's narrative to a close, there is a final chapter in Little, Big which departs from the mood of the previous chapters. Entitled "Once Upon A Time," the chapter creates a sense of cyclic repetition which returns the ending of the work to the potential of the beginning. This brief chapter describes the slow decay of the abandoned house at Edgewood, which becomes the subject of a popular legend in the harsh years which follow the disappearance of Russell Eigenblick. Slowly, the house and its surroundings crumble away and pass into the domain of nostalgia

and folklore:

> One by one the bulbs burned out, like long lives come to their expected ends. Then there was a dark house made once of time, made now of weather, and harder to find; impossible to find and not even as easy to dream of as when it was alight. Stories last longer: but only by becoming only stories. It was anyway all a long time ago; the world, we know now, is as it is and not different; if there was ever a time when there were passages, doors, the borders open and many crossing, that time is not now. The world is older than it was. Even the weather isn't as we remember it clearly once being; never lately does there come a summer day such as we remember, never clouds as white as that, never grass as odorous or shade as deep and full of promise as we remember they can be, as once upon a time they were. (626-27)

The narrative voice in this passage is distanced from its subject in a manner which is uncommon in the work as a whole, expressing a sense of loss and resignation which contrasts with the vitality of the preceding pages. With this elegaic tone, Crowley draws on the idea that moments of change, with their energy and variety, are necessarily limited to a brief space of historical time. Since this sense of loss is also articulated in the conclusion of AEgypt, however, Crowley also ultimately suggests that Little, Big portrays a moment of transitory change which is a part of a larger pattern of cyclic change and renewal.

Conclusion

Despite their generic iconoclasm and mixture of modes, the works of John Crowley do constitute a unified and coherent whole. His success in this respect ultimately stems from his ability to link an archaic world view with a contemporary scientific outlook. His sophisticated sense of time and change can easily accommodate both the "Great Year" of the ancients and Thomas Kuhn's model of paradigm shift. This synthesis of the archaic and modern points of view accounts for the importance of the Renaissance in Crowley's work, since it was in this historical era that the two competing attitudes most clearly coexisted.

When Crowley's five books are viewed in chronological order, they tend to suggest a progressive shift away from the science-fiction genre. It would not be wise to exaggerate the extent of this transition, however, because the sensibility of science fiction is associated with the sensibility of romance in Crowley's fictional universe. As we have seen, science fiction draws the reader into a process of imaginative exploration, and because Kuhn's conception of paradigm change is a fundamental part of the philosophic background of Crowley's thought, the habits of mind which characterize his early science-fictional works persist in his later, more "romantic" and archaic works, Little, Big and AEgypt, despite the absence of such common science-fiction motifs as robots and space ships. Consequently, if one sees Crowley's affinity for science fiction as a product of his sense of time and change, which is equally a central part of his attachment to romance, then AEgypt is quite clearly recognizable as a natural outgrowth of the creative consciousness which produced The Deep.

The interrelationship between science fiction and romance is one of the most distinctive features of Crowley's multi-faceted fiction. By juxtaposing an archaic world view

and a technologically-oriented vision of the universe, he combines the emotional appeal of romance with the self-conscious and intellectual exploration of ideas that is generally associated with other genres or modes of discourse. Significantly, Crowley himself provides a label for this kind of generic marriage in AEGYPT, when Pierce refers to Kraft's unpublished book as a "philosophical romance" (388). Kraft's book depicts a world in which characters like Dr. Dee and Giordano Bruno undertake quests and encounter wonders; however, their quests are primarily philosophic journeys and the wonders they discover are chiefly the products of human perception. Similarly, Pierce's adventures take the form of adventures of the intellect and imagination. Although the plot of AEgypt thus resembles medieval quest narratives, the text's contemporary setting relegates the magic of chivalric romance to a basically perceptual context.

A new form of the genre in this sense, Crowley's narrative also reflect his awareness that philosophical romance was part of the pastoral tradition, which dominated prose narrative at the time of the Renaissance. Thus Crowley creates deliberate parallels between AEgypt and the conventions of pastoral. Spofford is essentially a shepherd, and Boney's country estate is called Arcady (114). When Pierce first arrives in the Faraways he carries with him a book of seventeenth-century Spanish pastoral poetry, the Soledades of Luis de Gongora. Pastoral heros were contemplative, like Crowley's characters, and their musings were set in rural backgrounds, much like the Faraways in AEgypt. Furthermore, love was often unfulfilled in pastoral romances--a feature which perhaps helps to explain the lack of a hierogamy in AEgypt. Although there are characters in the narrative who seem to qualify for such a union, they never fully achieve this state. Alternatively, one may interpret the

conjunction of different world ages in an instant of transitional time as an intellectual marriage of different histories and world views.

Ultimately, it is as a writer of philosophical romances that Crowley achieves his artistic success and commands the reader's full attention. At his best, he scientifically investigates the intellectual, historical and cultural foundations of romance in a context that appeals to the emotions and imagination of the reader. Thus he writes about the archaic mentality while writing from an archaic perspective; he evokes a sense of the numinous while analyzing the evolution and interaction of different cultural aspects of the sacred. By placing the fantastic within the context of cultural and individual change, he depicts a world which reflects both the uncertainty and potentialities of our everyday lives. Crowley's skilful coordination of perspectives which appear, on the surface, to be irreconcilable, endows his work with an inclusiveness which is very well-suited to address an age which is as full of contradictions and turmoil as the late twentieth century.

NOTES

Introduction:

1) Unless otherwise indicated, in my use of the term romance (or mythic narrative), and in my references to its features, I will generally be following the redefinition of the genre provided by Hinz ("Hierogamy") and Teunissen. Similarly, in keeping with their practice, when I use the term "archaic" I am referring to a particular type of mentality and not to historical "primitives" isolated from contemporary culture.

Chapter I:

1) As this quotation--with its repetition and truncated syntax--suggests, Crowley's style frequently makes its own organic contribution to the themes he is exploring.

2) The phrase "figures of earth" clearly refers to James Branch Cabell's romance by this name and seems to suggest Crowley's recognition of the way Cabell's philosophical concerns and generic experimentation are similar to his own. For a discussion of Cabell as a romancer, see Hinz and Teunissen, "Life beyond Life."

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