

**PANIC ON THE BRITISH BORDERLANDS: THE GREAT GOD PAN, VICTORIAN
SEXUALITY, AND SACRED SPACE IN THE WORKS OF ARTHUR MACHEN**

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ABSTRACT

From the late Victorian period to the early twentieth century, Arthur Machen's life and his writing provide what Deleuze and Guattari argue to be the value of the minor author: Contemporary historical streams combine in Machen's fiction and non-fiction. The concerns and anxieties in the writing reflect significant developments in their times, and exist amid the questions incited by positivist science, sexological studies, and the dissemination and popularity of Darwin's theories and the interpretations of Social Darwinism: What is the integrity of the human body, and what are the relevance and varieties of spiritual belief. The personal and the social issues of materiality and immateriality are present in the choice of Machen's themes and the manner in which he expresses them. More specifically, Machen's use of place and his interest in numinosity, which includes the negative numinous, are the twining forces where the local and the common, and the Ideal and the esoteric, meet. His interest in Western esotericism is important because of the Victorian occult revival and the ritual magic groups' role in the development of individual psychic explorations. Occultism and the formation of ritual magic groups are a response to deep-seated cultural concerns of industrialized, urban modernity. Within the esoteric traditions, the Gnostic outlook of a fractured creation corresponds to the cosmogony of a divided cosmos and the disjointed realities that are found in Machen's late-Victorian literary horror and supernatural fiction. The Gnostic microcosm, at the local level, and the mesocosm, at the intermediary position, are at a remove from the unified providence of the greater macrocosm. The content of the texts that I will analyze demonstrates Machen's interest in the divided self (with inspiration from Robert Louis Stevenson), and those texts consider the

subject of non-normative sexuality and its uncanny representations, natural and urban, as a horror that is attractive and abject—a source of fascination and a cause of disgust. The view that I state is that Machen wrote late-Victorian, post-Romantic Gothic literature that is not dependent upon either the cares of Decadence for artificiality or the disavowal of Gnosticism of the worth of mortal life and experiences in the material world. Machen’s outlook is similar to the Hermeticists, and he enjoyed many of the pleasures available in the world and in the narratives of ecstatic wonder that he found: the power of archetypal myth and local lore; good food and drink; travel between country and city; and close associations with friends and family, modest in number and rich in quality. *The Great God Pan*, *The Three Impostors*, or, *The Transmutations*, “The White People,” and the autobiographies *Far Off Things* and *Things Near and Far* are the primary sources in my study.

The enchantment of place and the potential and active horrors of the countryside and the city of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods inform Arthur Machen’s life and his literary world. The influence of Machen’s childhood in his native county of Gwent, in South Wales, and his adult residency in everywhere from low-rent to more-desirable areas of London feature prominently in two volumes of his fiction, which appeared in the influential Keynotes Series published by John Lane’s Bodley Head Press in the 1890s: *The Great God Pan and the Inmost Light* (1894), and *The Three Impostors*, or, *The Transmutations* (1895). Those works of fiction indicate a major pattern in Machen’s outlook and imagination. For instance, the novella *The Great God Pan* presents Machen’s late-Victorian re-invention of Pan, the classical rustic Arcadian god of Greek mythology. The Pan demon—or sinister Pan—evidences an aspect of threatening vitalistic nature that appears at the indefinite center of sexual concealment. Male characters act in secrecy by necessity due to the Labouchère Amendment to the Criminal Law

Amendment Act of 1885. Machen uses the more beneficent, affirming aspects of the Pan figure for the short story “The White People” (1899) in the long middle section titled *The Green Book*. However, threats to female adolescence and sexual sovereignty, and contending principles of female and male energies, unpredictably strike through the more sinister and in the more beneficent of Machen’s tales, which include the prose poems of *Ornaments in Jade*. These factors sometime destroy life, and seldom conceive or sustain its creation. Yet the presence of esoteric concepts in those same narratives offers non-rational alternatives to the attainment of gnosis. *The Three Impostors*, the second of Machen’s Keynotes volumes, with its plot of conspiracies and dark secrets not only suggests Machen’s interest in the criminal underworld and involvement with the ritual magic groups of the late-nineteenth century, but also his caution about the dark attraction of that glamour and how those occult groups and leaders operated. The Horos case and trial of 1901 and the Charles Webster Leadbeater scandal of 1906 provide support for Machen’s circumspection. However, as a skeptic of the occult in practice, but as a reader and writer who had a deep interest in the esoteric as a subject of study, Machen’s literary writing presents a variety of tensions between belief in the idealism of spiritual realities and the necessity for clear and grounded reason in consideration of preternatural phenomena.

The interest in the abnormal functioning of bodies, a convention of Gothic fiction, appears in Machen’s work in correspondence to the status of Sexology and the proliferation of studies of human sexuality in the late Victorian period. Especially important is the concept of sexual inversion, a term for homosexuality that was popularized in the works of the scientific researchers Richard von Krafft-Ebing, in *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886), and Havelock Ellis, in *Sexual Inversion* (co-authored by John Addington Symonds), which is the first volume of Ellis’s series *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1897). The final chapters of Machen’s *The Great God*

Pan are set in 1888 in London, and there is a direct reference to the White Chapel murders (i.e., the Ripper crimes). Therefore, I analyze Machen's fiction for its gendered focus on abhuman qualities, abnormal behavior, and violence: the abhuman as understood by Kelly Hurley, and violence in London as a version of Walkowitz's London as City of Dreadful Delight. Another historical context exists because the year before Machen finished the first chapter, "The Experiment," the Cleveland Street affair and its scandal occurred and included a royal intervention from the Prince of Wales to halt any prosecutions (1889). In *The Great God Pan*, Helen Vaughan, who passes from salons in Mayfair to houses of assignation in Soho, represents a dynamic, unified force of being and becoming that draws from and revises the multiple but fractured personality of Stevenson's Jekyll. Likewise, *The Green Book* girl in the short fiction "The White People" experiences a communion of gnosis that separates her from the social life and conditions of her father, a lawyer, and his middle class world of the British Empire's materialist legal structures. The esoteric and otherworldly, and the physical and material, combine, fragment, and transcend in the local world and the greater cosmos imagined by Arthur Machen.

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Το Πάν

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR IDEAS, MR. MACHEN?

I. The Soul Shudders within the House of Flesh

By an alchemy of fate, Arthur Machen entered the world at a place of enchantment whose influence would stay with him for his entire life, even when he lived far from his start in the Marches of Wales. He spoke no Welsh and could read or write very little of the language, but the country of his infancy and childhood stayed as a steady, effusive presence in his life and writing long after he first departed for London at the age of seventeen. Born on 3 March 1863, he was three-quarters Welsh, but he was not Machen at birth. He was Arthur Llewellyn Jones, born in Caerleon-on-Usk, Monmouthshire, and he referred to the county by its Welsh name, Gwent. His father, John Edward Jones, a third-generation Oxford graduate and pastor, moved his family when he became the vicar of the tiny church of Llandewi Fach, north of Caerleon. In that small, economically-depressed parish that had been hit by an agricultural collapse, Jones struggled with finances to provide for his son and chronically-ill wife. Amid the threat of poverty, Machen grew up at the rectory with the solace of access to a well-stocked, if jumbled library: Greek and Roman classics; the works of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists; volumes by his new heroes Cervantes and Rabelais; and bound copies of Dickens's *Household Words*

with its breadth of subject matter. Then, the writer's father adopted his wife's maiden name, Machen, to inherit a legacy. The money that the family received helped to educate formally their son Arthur at Hereford Cathedral School, and, after the death of his parents, he received additional legacies that would sustain him at the height of his creative writing in London (1887-1899). The boy legally became "Jones-Machen," was baptized under that name, and when he began to write he used the shortened version by which he now is known. The problem of how to say the name led Cyril Connolly to suggest that "if I had been Arthur Machen, I would have added 'rhymes with Bracken' to my signature by deed-poll, for nothing harms an author's sales like an ambiguity in the pronunciation of his name" (Lachman 222).² While sales were a lifelong problem, for no name-related reason, the nominal baptism coincided with Machen's discovery of Gwent's past with its millennia-spanning archaeological ruins of Pre-Celtic, Celtic, and Roman peoples.

With the centuries of Arthurian legends and the remains of local folklore, home was magic for Arthur Machen, as his understanding of place extended beyond his parents' household. The Arthurian legends include the medieval ones compiled and invented by Geoffrey of Monmouth, a fellow man of Gwent, and the Romantic narrative poem cycle of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, who wrote parts of *Idylls of the King* at the Hansbury Arms tavern in Caerleon-on-Usk. Celtic heritage did not prevent Machen's taking a position of dissent from the Celtic Revival in the arts.¹ Yet he developed a profound devotional respect for a version of Christianity that he imagined to have existed prior to, and that had withstood the influence of, Rome's hierarchical interference in the medieval local worship of the converted Celtic tribes. Representations of a syncretic High Anglican faith in a Celtic Church can be found in evocations of the *San Graal*, Machen's preferred name for the Holy Grail. This object is not a part of

standard denominational services of his time or at any other in the historical record, and Machen judged as fanciful Jessie L. Weston's theory of the grail in *From Ritual to Romance* (1920).

However, he did have an interest in Weston's project because of its consideration of the pagan content in Christianized narratives, and of the possible sources and meanings of mythic content.

Machen's stories *The Secret Glory* (1907) and *The Great Return* (1915) represent the modern quest for a spiritual life, which he would refer to as the move to sanctity. Those texts present a later addition to his multi-sided occult and esoteric studies of the eighteen eighties through nineties, which he would refer to as an interest in sorcery.

Machen's fiction and non-fiction written in those last years of the nineteenth century, at the British fin de siècle, are where my analysis in the subsequent chapters will focus. Through his life and in his works, this writer provides what Deleuze and Guattari argue to be the value of the minor author: In Machen, contemporary historical streams combine in the stories that he wrote. The concerns and anxieties embodied by his writing reflect the developments in their times, and the personal and the social issues are present in his choice of themes and the manner in which he expresses them. More specifically, Machen's use of place and his interest in numinosity, including the negative numinous, are the twining forces where the local and the common, and the Ideal and the esoteric, meet. His interest in Western esotericism is important because of the Victorian occult revival and the ritual magic groups' role in individual psychic explorations. The occult revival and creation of those ritual magic groups are a response to deep-seated cultural concerns and millenarian anxieties. Within Western esotericism, the Gnostic outlook of a fractured creation corresponds to the cosmogony of a divided cosmos and the disjointed realities of Machen's late-Victorian literary horror and supernatural. The Gnostic microcosm, at the local level, and the mesocosm, at the intermediary, are at a remove from the

unified providence of the macrocosm. Within the texts that I will analyze, their content allows for a demonstration of Machen's interest in the divided self and provides the means of an examination on the subject of non-normative sexuality and its uncanny representations, natural and urban, as horror. However, Machen's literature is not dependent upon the Gnostic's disavowal of the worth of mortal life and experiences in the material world. Like the Hermeticists, Machen enjoyed many of the small pleasures offered by his time in the world: food and drink, travel between country and city, and, though modest in number, close associations with friends and family.

As an only child, Machen passed among and above and over mementos of the past on long, solitary walks, and the intersection of wonders from different times and cultures that about the current age stoked an outlook that ordinary affairs happen beside the extraordinary. One can be a witness to this glory if one has the desire to seek and the ability to be open to what one finds. In one of the last stories that he wrote, Machen uses an old term for such intersections: "I believe that there is a perichoresis, an interpenetration" ("N" 44). He uses the term perichoresis to refer to the existence of a hidden life behind the material world. The story "Novel of the Iron Maid" begins with what could be a remembrance of the early days in the author's life that provided Machen with a way of seeing where the hidden touches the known: "As I walked...and fields where the magic had departed...walking alone through their silent places I felt fantasy growing on me, and some glamour of the infinite. There was here, I felt, an immensity as in the outer void of the universe" (187). Machen took as his vocation to share these literally awful impressions in writing. In the final parts of the Victorian age, he was not alone among writers who used topics from alternative spiritualities and the paranormal that combine horror elements of every grade: from tales of skeptical enquiry and the strictly psychological to the grossly

explicit and on through to the marvelous. In pursuit of the vision that matured and developed in its transmutations over his lifetime, Machen's particular use of genre devices in the expression of Western esotericism and his idea of sorcery sets his work apart from the literary supernatural tales of other writers such as Edith Nesbitt, Richard Marsh, Conan Doyle, Bram Stoker, and Vernon Lee (Violet Paget).

To the present, analyses often discuss Machen in comparison to his contemporary Algernon Blackwood, since the two wrote extensively about the natural environment and visions of non-consensus reality. Through manifestations seldom found in the natural world and urban environment of Blackwood, the destructive and regenerative aspects of the god Pan and Nodens, Celtic god and Lord of the Great Deep or Abyss, enter most prominently in the late-Victorian society and locations depicted by Machen. One finds the destructive, sinister aspect of a vitalistic daemon in the novella *The Great God Pan* (1894) and, to a lesser extent, in the novel of serialized, interconnected stories *The Three Impostors* (1895). The more beneficent, affirming aspects weave through his masterpiece "The White People" within the long middle section titled *The Green Book*. As no good is so simple as not to have some blemish on its outward parts, contending female and male energies strike through the more beneficent tales as they do in the more sinister, sometimes destroying life—not conceiving and sustaining its creation.

By the Edwardian period, the turns of the screw of ordinary human hardship in Machen's personal life and professional career were moving him away from the type of supernatural terror and macabre horror tales that he wrote over the previous decade. His innovations with Pan as cosmic force and a threat of unknowable nature offered a prototype for many of the Pan variations in Trans-Atlantic fiction that followed, including those beings that appear in the work of H. P. Lovecraft, Peter Straub, Stephen King, and T. E. D. Klein. Once Machen's career

entered a course correction from sorcery to sanctity, the overlap with Blackwood's budding career and its Pan-type forces and ominous landscapes demonstrates as much contrast as comparison.³ Sinister, inhuman forces in Blackwood's fiction often appear in the form of revenants, rather than rough and rank classical gods or Romano-Celtic deities whose names and stories filled Machen's boyhood—and whose shards of worship littered the hills and paths on which he walked. Blackwood's story "Secret Worship" (1908) is a prime example of one difference between the two writers: ghosts appear in that short story and none do in any of Machen's fiction. Manifestations of ancient gods occur in Blackwood, though the human characters only sometimes perceive the numinous presence as a threat. Often the character has sympathetic ties to the force or is ignorant of that force's magnitude: A young man worships and with great verve sacrifices himself to such a presence (the minor sea divinity Glaucus) in the story "The Sea Fit," found in *Pan's Garden: A Volume of Nature Stories* (1912). Other notable examples of sometimes revered but ever-unknowable powers include the stories "The Willows" (1907), "The Wendigo" (1910), and "The Man Whom the Trees Loved," which is another part of *Pan's Garden* where there is "the merging of its hero into some aspect of physical nature" (Merivale 193). Machen's content in the Keynotes Series nineties has less currency with Blackwood's pantheistic mysticism.

The boundaries of matter and spirit meet in their psychogeographic liminality in Machen, and open a distinct place for him among writers and other explorers with an interest in the power of place on the psyche (e.g., Merlin Coverley, Peter Ackroyd, Iain Sinclair, and Alan Moore). Machen's sensitivity to place brought for him since his youth the burning desire to find a means for expression in words. Due to more immediate influences on the content and style of Machen's fiction of the eighteen nineties, at certain points my analysis cites Robert Louis

Stevenson and *More New Arabian Nights, the Dynamiter: The Story of a Lie* (1885) and more extensively *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886, *Strange Case*). Due to their importance for Machen's career, my focus throughout these chapters is primarily on two works of fiction. The first work is "The White People" (1904) with its section *The Green Book's* discussion of good and evil set in a basic frame narrative centered by journal entries on esoteric subjects and the occult that run parallel to a plot of sexual awakening. The second work is *The Great God Pan*, since it presents an important depiction by Machen of the god Pan as an apotheosized, decadent vital force. This Pan's insidious introduction into human affairs by way of hubris and secret veneration subverts both middlebrow sexual standards and a belief among a threatened upper class in the integrity of the human body and mind when engaged in acts of concealment.

Within the serial tales of *The Three Impostors*, one can relate back to *The Great God Pan* the theme of the god's role as a signifier of transgressed cultural and social boundaries. In the former work, the deity inhabits the periphery as an allusive reference in the frame of a false document—a device that occurs again in *The Green Book* of "The White People"—a text that lends its heading to the penultimate-chapter title: "History of the Young Man with Spectacles." As the author of that history reveals in the pages of a recovered notebook, he once served a criminal mastermind named Doctor Lipsius as a member of that man's London gang, a secret society that practices cultic activities that include thefts of ancient fetishes and the celebration of orgies hosted at Lipsius's townhouse.⁴ There, participants drink a ritual substance known as "the wine of the Fauns" (Machen, *The Three Impostors* 222), a neopagan version of the sacramental wine of the Christian Mass. The three impostors, taleweaving bountyhunters employed by Lipsius, search for the Young Man with Spectacles once he flees from the gang,

since in his rush to escape he stole a valuable coin (itself a kind of fetish): the gold Tiberius, a coin “struck [by the emperor] to commemorate an infamous excess” with “the figure of a faun standing amidst reeds and flowing water” stamped on the obverse side (Machen, *The Three Impostors* 109). Besides the references to fauns and Pan present amidst suspect enterprises, another connection emerges between *The Great God Pan* and *The Three Impostors*, published within a year of one another as entries in John Lane’s Keynotes Series: *The Great God Pan* identifies the daughter of divine force by the name Helen, and Helen is the true name of the lone female impostor, the woman of whiles who is a disguised threat to men.

Of all the names that the character in these separate works could possess, this choice suggests a rather obvious threat from a figure who tempts men to peril. In Machen’s narratives, as with many such mythic figures—divine, semi-divine, and mortal—the classical Helen’s identity conflicts from one source to the next, or combines and recombines parts: some tales tell of her treachery against the Trojans; others depict her deception of the Greeks; in one version she is an eidolon whose true form went to Egypt; while another set of stories presents her as an isolated figure on a desperate search for sanctuary. The name’s acquired weight fits as that of one of Machen’s impostors. *Helen on the Ramparts* is the most popular image that artists reproduced during this period in Machen’s lifetime—the Helens of Gustave Moreau and Lord Frederick Leighton, where she stands alone atop the great battlement that girds Troy and appears to contemplate the horror of war displayed below on the field of battle. While the ramparts are not the final set piece of *The Great God Pan*, the mortal life of that Helen ends in isolation in an upper room, besieged by men. Machen blends the classical legacy with a version of the Victorian New Woman set up here as Fatal Woman, the femme fatale who must be held accountable instead of her male sex partners, who merely follow innate katabolic impulses as

sexual appetites enthrall them, thereby keeping them blameless for any fall that they suffer. As one character states, “That woman, if I can call her woman, corrupted my soul” (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 16). The story turns on the old Judeo-Christian one of temptation and descent that expels one from the naïve shade of the Tree of Life. By this fusion of the classical and contemporary, *The Great God Pan* suggests modes of sexual consummation with the dangerous capacity to defy an assumed standard of natural gender distinctions and their maintenance.

Machen’s fiction of the mid-to-late-eighteen nineties removes Pan, the numinous figure of field and wood, from any Arcadian setting to function as a disruptor of rural domestic tranquility and urban social order, especially in relationships with those who dwell in an elite socioeconomic world of concealed sexual activity. The panic innate to the Helen in *The Great God Pan* arrives with the fierceness of naked divinity revealed as a corporeal presence suggested rather than directly shown: “[The Great God Pan] was, indeed, an exquisite symbol beneath which men long ago veiled their knowledge of the most awful, most secret forces which lie at the heart of all things; forces before which the souls of men must wither and die and blacken, as their bodies blacken under the electric current” (Machen 43). In the late Victorian through Edwardian periods, one finds in literature and visual art a double cult of the benevolent Pan of fable, the one more common in the aforementioned Blackwood’s writing, and the sinister, unpredictable, and ambiguous Pan of the horror story found in Machen’s fiction. Horror here refers to that mode described by David. G. Hartwell in his seminal anthology of horror literature *The Dark Descent* as the first and second streams of horror found in literature: 1.) the moral allegorical; 2.) psychological metaphor. The first stream contains characteristically supernatural fiction, whereby there is an “intrusion of supernatural evil into consensus reality” (8). A psychological aberration as a body marks the second stream with a “monster at the center...an overtly

abnormal human or creature, whose acts and on account of whose being the horror arises" (9). Both streams combine in *The Great God Pan* through Helen, just as they do through Mr. Edward Hyde in Stevenson's *Strange Case*, who exists due to Dr. Jekyll's "transcendental" experimentation (*Strange Case* 46-47). "The White People" and *The Green Book* cross the first and second streams. See Kelly Hurley's use of the term "abhuman," first used by William Hope Hodgson in his fiction (cf., *The Boats of the "Glen-Carrig,"* 1907, and various of the Carnacki supernatural detection tales). Patricia Merivale refers to this latter type as the "Pan demon" (158). Machen's Pan demon, a daemon that can fascinate and terrify, can and does give way to the less-binary natural daemon, and does so most notably in "The White People" with its God in the Woods.

Machen's treatment of the goat-god as a so-called demonic force suggests a Puritanical and Gothic split between humanity and nature, particularly nature in the English Romantic sense with its attendant sublime elements, from which Machen's Victorian Gothic departs. The distance formed from the split presents a danger that is due to a gap in knowledge that often is based in the hard sciences and reliant upon progressive rationalism. Those persons who practice this secular extremism proclaim with confident if misplaced certainty of an ability to cross that gap's span. Internally, unmeasured elements exist in the human mind, and they seem to be immeasurable, while externally phenomena persist in forgotten outlands and seldom-visited tracts of wilderness. This uncanny absence of humanity is there in Machen's descriptions of the old growth forests and pristine meadowlands of his native Caerleon-on-Usk, Wales and the old Roman civil city Caerwent, settled after the Second Augustan Legion established Isca Silurum. He fictionalizes this world of his youth as Caermaen, former tribal center of the Brythonic Celtic Silures, a place he frequently draws upon for the settings in those stories analyzed here and in the

other chapters. The metaphysical poet Henry Vaughan, called the Silurist, came from nearby Mid Wales. In personal letters, Machen often used the signature The Silurist. Machen opposed Puritanism and Protestant orthodoxy, even viciously satirizing both in the novel *Dr. Stiggins: His Views and Principles, a Series of Interviews* (1906), a book as ponderous in its method of attack as the title suggests. He was an opponent of strict moralism, but his conservatism too often won out over a more-reasoned approach to cultural and social developments. Such an obstinate mindset is what Joshi has called “monolithic views...that he guarded with a dogged tenacity against opposing views he could not understand or approach sympathetically” (17). While Machen held a guarded position on most issues of technology, politics, and tradition versus change, his outlook did not treat all authority and hierarchy equally, whether its origins were secular or religious.⁵

In *The Great God Pan*, abuse of the authority of medical science and its role in the knowledge gap appears from the start in the obsessed scientist Dr. Raymond, a man who commits errors of professional hubris in an experimental procedure to conjure Pan by surgical means. Here, Pan more accurately refers to the embodiment of the occult vital forces manifested in natural forms, which I state in the chapter on alchemy as Paracelsian *prima materia* and Thomas Vaughan’s *tenebrae activae*. With no clear objective stated, the physician resolves into visible reality a disruptive, untamed energy that unsettles the rest of the narrative. This exchange between the doctor and Mr. Clarke, a friend and witness who voices his concern over the safety of the surgery, demonstrates the arrogance and entitlement at work:

‘But you have no misgivings, Raymond? Is it absolutely safe?’

[....]

‘Safe? Of course it is. In itself the operation is a perfectly simple one; any surgeon could do it.’

‘And there is no danger at any other stage?’

‘None; absolutely no physical danger whatever, I give you my word.’

(Machen, *The Great God Pan* 1)

One wonders if Mr. Clarke only asks those questions out of a sense of duty to ease his mind and allow himself to feel absolved of complicity if something goes wrong—and something soon does. Mr. Clarke looks for a shadow of a doubt from his colleague, finds none expressed, and here the story hits a dangerous cusp that drops from pre-operation confidence to post-operation debacle, whose outcome preys upon a society’s fears for the protection of reputation from scandal and sexual impropriety.

Para-scientific means to either hoped-for access to occult knowledge or the securing of immaterial power recur in Machen’s work and will be my focus in greater detail in the chapters on alchemy and Western esotericism. Rather than offenses derived primarily from the exploitation of another person, as happens with the surgery in *The Great God Pan*, Machen’s fiction from this period condemns as the greater sin those ““attempt[s] to penetrate into another and higher sphere in a forbidden manner”” (Machen, “The White People” 65). In the above-quoted exchange, Mr. Clarke’s first question challenges Dr. Raymond on two fronts: the doctor’s ability to carry out the procedure, and the amount of trust in his own technique. The second question challenges the safety, and, by extension, the ethics of the procedure. The phrase “absolutely safe” asks for certainty from a man who practices “transcendental medicine,” a type of experimental, dangerous medical science that Stevenson’s Dr. Henry Jekyll pursued (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 1). Dr. Raymond echoes the bombastic claims of his colleague in

transcendental medicine, Dr. Henry Jekyll, who exclaims to Dr. Hastie Lanyon: ““And now, you who have so long been bound to the most narrow and material views, you who have denied the virtue of the transcendental medicine, you who have derided your superiors—behold!”” (Stevenson *Strange Case* 46-47). This same man in Machen cites as a teacher a medieval alchemist who followed Paracelsus: ““You see that parchment Oswald Crollius? He was one of the first to show me the way, though I don’t think he ever found it himself”” (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 4).⁶ Dr. Raymond applies his hand in the creation of what later appears to be a monster, named Helen by the narrative, who was created by skills inspired by non-canonical instruction, the same alterity of inspiration as Mary Shelley’s Dr. Victor Frankenstein and Goethe’s and Marlowe’s versions of Faust before him.

In this volume of Machen’s Keynotes work, Stevenson’s *Strange Case* and the subject of the divided self echo. However, the same downside occurs in *The Great God Pan*: The transcendence of personal and socially-constructed limits threatens to penetrate by any means available into higher spheres previously closed off, and the process to attain the results happens in such a way that there is a disregard for the lives of others and their safety.⁷ These transgressions would violate Machen’s closely-held, if non-orthodox, Christian beliefs about the way to attain fuller consciousness. In the final chapter of *Strange Case*, where Dr. Jekyll gives his “Full Statement of the Case,” he explains, “And it chanced that the direction of my scientific studies...led wholly towards the mystic and the transcendental” (*Strange Case* 48). Dr. Lanyon’s assessment of the contents of Jekyll’s chemistry kit, where the skeptical colleague questions the wisdom of Jekyll’s research, parallels Mr. Clarke’s doubts about Dr. Raymond’s methods in *The Great God Pan*: “Here was a phial of some tincture, a paper of some salt, and the record of a series of experiments that had led (like too many of Jekyll’s investigations) to no end

of practical usefulness” (Stevenson, *Strange Case* 44). In reply to Lanyon’s charge, Jekyll’s answer boasts of his control of metaphysical forces and of his possessing ever-higher powers, which are beyond the abilities of his former colleagues: “Or, if you shall so prefer to choose, a new province of knowledge and new avenues to fame and power shall be laid open to you...and your sight shall be blasted by a prodigy to stagger the unbelief of Satan” (Stevenson, *Strange Case* 46). Delivered on the night that he calls upon Lanyon to assist in the reversion from Hyde to Jekyll, there is a reminder of that phrasing that can be heard in the overly-confident spirit of the reply made by Dr. Raymond to Clarke. As the second chapter of *The Great God Pan* reveals, Mr. Clarke has worked for years on compiling his “Memoirs to Prove the Existence of the Devil,” with his manuscript composed of transcribed oral accounts and odd, Fortean newspaper reports (Machen 8). To his horror, Mr. Clarke meets the proof for the suspected reality that he has sought, and his experience is similar to what the witness Dr. Lanyon confronts. Each character does maintain a set of doubts at some level of their psyche about the possibility of what they fear to be an actuality, but each man does agree to see the attempt made to summon an unknown part of reality. In Machen’s story, as in Stevenson’s, the abuse of authority and an extreme and unscrupulous version of progressive, rationalist ability provide the strange and horrifying evidence. The results are the knowledge that life, in general, and the human body, in particular, are neither stable nor neatly ordered.

Machen diverges from Stevenson in that rather than a transformation that occurs from self-experimentation upon the body and within the character of the scientist, Dr. Raymond’s operation occurs externally. Let into the material world is an unchecked animated force that later ruins members of the Bohemian artistic community and incites fears of scandal among professionals in fashionable, wealthy society. In “The Experiment,” the first chapter of *The*

Great God Pan (finished as a short story around 1888 and published in 1890 in the periodical *Whirlwind*), the only two people awake and conscious in the room, Raymond and the friend and witness Clarke, do not see Pan's manifestation, but the aptly-named Mary, the procedure's exploited patient who is to receive this mixed "blessing," does. In a method that prepares us for the series of secondhand, or even-farther-removed, information that the subsequent chapters give, these men witness the effects—Mary's erotically charged spiritual bliss that quickly turns to terror—and miss the cause:

[A]s they watched, they heard a long-drawn sigh, and suddenly did the colour that had vanished return to the girl's cheeks, and suddenly her eyes opened.... They shone with an awful light, looking far away, and a great wonder fell upon her face, and her hands stretched out as if to touch what was invisible; but in an instant the wonder faded, and gave place to the most awful terror. The muscles of her face were hideously convulsed, she shook from head to foot; the soul seemed struggling and shuddering within the house of flesh.

(Machen, *The Great God Pan* 7)

The critical failure that causes the devastating assault on Mary—"she has seen the Great God Pan" (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 7)—derives from a misuse of knowledge, one that Theodore Ziolkowski might cite as a Faustian sin.⁸ The doctor applies his science in a reckless matter because to reach the end for which he aims he must subject another person to abuse, in sacrifice to his ambitions. Other than the flimsy rationale that for an instant he can fulfill a kind of Blakean and Hegelian desire to tear the folds that separate modes of perception, the surgery's practical purpose remains unclear to nonexistent, and, for the doctor, inconsequential. He gives no indication that what he exposes Mary to will result in any benefit for her, the general society,

the medical field of which he is a member, or business interests.⁹ For the doctor, the consensus reality he wants to pierce is ““but dreams and shadows....[t]here *is* a real world, but it is beyond this glamour and this vision...beyond them all as beyond a veil”” (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 2). His grand, if unspecific, reason for the enhanced vision he wants to generate of the Real requires that he use a female in a kind of archetypal modern ceremony with stereotypical gender mechanisms deployed. With her age differential and socioeconomic disadvantage to the doctor, the teenaged Mary’s background leaves her in thrall to untested whims that are free of any internal review board.¹⁰

My extended treatment of this first part of *The Great God Pan* shows an example of how Arthur Machen’s narratives of the eighteen nineties tend to menace young women with dangers tied to their budding physicality and sensuality. This is a theme recurrent in modern fairy tale adaptations (e.g., Angela Carter, Catherine Breillat), and a feature that is not necessarily an attempt by the author for prurient shock value, though contemporary reviews disagreed. *The Great God Pan* uses this gendered plot and so does the “The White People,” and, as a consequence, interactions with the preternaturally potent (i.e., Pan as the name of the oft-unseen yet terrific force that animates nature) receive culturally-determined depictions as a cause of harm and not a source of boon. While the intent and effect upon humanity remain common, the names and forms that Machen gives to these forces vary: Pan; Nodens; the wine of the Fauns; untitled Roman-era statues in the Welsh hills and the ancient woods; and the fair folk (the *Tylwyth Teg*, or little people of Celtic mythology). Repeatedly, an innate ability and sincere desire on the part of a female character to commune with these forces become the prime cause for the punishment she receives from her male counterparts who reject and resist such communion.

As my chapter on sinister Pan (as daemon) and *The Great God Pan* will demonstrate, these same male characters assiduously conceal their sexual identities that touch upon, and even share in, this communion, and take as their duty to capture the being named Helen in an attempt to quell the manifestation of an uninhibited and scandalously open sex drive that does not respect heteronormative borders. Characterized as defenders of the realm of imperial values and domestic moral standards, these men, depending on the context in which they meet this being who is a visage of their panic, either prohibit or intervene in blocking a more authentic drive—unmediated by the prudence of custom and self-restrained artifice.¹¹ Pan’s energy certainly does not provide eternal delight for most characters in *The Great God Pan* or *The Three Impostors*, and the contested fate of a character in “The White People” reflects as much upon the incapacity of those persons in the narrative who interpret the story-within-the-story as much as it does on that version of the Pan force encountered by the deceased. Concealed sexual identities are not at stake, though sexual initiation is among the female character. The male characters in “The White People” and *The Green Book* hold the same position in their intervention of the spiritual development and sexual expression of an adolescent female character whom they discover that they cannot control as they desire to.

II. Another Turn of the Keynotes

Before a closer examination of Arthur Machen’s prose invention of sinister Pan and his variations on benevolent Pan, a brief contextual review of the relationship between the author and his publication history proves that he had a hard start and even less easy finish in the eighteen nineties.¹² The celebrated Keynotes Series, a division of John Lane’s Bodley Head Press, published *The Great God Pan* and *The Three Impostors* as volumes V and XIX, with mixed results for the young author.¹³ Machen received the benefit of significant literary

exposure and modest popular success that came with his inclusion in the catalogue of an established London publisher. However, the fact that Lane produced the literary journal *The Yellow Book* concurrent with the Keynotes Series brought for Machen a near-instant association with the Decadent movement. This connection implicated him among reviewers and the general public as a practitioner of Decadence, no better than the various Aesthetes and Decadent artists who published in both the journal and Keynotes. Lane did operate on the premise that the series would be a venue to expose new talent to publication, though the unsurprising profit motive also at play was to use the series to exploit contemporary aesthetic fashions for book sales.

Machen had a difficult time dodging the charges even though his literary interests and aesthetic ideas differed in many ways from fellow Lane-published authors, such as Max Beerbohm, M. P. Shiel, and Ernest Dowson, who were the types of artists whose artistic conceits Max Nordau condemns in his screed *Degeneration* (1892). Besides a few interpersonal relationships and a fleeting acquaintance with members of those literary circles, Machen could not escape the labels of impropriety when *The Great God Pan* opens with an illicit surgery performed on a young woman exploited for the suspect purpose of opening her eyes to the unveiled force of nature. As Dr. Raymond states, “[The procedure] will level utterly the solid wall of sense” (3-4). In its build-up to the procedure, imagery and language evoke the Judeo-Christian tradition now appropriated for amoral ends—a ritual with scientific instruments and no sanctity for life or respect for careful process. More dangerous, the later parts of the narrative center on the search for an adult child (named Helen) sired by the male-emanation of sacred, vital force (suggested by the image of the great-horned god Pan and the tradition of the satyr) and conceived with a mortal mother (the above-mentioned Mary). This daughter’s intense

sexual allure and unnamed-abilities drive men of artistic sensitivity and high society to commit acts of self-destruction.

Further, non-literary complications tied to the flesh arose for Machen because the first edition of *The Great God Pan* features a cover illustration of a bare-chested faun designed by Aubrey Beardsley. The figure is a tame depiction of the mythic creature when compared to many other contemporary works in the Beardsley portfolio. Nevertheless, S. T. Joshi states in the Introduction to the Chaosium edition (2001) of Machen's collected fiction, with some embellishment, that "[m]atters...were not helped by the fact that the book had a lascivious frontispiece by Aubrey Beardsley" (Machen, *The Three Impostors* xiii).¹⁴ This critique echoes the contemporary review from *Athenaeum* that morally upbraids Beardsley's faun as a way to attack Machen's novella: "Appropriately enough, the title-page is designed by Mr. Aubrey Beardsley. One can well imagine that the idea of the author was to render into another medium the sentiment of those innumerable faces, all ugly with the ugliness of sin, with which this artist gratifies his admirers."¹⁵ The unstated problem is a kind of aesthetic connect-the-dots: Machen attracted special ire over Beardsley's involvement, which derives from the illustrations that Beardsley provided for the first English edition of Oscar Wilde's play *Salome* (1894). For instance, a full-frontal nude of a hermaphroditic Pan-like figure appears on the original title page, a kind of shadowy second visage that may be seen rising behind the Keynotes faun. These problematic links with the Decadents and Aesthetes were compounded further for Machen since he and his first wife Amy (Amelia Hogg) had entertained Oscar Wilde as an occasional dinner guest. The lead up to Queensberry's provocations over his son's Lord Alfred Douglas's amorous involvement with Wilde, and the subsequent libel trials and the Criminal Law Amendment Act

of 1885 prosecution and conviction, occurred long after Machen stopped seeing Wilde. The damage done by aesthetic associations had been done.¹⁶

Machen did not lack a sense of humor about his treatment, and he took the moral reprimands with a dose of glee and a smidge of masochism and saved the negative reviews from his writing career, publishing them without commentary in his book *Precious Balms* (1924). That cheeky work capped the part of the mid-nineteen twenties when his career experienced a Trans-Atlantic revival of interest: In England the surge came from reprints of his major works from Martin Secker, publications of the three volumes of his autobiography, *Far Off Things*, *Things Near and Far*, and *The London Adventure: An Essay in Wandering* (1922, 1923, and 1924, respectively), and his work of prose poetry *Ornaments in Jade* (1924). In the United States, new-found recognition came from the Knopf editions of his books. However, a contemporary review of *The Great God Pan* from the Manchester Guardian serves as a fine representation of the furor directed at Machen at the start of his career: “The book is, on the whole, the most acutely and intentionally disagreeable we have yet seen in English. We could say more, but refrain from doing so for fear of giving such a work advertisement” (8). The unintentional advertisement that these critiques awarded to the work and the increased sales led to Lane’s issuing a second edition. Critics implicated Machen for crimes of indecency against readers, but these charges came more from a phobic association of him with members of the Yellow Nineties, such as the rare dinner-partner Oscar Wilde and the publisher-commissioned cover art by Beardsley.

A less circumstantial and more substantial claim for Machen’s place among the Decadent milieu is the truly ambivalent approach that his Keynotes books take towards salacious subject matter. There is an attraction to that which causes disgust—another one of those features that are

common to the uncanny. After all, due to civil legislation and the Evangelical censors, the works of the English Decadence showed much less than their French precursors did, so the fascination with various types of decay often came with qualifiers. There is a graphic dissolution of the human form in the conclusions of Machen's Keynotes fiction. In the end, the spectacles that finish *The Great God Pan* and *The Three Impostors* condemn non-normative sexuality and subversive behaviors as horrors, which is a situation that happens once more in the outer framing of the Keynotes-era short story "The White People." This reality stands at odds with the judgments meted out by the same critics who claimed Machen's work as a site of permissive, decadent attitudes and sanctioned immorality. I examine other alternative aspects of Machen's work in the chapters on alchemy and Western esotericism, where I give particular attention to non-traditional forms of knowledge and their acquisition. Decadence figures in the content of the chapter on *The Great God Pan* that will discuss scandal in the context of late-Victorian sexuality and sexual inversion. Like the term Decadence, Pan functioned as a variable with a suggestive quality that led to a variety of uses that accorded to the position of the author. The same author could employ Pan in a kind of multiplicity of meaning, which is the case in Machen's fiction with its interest in divisions.

As I have traced, the Pan-addled content in Machen's Keynotes volumes brought threats of censure against him from reviewers and the mostly-inert but vocal citizen vice squads, but also from a skittish John Lane. As was the case for any other writer, Machen had to be aware of the local Vigilance Association, the continued influence held by circulating libraries and the railway station bookstalls, and possible enforcement of the Obscene Publications Act. Tame by current standards, the most-graphic reference in any work by Machen, due to the strict legal atmosphere, paled in imitation to what the French Decadent movement could do with content

and descriptiveness of the concepts of sin and scandalous scenes.¹⁷ As for Lane and the hostile atmosphere caused by Oscar Wilde's trial, the publisher insisted that Machen censor the manuscript of *The Three Impostors*. Lane wanted Chapter I: "The Experiment" excised from *The Great God Pan*, which Machen fought with him over, and did so persuasively. As a series of letters between Machen and Lane demonstrate, barring the omission of one word, Machen refused to revise further.¹⁸ In the second volume of his memoirs, *Things Near and Far* (1923), Machen concedes the following point about *The Great God Pan*: "The tale was written in bits, in the intervals between severe literary cramps...and it was published by Mr. John Lane, of Bodley Head, at the end of 1894, when yellow bookery was at its yellowest" (98). Machen admits that his fiction found a niche in a movement of the age. By the references to "bits" and "cramps," he implies an incidental appearance of work that he began before the new fashion and therefore differed from his contemporaries with whom critics and other readers grouped him.

Dating from the childhood days of the rectory library, Machen drew from sources that were dissimilar to the Aesthetes and Decadents. When he began to draft his more mature fiction, one must bear in mind that in the latter part of the late-eighteen eighties Machen translated texts whose language outdated his own by two or more centuries. His early writing experiments mimic the style of these source texts. The cumbersomely-titled frame narrative *The Chronicle of Clemency; or, the History of the IX. Joyous Journeys of Gervase Perrot* [sic] exhibits a debt to that reading, with its mock-seventeenth-century English and the false claim that the text is a translation of a rare Latin work inspired by Rabelais. The genuine translations offer a provocative mix of ribaldry for their time, though less risqué by Machen's own: *The Heptameron, or Tales and Novels of Queen Marguerite of Navarre* (trans. 1886); *Fantastic Tales: Or, the Way to Attain* (the *Moyen de Parvenir*), by Béroalde de Verville (trans. 1890); and

The Memoirs of Jacques Casanova (trans. 1894).¹⁹ Rather than the French texts of the Decadents and the Symbolists, Machen was at the well of seventeenth century French literature. A quick review of the legal environment in England reveals a state of affairs where laws on the books were enforced more often by the evangelism of civilian vice squads than by courts of law because of the expense to bring a case through the court system. As with visual art, literary works accused of lewdness or Decadence, a term popular by the eighteen nineties following the French influence, presented the kind of material that the Evangelical movement sought to confiscate, especially by members of the Society for the Prohibition of Vice. The usual claims were that exposure to these works led vulnerable and impressionable citizens to confront elements of legitimate culture twisted into pornographic forms that would cause “lewdness, first in mind, then in action,” as stated in a column from *The Magazine of Art* in 1894. The key act is the Obscene Publications Act of 1857 (Lord Campbell’s Act and later known as the Hicklin Act), which would not be revised for nearly seventy years until the Obscene Publications Act of 1959, the same law tested by the trial of D. H. Lawrence’s novel *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*. Other laws bolstered the 1857 Act, which was the first to name the sale of obscene materials as a statutory offense: the Customs Consolidation Act of 1876 applied to the importation of obscene materials, and the Indecent Advertisements Act of 1889 added additional penalties. Parliament and local governments passed these laws, but the Evangelical Christian groups made it their self-appointed duty to police the pornographers and submit evidence to the judiciary.

As a mature writer, Machen’s career begins with short fiction published in periodicals like the *St. James Gazette* and *The Whirlwind*, and book-length works that appears as Keynotes Series publications, whose structure and content reflect the influence of Robert Louis Stevenson: “It was in the early spring of 1894 that I set about the writing of the said ‘Three Impostors,’ a

book which testifies to the vast respect I entertained for the fantastic, ‘New Arabian Nights’ manner of R. L. Stevenson, to those curious researches in the byways of London which I have described already, and also, I hope, to a certain originality of experiment in the tale of terror” (Machen, *Things Near and Far* 103). *The New Arabian Nights* and *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter* provided Machen with models for quicker pacing and framing devices, and *Strange Case of Jekyll and Hyde*, as discussed earlier, supplied thematic inspiration and variations on the modern anxieties cresting and gathering at the weir of the century’s turn.²⁰

While we find that extratextual relationships between the period, its players, and the Keynotes fiction reveal interesting material, the content of *The Great God Pan*, *The Three Impostors*, and “The White People” contains rich matter written by a son born and raised on a thrice-blessed Welsh borderland of mingled Celtic, Roman, and Arthurian legends and the mythscape of Old Europe’s stone monuments and hill remnants. In the urban space, Machen’s London is the city of resurrections, a place of occult coincidence that teems with dangerously-concealed intimacies. With these settings as the stage, Pan enters the late-Victorian horror story and literary supernatural in a style that, in a description from Ernest Dowson that can just as well be about Machen, derives from a “mingling of old mythology with fin de siècle Piccadilly” (81).

III. The Great Pan Lives

To appreciate this left-hand image of the Pan who casts his shadow and her form across Machen’s urban and rural fearscape, we start with a brief account of a legend that Machen inherited from his public-school days. Among the ancient Greek *pleroma*, Pan holds a distinction as the lone dead deity—at least dead in one popular version of his story. In *De Defectu Oraculorum* (“The Obsolescence of Oracles,” 419b-c), the historian Plutarch tells the

tale of a singular event from the reign of Emperor Tiberius. A ship that carried freight and passengers lost the wind near the Echinades Islands and drifted near Paxi, where a strange sound reached the deck. The sound was a voice from the shoreline that called out for the ship's Egyptian pilot, a man named Thamus, a capable crewman who had done nothing of distinction on the voyage to that point. After the third call, an astounded Thamus answered, and received this message: "When you sail by Palodes, announce aloud that Great Pan is dead" (Boardman 42). The voice ceased, the wind returned, and the ship sailed off from Paxi. Once near Palodes, the wind and sea calmed enough for Thamus to announce from the stern that "Great Pan is dead." Before he ended his shout a sudden chorus of despair rose from the unseen audience on the shore. Machen's interest in paganism and pre-Anglo-Saxon Britain pointed him to a common interpretation for this tale of a panic where a new belief system supplants an old one—i.e., the risen Jesus and Christian worship replace the fallen Pan and the pagan rites and Mysteries.²¹ Machen, a son born from multiple generations of Welsh preachers, who wrote his first, privately-published work based upon a Greek mystery cult, answers the legend of the dead Pan with his own call, and a debt to Swinburne, just as his contemporaries made their reply in various media. While not yet beyond the pull of his halcyon schoolboy days with its classical subjects, Machen's interest in a revival of chthonic mysteries began early. In 1881, he wrote the poem *Eleusinia*, a work that is derivative of Swinburne that in its juvenilia mimics style without substance.²² In late Victorian England, Pan resurrects with a numinous awe in the graphic and literary arts, but there also is a renewed emphasis on sexual implications. These Pan figures have an ability to incite sudden fear that is a reflection of contemporary concerns over cultural and social changes. Thus, Machen's use of Pan does not provide the rustic charm that writers of the

English Renaissance put the god in service of, and this fin-de-siècle Pan does not perform as the object of antique worship as he did among the Arcadians.

The Great God Pan updates the medieval European identification of Satan with the classical goat-god, similar to a reference made at the end of Machen's detective tale "The Red Hand" (1895) that condemns diabolical, inhuman behavior as the "Pain of the Goat" ("The Red Hand" 28). On this point, Sir John Boardman, who spent a career studying Western depictions of classical Greek deities, states: "Pan elements in the iconography of the Devil were rather inconsistently applied, but his reputation and behavior were thought good qualifications for his service as model" (24). Fittingly, the end of the second chapter of *The Great God Pan* is this phrase that Mr. Clarke inscribes on a page of his unpublished memoirs: *ET DIABOLUS INCARNATE EST. ET HOMO FACTUS EST* ("And a devil becomes flesh. And a human being is made.") (Machen 14). The title of that novella's third chapter, "The City of Resurrections," equally is apt for its revelation that the Pan force that is Helen now lives in London, just as the Latin quote that ends the previous chapter tells how the experiment that Clarke witnessed conceived a child, one who returns Pan to modern life in an immediate form. Allegations made against Helen from childhood to adulthood equate her with the base reputation of the god as demon and ignore the role of the more-nuanced daemon. A Welsh girl who was Helen's friend when in their teens laments: "Ah, mother, mother, why did you let me go to the forest with Helen?" (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 13). The implication is that Helen can conjure elementals who take the form of satyrs, and illicit sexual contact ensues. Mr. Charles Herbert, Helen's ruined first husband, tells his school chum Villiers how "I have seen...such horrors...and ask whether it is possible for a man to behold such things and live" (Machen, *Pan* 16). In both the country and city, in youth and maturity, Helen's Pan tendencies receive only condemnation. The

unnamed narrator of *The Green Book* in “The White People” fares no better in her fatal outcome for cavorting beyond the domestic sphere, and her doing so with non-orthodox methods.

In these stories, Machen’s male characters dominate with their belief that the wild places beyond and beside human cultivation are a source of spiritual and physical threat, and there is a threat, too, from anyone who couples (imaginatively or otherwise) within those places.

Unknowable and forgotten forces fill and inhabit the space that stretches between settled, civilized lives and the more distant, diminishing countryside—the same type of lands where Machen once had felt magic beyond the troubled lives of his parents.²³ In *The Great God Pan*, while in a drug-induced reverie, Mr. Clarke experiences an awful emergence from this space:

Clarke, in the deep folds of dream, was conscious that the path from his father’s house had led him into an undiscovered country, and he was wondering at the strangeness of it all, when suddenly, in place of the hum and murmur of the summer, an infinite silence seemed to fall on all things, and the wood was hushed, and for a moment in time he stood face to face there with a presence, that was neither man nor beast, neither the living nor the dead, but all things mingled, the form of all things but devoid of all form. (Machen 6)

Here the deity’s depiction mixes into the composite Pan: an earlier tradition of Arcadian Pan (from *paein* “to pasture” and *pa-on*, “grazer,” a god of wood and field); the later Orphic Pan (*pān*, god of “all”); and the Eusebian daemon made obsolete by the triumphant revelation of Christianity. The reverie’s prelude to a panic—the “infinite silence,” the sudden “hushed” world of fauna and flora, the ambiguous “presence”—echoes the “current of disordered sensual images” named by Dr. Henry Jekyll upon ingestion of the drug that he prepared as the Hyde

“tincture” (Stevenson, *Strange Case* 50). The risk arises from the wildness activated inside the body and beneath the conscious self that meets that which is present outside humanity.

As in the old tales, Pan’s shadow is enough to strike panic in the unwary and uninitiated—and those who must conceal some essential part of themselves—which is what happens for those men in Machen’s stories.²⁴ As my chapter on female adolescence in “The White People” and *The Green Book* discusses, Pan as the animated, supernal force in nature can give his protection to the sexually vulnerable as they begin their journey into the spiritual mysteries and pleasures attained by way of the flesh. Those persons who hide and exploit sexual impulses, and who threaten the sexuality of youth (particularly those who target females), receive this force’s wrath. Machen does not depict Pan as a single avatar: depending on the stage of his career and the story, Machen’s writing may refer to Pan, or else Nodens or the God of the Woods, as the name for the life force incarnated (i.e., vitalism), the archetypal male principle, numinosity, or occult powers of unknown provenance and scope. These are the persons who find their lives touched by a crippling anxiety cast upon them by a female form made of divine parts that are spirit and natural impulse that are free of social convention, and mortal, androgynous parts that are flesh and action that are restricted to social rule. Females who venture into and emerge from the domain of Pan present an immediate danger, often specific to the honor of family name, personal reputation, and class status. Once they detect the violations committed, the men react according to a program of sexual repression and behavioral controls, and commence a search to locate and neutralize the offending figure. The active expression of desire by an adult woman in *The Great God Pan* and the emergent sexuality of an adolescent girl in Machen’s short story “The White People” do not find tolerance in this version of upper-

middle-class Victorian society. For these females, learning, practicing, and living their sexual natures from without a regulated society must and do receive stricture.

IV. The Imperfect Copies and the Perfect Originals

The Pan cipher examined in the following chapters shifts forms, as do the rural and urban settings, all of which follow Arthur Machen's evolving worldview and changing outlook on life. In a pair of books written in the same year but published in the next century, Machen realizes his finest success in fiction and makes his boldest statement on literature. The final draft of the short story "The White People" (1899, published 1904) succeeds in its execution of the manner and matter of its long middle passage: This false document titled *The Green Book* is the diary of a teenage girl whose contact with the numinous is one of joy and unconscious recklessness. In an earlier work, *The Great God Pan*, the character Mr. Clarke's *Memoirs to Prove the Existence of the Devil* is another secret manuscript with traces of the genre conventions of English Gothic fiction. The book *Hieroglyphics: A Note upon Ecstasy in Literature* (1899, published 1902) contains Machen's clearest assertion of what literature should be. Together, "The White People" with its *Green Book* and *Hieroglyphics* form on either side of the fin de siècle a dyad that conveys the intersecting point of literary creation and human life as one best meant to seek after and share in a liberating ecstatic experience.²⁵ Despite Oswald Spengler's attempt to anthropomorphize the seeming descent of past civilizations to fit his theory in *The Decline of the West* (1918), the term fin de siècle implies decline and renewal. Gilman has argued this point in rebuke of Spengler's popular work, and, in his support of Gilman, Weir has stated that "if fin de siècle implies both decline and renewal, such a mixture is consistent with the transitional ferment of decadence" (xvi).

For Machen, to abide the dictate to follow one's bliss as the single rule is insufficient in the suitable governance of one's life. This route can lead too close to the suspect Aleister Crowley's esoteric religion of *Thelema* and its laws of vice and goetic magic as celebration of will. In addition, any way to ecstasy is fraught with temporal sorrow and assaults of rote distraction. The means that can lead to the desired end exact a toll on even the sincerest aspirant. In its striking first lines, "The White People" introduces the mental realm of Arthur Machen at a new century as he considers these diverging paths: "Sorcery and sanctity...these are the only realities. Each is an ecstasy, a withdrawal from the common life" (62). Ideas of the holy and profane enfold his vast esoteric reading, a childhood spent in solitary awe of nature, interest in Catholic ritual that compelled his High Church Anglicanism, and a desire for ever-fading tradition in the constant push of modern change. In their describing uncommon states, *The Green Book* and *Hieroglyphics* reflect a contemporary response to broader cultural and social anxieties, sharpened by the personal struggles of the writer.

From manuscript form at the calendar end of the Victorian age to print debut at the start of the Edwardian, the story and book separate in time a shared origin in pain. Machen in 1899 had his reasons to want a withdrawal from life at the century's close: His descent into psychic confusion and dysregulation caused by his first wife's, Amelia Hogg's (his Amy's), death.²⁶ What he wrote in her last year, in exaltation of language's traces of the ineffable, could not console the suffering of a lover's and caregiver's loss. Yet Machen did not discard belief in the ecstatic image of higher Form whose outline he sought in his writing of those works. The entrance into a vortex of grief led to an emergence at the start of a new period with his friend A. E. (Arthur Edward) Waite's help, who published "The White People" and encouraged Machen to find condolence as an initiate of the ritual magic group The Hermetic Order of the Golden

Dawn.²⁷ Machen's sense of something beyond the mortal sphere, outside of time, did not weaken from his widower's struggle with that loss. The struggle became the very means of growth, maturing, and joy as he would form new relationships, renew old ones, and begin a career as an actor (a "new boy") in a company of travelling players. The entry into that state of something greater, of awe and fleeting numinosity, is often (maybe always) the result, however indirect, of some encounter with other human beings—from the sum of all that Machen had given to and shared with his wife to the loyalty and assistance received from Waite.²⁸

The Green Book's narrator, bereft of her mother from a young age, tells how contact with her childhood nurse assisted in bringing her closer to that something beyond. While the point is not to find a direct correlation between the author's life and creative output, when no exact, corresponding formula exists, one does find a symbiosis between the fiction and the creative non-fiction. In *Hieroglyphics*, Machen remarks at (discursive) length on the technique applied in "The White People" but makes no reference to the story—a "cyclical mode of discoursing" (*Hieroglyphics* 8). What *Hieroglyphics* proposes is a distinct, narrowly-focused aesthetic judgment of literary merit: ecstasy must suffuse the writing. In the book's Prefatory Note, the argument purports to derive from conversations between Machen and an "obscure literary hermit" who lives on the edge of London (*Hieroglyphics* 3). This hermit, in description and location, is a copy of the character Ambrose the recluse from the Prologue and Epilogue of "The White people," who "dozed and dreamed over his books" and guards *The Green Book* (62). The compulsory element named by the hermit depends upon the man-behind-the-hermit's, Machen's, claim that ecstasy is an essential quality of high literary art. That same art must look to the unknown, stand remote from the mundane, and intone the contents of the otherworldly in a voice of enchantment—a tough list of qualifications to meet.²⁹ The substitutes that Machen provides

for the key term are no less objective: “rapture, beauty, adoration, wonder, awe, mystery, sense of the unknown, desire for the unknown” (*Hieroglyphics* 18). Furthermore, he makes the claim that “all and each [of the substitute words] will convey what I mean; for some particular case one term may be more appropriate than another, but in every case there will be that withdrawal from the common life and the common consciousness which justifies my choice of ‘ecstasy’ as the best symbol of my meaning” (*Hieroglyphics* 18).³⁰ This withdrawal relies upon symbols and their power to evoke hidden forces, for symbols underpin the idealist Machen’s vision of the real.

From the glamour of his childhood spent on lone wanders of Gwent in the Welsh March borderlands—crossroads of megalithic Old Europe, Celtic myth, Roman history, and Arthurian legend—Machen sought the ability to engage in a mode of the non-literal as a means by which one enhances one’s life and steps outside of an alienating, modern stasis. He could choose no better term than ecstasy to describe the process. Without surprise, Machen rejects realism in a search for the transcendent through the written word. His style through the fin de siècle varies between the expository one of *Hieroglyphics* and the personal, intimate (and invented) narrative of *The Green Book*. Machen’s grudge is with literature whose content and effects deny or fail, by his measure, to assert a spiritual component of human existence. In its outline of technique, Wordsworth’s essay “Preface to the Lyrical Ballads” holds no quarter here, with deliberate prescriptions on the composition process that seek to contain the sudden inspired moment.³¹ With no clear method and once Machen names authors, the theory of ecstasy threatens to head off onto a misty fringe of Romantic conceit of the impractical and irrational. Those whom he parts into the fold of the ecstatic clean are Homer, Cervantes, Rabelais, and Dickens, and representative among the unclean realists are Pope, Austen, Thackeray, and George Eliot. Once

more the limits of *Hieroglyphics* appear for literary assessment, since the exclusion of the latter group of writers privileges the extraordinary and epiphanic and ignores their art's social engagement.

Across many types of writing, Machen consistently displays more interest in suprahuman horror, pre-1899, and preternatural glory, post-1899, but at all times he cares about the interplay of physical space on the emotions and behavior of individuals. He demonstrates less concern with what Chris Hedges defends more broadly in *Empire of Illusion* as the power and necessity of "literature as both a mirror and a lens, to reflect back to us, and focus us on, our hypocrisy, moral corruption, and injustice" (97).³² Literature that is patently socially-minded is part of what Machen refers to as "literature on the subject" and "reading matter" from a "consummately clever photographer" and not "the Artist with a capital A" (*Hieroglyphics* 40-41). Yes, there were moral offenses and tales of injustice and interpersonal cares that Machen would address as an essayist and a journalist for his many newspaper employers. He saw and sought a different purpose for literature, where one could occupy as either writer or reader an expanded consciousness to better cope with the cares and injuries that an ever-grinding modernity forced upon the individual self. Concerns of Machen's time are present in his fin-de-siècle literature

However problematic the application of *Hieroglyphics* as theory may be, the repeated praise heaped on ecstasy and the superior pattern of symbolic gesture give insight into Machen's own project. The literary criticism of his book reveals itself to be a collection of personal preferences of a conservative critic who was prone to attack his triple terrors: industrialization; materialism; and the false hermeticism of neo-paganism and occult societies with fraudulent histories and lax, abusive leadership.³³ Each target, admittedly, is a fair object for scorn. The ruined life of the would-be writer-hero Lucian Taylor, the semi-autobiographical protagonist in

Machen's farewell-to-Decadence novel *The Hill of Dreams* (1907, but written a decade earlier), relies on the repeated, tragic theme of the artist in the creative workshop who is isolated from modern society and disconnected from its responsibilities. The dilemma's presentation is one where the artist is not at sole fault for disinterest in the rest of humanity: "The love of art dissociated man from the race" (Machen, *Hill of Dream* 197) and "he realised that he had lost the art of humanity for ever" (Machen, *Hill of Dream* 210). The race is full of those who are unknowing, unable, unwilling, or uncaring, and they do not question or follow what measure of perception that they may glimpse beyond and other than what Blake names as "Newtons sleep" [sic]—the bound of all that is already known.³⁴

What doomed misanthrope Lucian Taylor failed to know with his untapped imaginative capacity, compounded by a frustrated general inability to appreciate and enjoy, Machen does demonstrate with a selection of ecstatic, powerfully-allusive moments from the anonymous female narrator that charge the prose fiction of *The Green Book* in "The White People." This later story plays on the same theme of the doomed protagonist. However, Machen realizes her interiority and exterior adventures in a manner beyond *The Hill of Dreams* and exceeds what *Hieroglyphics* could hope to achieve in definition and explication. In Arthur Machen's maturing vision, symbolism is the closest that one can get in this life to the greater actuality beyond appearances, a reality with binds that many of his characters prior to 1899 cannot escape without punishment of physical torture or social and spiritual damnation—and they often experience all three and often in that order (e.g., the misadventures of the men in *The Great God Pan* and the doom of the Young Man with Spectacles in *The Three Impostors*). In *The Green Book*, nature is revelation for the girl and the place where the hidden potential of the female psyche is individuated as it is for her nowhere else. Any remotely-standard Christian context for

understanding the anonymous girl's symbolic life is stripped away in the singular content of her journal entries.

The Green Book is the prime example of a Machen text that refers to an otherworld of higher forms—of the capital kind—met in this mortal world with its cycles of decay and renewal. The outer framing of “The White People” conceives of a Platonic interpretation of *The Green Book*'s affairs as ones engaged in a shadowplay of events whose philosophical base is Plato's Allegory of the Cave. Ambrose, the hermetic recluse and keeper of *The Green Book*, echoes the *Republic*'s allegory in his description of the Neo-Platonic seeker and its inverse:

‘Great people of all kinds forsake the imperfect copies and go to the perfect originals. I have no doubt but that many of the very highest among the saints have never done a “good action” (using the words in their ordinary sense). And, on the other hand, there have been those who have sounded the very depths of sin, who all their lives have never done an “ill deed.”’

(Machen, “The White People” 62)

Ambrose also poses as a hierophant who alleges to see the shadowlands that the modern material world has dimmed, blocked, or muted even for those with more acute perceptive abilities. In his attempt to sketch out this portion of his metaphysical views for the current audience, a visitor named Cotgrave, Ambrose inserts a firm moral consideration to the Idealism that he believes himself to represent.³⁵ By Ambrose's measure, what he asserts is the prelude to a great tale with the main role starring an adolescent who went “to the perfect originals” by the wrong way. Read in the way that he prefers, the tale becomes one of harrowing damnation because this girl's withdrawal from the standard life of her uninitiated peers and elders, who lack her gifts of enchantment, occurs by her use of the magic craft (e.g., witchery, or *maleficium*).

In the cross-referencing found between *Hieroglyphics* and “The White People,” the Platonic cave transmutes to a matrix from which visionary imagination emerges. One finds such an expression in the Prefatory Note to *Hieroglyphics*, when Machen is in the company of the hermit (who is Ambrose-by-another-name):

I recall the presence of that hollow, echoing room, the atmosphere with its subtle suggestion of incense sweetening the dank odours of the cellar, and the tone of the voice speaking to me, and I believe that once or twice we both saw visions, and some glimpse at least of certain eternal, ineffable Shapes. (Machen 7)

In the darkened rooms laced with whiffs of Decadence, the memory of Machen-the-narrator sketches the meeting place as cave-like and where the ideal forms, the “Shapes,” may be. Yet in “The White People” a significant change occurs in the presentation of the hermit who is meant not as a cultural iconoclast but as a status-quo guru who collects curiosities and exoticisms, and he does as to keep a close eye on that which may threaten to destabilize social foundations and middlebrow order. Ambrose poses as one who has left behind humanity in a trade for quiet contemplation in his cottage of curios and antiquities. If such a lifestyle were the case, he would be on par with Lucian Taylor of *The Hill of Dreams* had Lucian found the stability and strength to go about his work. Rather, Ambrose is a kind of outlying watchman who has collated the scraps and ends of individual cases of those persons who threaten to rent the social fabric—as if he is part of the curation of humanity’s secret cabinet, whose archives must be kept from profane eyes and minds.

Machen never abandoned Christianity as his primary—and idiosyncratic—faith, but, with qualifications, he respected occult studies and select elements of paganism. Neo-Platonic Hermeticism and philosophic alchemy entered his consciousness from his childhood at Llandewi

Fach and as a young adult in the employ of the publisher and antiquary bookseller George Redway of Covent Garden. For Machen, the best of the pagan past that one can appreciate in the present consists of Platonic philosophy, Neo-Platonism, and the Mystery religions of the Greco-Roman world. More precisely, he held an admiration and a special regard for Eleusis. When writing in praise of the exuberant obscenity of Rabelais, whose works he had known since a child, Machen reveals the influence that he had absorbed from the classical texts first encountered in adolescence. In *The Life of Gargantua and of Pantagruel*, Machen hears “the clear, enchanted voice of Plato” (*Hieroglyphics* 97). His highest praise goes to the pagan Idealist philosophers, where sacred truth can be found in pre-Coptic paganism led by the Platonists and celebrated in the Eleusinian Mysteries. In late Victorian England, as Ronald Hutton has noted, the term pagan was often code for “freedom” and “self-indulgence” of an individual person’s passions and pleasures (27). Suspicions formed about there being an association with libertine and lubricious lifestyles that the scandals and manufactured displays of naughtiness for attention’s sake seemed to support, and that Machen feared to be true. The Horos case (1901) and the Charles Webster Leadbeater scandal (1906) would seem to confirm that darker underside of sexual exploitation among the esoteric orders, and the tutorials of the nurse and *The Green Book* girl in Machen’s “The White People” may anticipate.

In a final return to Wilde, Machen’s contemporary took pride in the use of the term pagan when he sat on the stand against the Marquess of Queensbury.³⁶ At the Queensbury libel trial, Wilde had to explain one of his aphorisms, “Pleasure is the only thing one should live for,” and did so with this statement for the record: “I think the realisation of oneself is the prime aim of life, and to realise oneself through pleasure is finer than to do so through pain. I am, on that point, entirely on the side of the ancients—the Greeks. It is a pagan idea.” As a rebuke to these

newly-acrued meanings and their part in an ancient pagan tradition, Machen stated that “more furious and frantic nonsense has been talked about ‘paganism’ than about almost any other subject” (*Things Near and Far* 55).³⁷ With the varieties of meaning for “pagan” in use during the Victorian period through World War I, finding a handle on the term can seem daunting. Nicholas Freeman provides a helpful consideration of the term’s connotations in the essay “‘Nothing of the Wild Wood’? Pan, Paganism and Spiritual Confusion in E. F. Benson’s ‘The Man Who Went too Far’”: “In short, late nineteenth century ‘paganism’ was more a set of associations or a loosely defined cultural movement than it was a coherent belief system” (23). Machen uses his essay “On Paganism,” originally the author’s introduction to Mitchell S. Buck’s book of prose sketches on Coptic Egypt, to state his position:

All words are more or less misconstrued and misunderstood; none more grievously than the word ‘Paganism.’ Paganism is conceived generally to be that state of the ancient world, Greek and Roman, but chiefly Greek, in which men lived in a kind of Abbey of Thelema, doing what they would, satisfying the flesh according to their desires, devoid of morals altogether, using the word ‘morals’ in its customary modern sense. (22)

As he did with his views on the Celtic Revival, Machen did not refrain from voicing an objection when deemed necessary, above all in reply to what he judged to be rueful contortions exacted upon the concept of paganism as lately defined and practiced in its modern, and for him, attenuated update. In this statement from the essay “On Paganism,” about a different culture and time, Machen reveals an attitude that easily can apply to his view of the more-dedicated devotees of fin de siècle English Decadence: “Alexandria [Egypt] did the thing [of late-Classical decadent

paganism] in style; and yet, it seems, it was all a failure at best. Man found that he could not live on bread alone; that is, purely in the material world” (25).

As can happen with the research and review of a single aspect from a complex period, a part of an intricate whole will exhibit itself as if it were dominant. Such an error is true especially at a time when England expanded its empire, its citizens at home and abroad made many scientific discoveries, experienced rapid judicial and legislative changes, and they lived under unique cultural and social mores that varied by class. Thus, the long-nineteenth century can appear to be a pagan revival if one searches out the abundant influence of interest in paganism. From Percy Shelley earlier in the century to Swinburne in the later decades, pagan themes provided the fodder to rebel against the social order that they opposed and the Christian tradition whose impositions that they resented. The adoption of this stance derives from what Daniel Corrick has referred to as “a subversive aesthetic that they saw as suitably compatible for their atheism and Republicanism,” but for Machen “it was a step in the great Mystery tradition, the Mystery tradition essential to that great experiment which is called Existence” (Corrick 19-20). Remarks made in the first and final chapters of *The Great God Pan*, “The Experiment” and “The Fragments,” turn a wary eye on the pagan worshippers of antiquity, some of whom sought to clear the limits between immediate, transitory appearances and the greater Real. For these seekers to do what they sought would mean that “they taste the Forbidden Fruit, they lift the lid of Pandora’s Box, they cast open the Door that looks on Cornwall...they go beyond what it is lawful to do and in doing so repeat the Fall from Grace” (Corrick 19). These fears that linger in the background of that first Keynotes story are the same spoken by Ambrose with his declarations about *The Green Book*. However, Machen’s writing at the fin de siècle concerns

itself with parts that have divided, that are divided, and that threaten to divide. Belief in apparent unity is undermined repeatedly in Machen's work.

Resonances from Platonic thought of what seems to be and what is recur from early in Machen's mature writing with *The Great God Pan* to the twilight work "N" (1935), but are captured nowhere else as fully and wondrously as in *The Green Book* of "The White People." Contemporary everyday life with its fill of boredoms, petty meanness, puritanical streaks, and senseless violence cannot be, and is not, all that is. The call that Machen attempted to answer, and that he devoted himself in trying to sound, resembles the efforts of a person with a standard mystic temperament. As he explains in an essay from late in his career, "We live in a world of symbols; of sensible perishable things which both veil and reveal spiritual and living and eternal realities" (Machen, "Farewell to Materialism" 51). But to attempt an articulation of the ineffable means a reliance upon the limits of words, and the aim for precision involves many stumbles and clumsy efforts that get revised for the next attempt until one's fated lot for further attempts expires. In a speculation that is hopeful and, perhaps, stated with an undercoat of defiant bitterness given his many professional defeats, Machen writes in the 1923 introduction to the Knopf edition of *The Three Impostors* that "it may turn out after all that the weavers of fantasy are the veritable realists" (xix).³⁸ His desire was for proof of the greater reality of the imagined and its permanence instead of forms that perish.

For this son descended from Welsh preachers who spoke with the passion of *hwyl*, Machen devoted himself to the belief that a mystery enchants the world that is at once a Veil and a Sacrament.³⁹ A current expression of the concept is in Jungian readings of the Rider-Waite version of the Tarot deck: "The unconscious speaks to us from behind the veil, through symbols, dreams, and visions" (Pollack 74).⁴⁰ For Machen, the intent and wherewithal of one's approach

to the wonder of this mystery determines the type of experience and its outcome's quality and course. Across his life he sought to make contact with the hyperreal and give expression to his beliefs. As in the case of the Angels of Mons legend at the start of World War I, begun by Machen's short story "The Bowmen" (1914) in the London *Evening News*, he was scrupulous in admitting when a work was fiction and coming to his own defense for the role of his imagination. His introductions to later editions of his fiction and autobiographies often include a reply to those who doubted the contents as being anything other than his own invention. One such redressing appears in the introduction to the 1923 Knopf edition of *The Three Impostors*:

I remember when 'The Great God Pan' was issued, a friend of mine said, 'I suppose it is just an old legend that was going down in your part of the country when you were a boy?' I was quite cross...and I daresay to others, 'These barbarians can't bear to acknowledge that anybody can 'make up' anything. They know they couldn't do any of the kind themselves and the suggestion that, for all that, the thing is done now and again annoys them.' I was proud of having invented 'The Great God Pan': I was not going to have the credit of that fact taken away on the strength of a legend which never existed. (Machen vii)

For all of the frustration that he experienced from his writing career, in "The White People" Machen comes closest to realizing his aims of sharing a joy in the creation of a life; however, the life of that story central character, *The Green Book* girl, ends in sadness with condemnation. There is a split of the girl's life from the cultural requirements made by her father's society, which has no place for the girl whose identity does not and cannot find support from the seemingly ordered, material reality that she once knew as home. This home was a single household in a much larger social fabric whose official legal workings and the unofficial

operations of its ethos sought to regulate itself against subversive conduct; infractions would receive punitive replies to maintain the appearance of social integrity and wholeness. Within *The Green Book*, the voice that speaks is more authentic than what Machen allows for in the safe orthodoxy of the narrative's outer framing, or in a direct pronouncement of his own on the topic of non-normative sexuality and non-Christian heterodoxy. The result is that the girl's life must be voided, which is the same end but accomplished in a different manner for Helen Vaughan in the climax of *The Great God Pan*.

Those complicated female characters are able to elude a gendered framing of their lives that discounts their abilities and the ultimate success of their efforts to attain the sanctity of Wisdom (i.e., Sophia, or the *nous* of the Neoplatonists)—a unity that is not possible in the divisions of the material world of dying forms. Their narrative deaths into a higher realm of being cap a height around which Machen's sometimes marvelous life and works surround, but at lower altitudes and perhaps of thinner stuff. His literary efforts can be understood as dual-quested: his quest in the eighteen nineties for the uncanny in the manifestation of bodies, and the quest for a spiritual energy in his understanding of Celtic Christianity and the *San Graal* (i.e., the Holy Grail). If Machen's entire literary output is taken into account, then the claim holds that Wesley D. Sweetser makes in his biography that Machen "wrote long before he had anything to say and long after he had said all that he had to say" (6). The time spent on the payrolls of a series of London periodicals demanded from Machen a speed of work and manner of form that did not allow for the continued attention to craft that would permit for the maturing of his style and the development of his imaginative abilities. *The Hill of Dreams* indicates where his fiction may have gone, and, while the leanness and celerity that journalism often required from him had

its benefits, his fiction was abandoned for long periods of time after Amy's death in comparison to his productivity in the eighteen nineties.⁴¹

However, my chapters are studies of Machen at the height of his literary career (a revival of interest in his career in the nineteen twenties factors in, too, which is when he wrote his three-part autobiography). My emphases on representative works will demonstrate how that writing provides a lens for seeing the various developments of ideas on sexuality and spirituality in the late Victorian period that are found in the stories of a writer whom few know today outside of the genres of horror and the literary supernatural. The narrative pieces finished by Machen at the fin de siècle form a visionary landscape of an outsider artist who, through his friendships, marriage, and freelance journalism and other newspaper work, kept a firm grounding in the bustle of life in the modern British, urbanized world. The fragments of his literary career capture many of the divided aspects of that particular period of transition, when the Victorian era began its conclusion and the buildup to the mechanistic terror of World War I commenced.

CHAPTER 2

STRANGE LITTLE GIRL: FAERIE AND THE CRAFT OF FEMALE ADOLESCENCE IN ARTHUR MACHEN'S "THE WHITE PEOPLE"

"The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness."¹

"As Spring said to the dryad, you must cultivate your cosmic sympathies, or Pan will not attend to you."²

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."³

I. Human Hermetics at the Fin de Siècle

The late-nineteenth century had no shortage of debating and theorizing on the status of humanity and the nature of good and evil, including inquiries into what may or may not be unnatural about the relationship of one to the other. Discourse on the moral conundrum drew the interest and participation of secular humanists and the theologically-prone, with agnostics, named by that Victorian neologism from T. H. Huxley, also in the jumble. By century's end, the information on human physiology and psychology, data from the new science of Sexology, and studies of socioeconomic conditions underwent a massive sorting and assorted theorizing in an attempt to make some sense of all the facts, figures, and measurements newly available about what British persons do and, purportedly, why they do it. In search of deviancy in order to define normalcy—prurience holds more interest than purity—the interested parties found that the hoped-for stable center of the morally right(-eous) and a normative control group kept shifting and shrinking.⁴ One of the popular questions on morality maintained the veneer of the old

Christian beliefs by asking about individual human value in light of the recent information from the sciences: Is there a soul in there, and, if its existence may be so, of what use is it? No clear answer was forthcoming.

By the eighteenth century, personal conscience and the environmental stressors under which a diverse, industrialized, and urbanized population lived held more credence than the tiring metaphysical bickering of the Christian denominations. Yet Voltaire's concern from the prior century remained, written in his verse epistle "A Letter to the Author of the Three Imposters" (1768): "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him" (402, trans. Iverson).⁵ Arthur Machen takes the title for *The Three Impostors* (1895), his novel of interrelated short stories, from Voltaire and from that apocryphal, mythic work of the European Middle Ages that was alleged to be dismissive of the Abrahamic religions as gross misrepresentations.⁶ In Machen's world of impostors, occult conspiracies and criminal networks operate undetected and unprosecuted in the capital of the British Empire. The penultimate chapter of *The Three Impostors* reveals the fragility of the established social order and the ignorance about actual conditions under which the lives of most Londoners pass, and the lives and realities that they pass by. Concerns with proper social controls and human morality relative to the occult take precedence in Machen's short story "The White People" (1899), where, under the aegis of human sexuality, the play of good and evil destroys the life of an adolescent girl.

With science in the ascendant and the muddled, in-fighting Church of England in its long descent from national influence, there were numerous opinions from professional and non-professional corners on human worth and purpose. The informed and the firmly opinionated each had their say: scientists; moralizing Evangelists; enterprising businessmen; dutiful MPs and jurists; the bourgeoisie; the lowest denizens from the East End flophouses to the Soho rookeries;

and the artists. Each constituency had its motivations for attracting hearts and minds, whether they sought a profit in pounds sterling, Dickensian “hands” (*Hard Times*), or souls (e.g., William Booth’s Salvation Army). Many other groups sought support for discoveries and new theories (e.g., the descent of man and degeneration), attention for the plight of the marginalized (e.g., Henry Mayhew and Charles Booth), or calls for changes to legal rights and status (e.g., social purists, Stead’s New Journalism, and the women’s suffrage movement). Aside from the positivist hopes for wide-spread social improvements at the fin de siècle, worries increased about crime, poverty, and invasions of foreign bodies that were both political and medical.⁷ “The White People” acknowledges these common social fears: “We take the very numerous infractions of our social “bye-laws”—the very necessary and very proper regulations which keep the human company together—and we get frightened at the prevalence of “sin” and “evil”” (Machen 64). The human form divine was now the human form (d-)evolved and disputed, and uncertainty remained about whether that status was an improvement, and, if not, what kind of correction was required.

Among the diverse options for how Victorians considered these questions of fin-de-siècle anxieties, morality and artists will be a focus for the moment on “The White People.” The Aesthetes often made a show of their interests in perversity and extreme artifice, lauding their perceptions of the anti-natural and imbibing a taste for exoticisms available from the stores of empire, like what one finds in Theodore Wratismaw’s book of poems, *Orchids* (1896). Decadence became a label for actions that flouted dominant, and, thus, acceptable modes of behavior, which for some became a kind of acting out—a posed naughtiness—that appeared to be proof of a withdrawal from normality and proper membership in English society. In “The White People,” Arthur Machen, who was neither an Aesthete nor a Decadent, brings together the

strictly moralistic and the amorally spontaneous, and writes the most-memorable first lines of his career.⁸ Ambrose, the character who speaks these lines, pronounces to his direct audience, a friend of a friend named Cotgrave, an absolute statement on the reality of ecstasy: “Sorcery and sanctity, these are the only realities. Each is an ecstasy, a withdrawal from the common life” (Machen, “The White People” 62). Ambrose’s words set up the basic frame narrative whose outer parts are a Prologue and an Epilogue that center upon their casting a judgment that condemns the outré affairs of the female, adolescent author of the story’s long middle section, a journal referred to as *The Green Book*.

The author of *The Green Book* receives no name other than “the girl,” a generic marker for a person whom Ambrose presents as guilty of the charge of sorcery and, therefore, deserving of society’s shunning.⁹ Here, sorcery is a sin in the upper case and that refers to a capital offense, a category on the moral scale beyond a felony. In the criminal code, anti-witchcraft legislation had existed as part of English law for centuries, but by the late-Victorian period emendations led to fraud prevention as the primary rationale.¹⁰ Thus, the moral, not legislative, stakes of the inner content of “The White People” appear from the start, set in a “house in a northern suburb, through an old garden to the room where Ambrose the recluse dozed and dreamed over his books” (Machen 62). The epithet, “the recluse,” indicates that Ambrose commits his own withdrawal from the common world just as the girl turns her back on her father’s household and departs for uncommon experiences. However, the result is not that this recluse straddles or has found a way to mediate between the path of the saint and the sorcerer (i.e., a Sinner according to the values system to which he subscribes).¹¹ He has no interest in either making use of both means to ecstasy, or of converting those paths into an active practice to enlightenment. Rather, his binary position follows a lifestyle that sets himself as the judge of

who may access certain rare texts and hidden accounts of ecstasy attained through means that are spiritually-sanctioned or damned. The implication is that Ambrose owns diverse works in his collection that depict advancement along those differing paths, but he is a gatekeeper and moralist who, in the act of securing his private library, blocks access to and stifles learning. What one finds from his story of the facts of that teenaged girl's life found in *The Green Book* is a man who uses his collection didactically. Above all else, he offers lessons for the curious on the horror of pagan rites that incorporate physical worship and that dare to break with hegemonic authority that would quell the celebration of those rites. The image of this man dozing and dreaming over his collected works calls to mind a half-committed Faust, prior to his deal with Mephistopheles, who neglects involvement with his fellow humanity and experiences ennui with traditional scholarly pursuits. There is also in Ambrose's broad characterization a call back to the exiled Prospero in *The Tempest*, who privileges a relationship with what his assorted esoteric volumes and grimoires hold to the detriment of the just treatment of people around him.

II. The Unreal Nature of Evil

The strange key to "The White People" is *The Green Book*, an impossible artefact of enchantment in which the words are not those of someone who believes that she merely is playing a game that generates illusions and sensory hallucinations—a type of play that ends once she opens her eyes from either sleep or idle make-believe. The spells and weird events that the girl writes about, as a witness to and the cause of, result from actual magic and are not tricks mixed in a conjurer's bowl or the seeming delusions of a smoke and mirror show that sleight her mental capacities. There is no hidden technology behind the scenes that she narrates, and she does not ingest psychotropic drugs or have contact with other chemical stimulants. As the prelude to the launch into her enchanted world of the occult as personal reality, Cotgrave exists

in the narrative's outer framing for no purpose other than to prompt Ambrose's statements on the staid morals of sanctity (i.e., the holy) and sorcery (i.e., evil), the latter of which, with its requisite wickedness, the girl is meant to exemplify. With Cotgrave's temporary possession of *The Green Book*, the girl's story is a negative spiritual enchantment does not reach a dynamic, charged audience; her story reaches a repository, a storage space where moral admonishment of female transgression will keep her story concealed.¹² Ambrose, in response to Cotgrave, explains the spiritual system of which the girl was a part:

'I think you are falling into the very general error of confining the spiritual world to the supremely good; but the supremely wicked, necessarily, have their portion in it. The merely carnal, sensual man can no more be a great sinner than he can be a great saint. Most of us are just indifferent, mixed-up creatures; we muddle through the world without realizing the meaning and the inner sense of things, and, consequently, our wickedness and our goodness are alike second-rate, unimportant.' (Machen, "The White People" 62)

Most crimes are sins against the social contract and lack the metaphysical weight of the cases gathered and catalogued by Ambrose, with *The Green Book* among the odd files.¹³ Furthermore, Ambrose's dualistic definition of the real suggests that he is a man interested far more in his collecting esoteric information and occult relics. This devotion trumps respect for the differences in how certain persons practice their attainment of ecstatic contact with the numinous and the correspondences that exist between those different ways to attain it.

Ambrose's essential, dubious assertion is that the type of true sin of sorcery that the girl commits is independent of the foundations and regulations of society, and that her boundary breaking justifies his indignation and her demise. At the end of the Prologue's circular

conversation, Cotgrave repeats his question about morality: ““In a word—what is sin? You have given me, I know, an abstract definition, but I should like a concrete example”” (Machen, “The White People” 68). *The Green Book* is the concrete example, and, before he shares its secrets, Ambrose asserts that people rarely engage in evil (i.e., true Sin): ““I told you it was very rare....The materialism of the age, which has done a good deal to suppress sanctity, has done perhaps more to suppress evil. We find the earth so very comfortable that we have no inclination either for ascents or descents”” (Machen, “The White People” 68). However, Ambrose’s example of the girl’s sorcery as esoteric Sin contradicts his own definition of it. The rituals described in the journal may be condemned by Victorian society for a host of reasons that include blasphemy and moral corruption, but the journal provides no evidence that it could be an example of the spiritual category of sin that adheres to Ambrose’s initial definition. Instead, the book’s contents reflect on Ambrose’s part an incomplete, limited understanding of what “a great sinner” is (Machen, “The White People” 62). His principle belief is valid: If this higher order of sin exists, then it “has nothing to do with social life or social laws, or if it has, only incidentally and accidentally” (Machen, “The White People” 67). The girl’s patrilineal society allows for no respect for her gifts per se, and has no interest in her abilities beyond their quelling.

However, Ambrose’s sorting of the spiritual matter of good and evil by “sanctity” and “sorcery” is precarious, and his efforts to clarify his accusation of the girl slips into a conturbation of terms. His initial claim is that true sin is a kind of theft: “But sin is an effort to gain the ecstasy and the knowledge that pertain alone to angels” (Machen, “The White People” 65). In Ambrose’s model, *The Green Book* girl has overreached her station and tried to filch what cannot be hers.¹⁴ The girl is guilty of ignorance in her escapades as a child tutored by her nurse, but this girl is not unknowing in her final years of life after puberty. On the former point, in *The Green*

Book she identifies with childlike innocence one of the nurse's rituals as a game, an act performed when the girl was around the age of eight. A mature perception would recognize that the nurse engages in sexual activities with a homunculus:

So [the nurse] did all sorts of queer things with the little clay man, and I noticed she was all streaming with perspiration, though we had walked so slowly, and then she told me to "pay my respects," and I did everything she did because I liked her, and it was such an odd game. (Machen, "The White People" 85)

When older, the girl plays the same "odd game" to create a homunculus, and has a new understanding that her younger self lacked about the purpose and result of the magical operation. She is proud of her mastery, which is made possible by a knowledge that pertains to more than the angelic category of divine beings that Ambrose references.

It was all true and wonderful and splendid, and when I remembered the story I knew and thought of what I had really seen....And [I] did everything that nurse had done, only I made a much finer image than the one she had made; and when it was finished I did everything that I could imagine and much more than she did, because it was the likeness of something far better.

(Machen, "The White People" 93)

Another sign of mature awareness is that the girl knows better than to reveal in detail the secrets of her mystical experiences, even in the personal narrative of her journal. While she never outwardly contemplates the morality of her or the nurse's actions, this girl indicates an extended reflection, non-judgmental, on the choices made by the characters from the nurse's tales. Yet Ambrose's intention is to use *The Green Book*, homunculi and all, as an example of spiritual sin that is not relevant to the general population's opinion of magic. He makes clear that his

definition of what constitutes real sinning is not one held popularly, and, even though the rituals that the girl performs may be considered sinful in accord with common superstitions and laws, she does not intend consciously to defy nature, either her human nature or natural laws.

Ambrose eventually contradicts his initial statement on sinning when he refers Cotgrave to the unconscious aspect of the girl's life, which requires a reading of *The Green Book* that serves to indict her on charges that she acted in violation of natural and orthodox laws. In his reply to Cotgrave's question about whether the iniquity of sorcery is ever an unconscious act, Ambrose argues the position that true sorcery is always unconscious:

‘[Sorcery] must be so. It is like holiness and genius in this as in other points; it is a certain rapture or ecstasy of the soul; a transcendent effort to surpass the ordinary bounds. So, surpassing these, it surpasses also the understanding, the faculty that takes note of that which comes before it. No, a man may be infinitely and horribly wicked and never suspect it. (Machen, “The White People” 66).

Ambrose uses “faculty” as a combination of how memory works and the personal capacity to reflect upon and consider one's actions (i.e., personal conscience). This role of the unconscious in sorcery negates his previous argument. He now implies that spiritually negative sin (i.e., sorcery) is an unconscious urge instead of a conscious effort that defies metaphysical laws.¹⁵

Ambrose's ideas create a gaping contradiction, that he may mean to proffer as a paradox: Sin is an effort to attain spiritual ecstasy that is possible only in defiance of the natural order relative to the transcendent. Yet such sinning is an unconscious desire inherent in one's soul that finds expression in violations that are beyond one's ability to know what one has done. This state implies that the desire to go against one's nature, and to do so destructively, is inherent in one's nature, as in the Semitic legends of Lucifer and Shaytan, but without conscious intent. Granted,

the unconscious powers that the girl taps into lead to her fledgling efforts at self-realization, but Ambrose's attempt to categorize her as an ignorant practitioner of *maleficia* fails due to his unbending disapproval of her.¹⁶ He insists on his position as logical; however, the parts upon which that argument is constructed is not.

To critique the shoddy reasoning and cranky metaphysics of a self-professed savant of the occult is not much of an accomplishment. What Ambrose refuses to see, or that his doctrinal stance blocks him from seeing, is that the girl goes toward her true nature. Her authentic course of action is outside of the convoluted ideological structure that Ambrose attempts to foist on his audience—and by Machen onto his, at least in part. The author of *The Green Book* presents no circumstances in which she intentionally or unintentionally acts against her nature. Instead, she embraces who she is, generally disregarding the regulations of society. This disregard is not the misbehavior of a willful brat; rather, she follows her innate abilities first developed under the guidance of her nurse. In one instance, the girl recalls meeting as a toddler nymphs who “sang a song till [she] fell asleep” (Machen 71). This memory captures the comfort that these creatures provide for her, and emphasizes her calm in the presence of a situation deemed wickedly unnatural by Ambrose. The mysterious white people are present from the beginning of the girl's life: “I was very little when I first knew about these things” (Machen, “The White People” 71).¹⁷ In addition, she recalls that one of her earliest memories is when she was “saying words nobody could understand...speaking the Xu language” (Machen 71). The young age when her inexplicable encounters begin with the world of faerie, nymphs, and magic further implies that the girl's position among the marvelous is innate and inevitable. To fight her gifts of esoteric heteroglossia and other powerful abilities would be to turn on herself.

III. Many of the Old Secrets and Some New Ones

When alive, the girl was a threat to the orthodox boundaries staked to social propriety, and, now that she is departed and defenseless, the secrets on her journal's pages attract Ambrose because he can use her words to vindicate his belief system. He is a connoisseur and a catholic in the sense that he will collect works that align with either part of the symmetry to attain ecstatic contact with the numinous.¹⁸ Yet his deceit works to manipulate the girl's story and his severity works to announce moralistic condemnation of the ways taken by the sorcerer, or, as in this case, the sorceress. Ambrose keeps alive the final portion of this girl's physical life by the storage of her autobiographical chronicle in his limited-circulation library. The home of this guardian of arcane, occult knowledge stands in what is suggested to be a state of disrepair: The structure is not one with a well-maintained and careful upkeep, but is a neglected and secretive repository for a stash of literature withheld from open reference and public learning, general and scholarly. Sacristy is an apt phrase for the library, since Ambrose assigns himself as a holder of sacred things, like the holy profanity of *The Green Book*. Even Machen's details about the retrieval of the book have an air of ritual, with the bureau as a kind of tabernacle: "Ambrose took a candle and went away to a far, dim corner of the room. Cotgrave saw him open a venerable bureau that stood there, and from some secret recess he drew out a parcel" (Machen, "The White People" 68).¹⁹ The singular, increasingly strange occurrences recounted on *The Green Book's* pages derive from activities that depart from the safe normalcy that Ambrose claims that the girl's activities negatively define. This bound material then passes from one male character to another, forming a sequence by which an ad hoc community of men discovers and condemns the girl as a participant in the use of forbidden knowledge, on the other, wrong side of circumscribed paternal rules. While the shock of the book's contents reinforces those rules, the case worsens because

the girl has dared to remove herself from sexual availability in the pool of marriageable females within which her prime age of sixteen places her.

The girl, who never can become more due to her death, is a kind of kept female. Her master, Ambrose, sometimes will share her in a kind of perpetual bondage, as if as a punishment for her not following the protocols required by her middle-class status. By special arrangement and when convenient, Ambrose exposes her, and not by her own choice, of which she has none. He preserves her body (the book), and dispenses her. An equally unpleasant implication is that Ambrose procures men to experience the girl. Therefore, he is selective in choosing who handles the exceptional, precious artefact that is *The Green Book*. At the handoff of the book to Cotgrave, there is a seemingly innocuous description: “Ambrose undid a wrapping of paper, and produced a green pocket-book” (Machen, “The White People” 69). What each man touches are the last physical remains of the girl. The language of violation continues from the unwrapping reference: “[Ambrose] fondled the faded binding...no stains no bruises nor marks of usage” (Machen, “The White People” 69). Only the first paragraph of *The Green Book* exists outside of the content taken from the book itself, and in this paragraph Cotgrave provides an estimation of the journal whose intimate contents he is about to inspect with his gaze and touch: “It looked small, but the paper was fine, and there were many leaves, closely covered with minute, painfully formed characters” (Machen, “The White People” 70). That line by itself would not raise much suspicion in concordance with a reading of illicit treatment of an adolescent girl by men. However, in the context of the preceding details a sordid transaction occurs between adults. Before the girl’s narrative commences, the final description from Cotgrave gives the sense that appearances may surprise with a depth beyond the initial, slight surface (“It looked small, but the paper was fine”). That line refers to the girl as if she is an object for appraisal.

Lastly, those “painfully formed characters” suggest that the girl wrote on these pages, with their reflections of her secret heart and life, in a tremendous effort that Ambrose, or whomever else that he allows, can peruse at his leisure.

In a story with a central narrative full of marvelous events and fantastic tales, direct sexual contact between the girl and Ambrose, or between her with Cotgrave, is perhaps the surest thing that cannot have happened in “The White People.” The girl has been dead for years prior to the two men meeting one another, and Ambrose was in the search party who found her spent body before a pagan relic that was “hidden by the thorns and the thick undergrowth that had surrounded it...a wild, lonely country” (Machen, “The White People” 97). Yet this point of adolescent female sexuality and passionate interest from adult males is significant, as I have demonstrated, because in the scenes from the Prologue and Epilogue the language contains suggestive, even sordid, phrases. Notions of juvenile sexuality changed in the nineteenth century, and the ecstatic way of sorcery includes sex magic, as my analysis of the Nurse Tales from *The Green Book* will show.²⁰ No explicit dates or allusions to historical events appear in “The White People,” but, based on the details from the story’s outer framing, the present moment, when Ambrose and Cotgrave are in dialogue, is meant to be contemporary to when Machen wrote the work: 1899. The lack of historical information is a deliberate technique that obscures an objective timeline for the events, though the girl sometimes states her age when she recites certain stories from her nurse or explains when she did certain things.²¹ Cotgrave gives this assessment of the physical version of *The Green Book*: “The book looked as if it had been bought ‘on a visit to London’ some seventy or eighty years ago, and had somehow been forgotten and suffered to lie away out of sight” (Machen, “The White People” 69). The circumstantial evidence points to the fact that the girl lived during the earlier decades of the

Victorian period, since she found the book “in a drawer in the old bureau” (Machen, “The White People” 69), a long time after its purchase. Every indication from Ambrose is that the girl, the daughter of a friend who practiced law, lived around the time of the changes to the British age of consent that began in 1861 with the Offenses Against the Persons Act that set the age of consent at twelve (amended in 1875 to thirteen years of age). Thus, she passed away many years prior to the momentous Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 that raised the age of consent to sixteen, which, in a temporal synchronicity, is the girl’s age when she writes the last parts of *The Green Book*.²²

The traces of sexual magic in *The Green Book* that horrify Ambrose’s moral sensibility, and which are meant to do the same to his audience, ally in an ironic parallel to the changing concept of late-Victorian female adolescence.²³ Sexual contact between men and girls in their mid-teens, and younger, would not have been uncommon throughout the nineteenth century. The irony is that the girl could have been in an acceptable relationship with an adult man, with an age gap of two or three decades, and retained her social favor, but dalliances with forest spirits and a god of the woodlands are unnatural and deserve censure. As the daughter of a lawyer, the girl has a relative security as a member of the middle-class, and, as a teenager, English society viewed her as both a child and a woman. In a letter to the *Critic* dated 17 Aug. 1889, Ernest Dowson referred to his preference for young girls as “the cult of the child” (433-35), which the historian Louise A. Jackson has elaborated upon with the explanation that “the pre-pubescent body of the 12-year-old girl was an entirely legitimate object of male sexual desire” (Jackson 114). Since *The Green Book* girl is the same age as the pre-1885 age of consent when she has her life-changing adventure in the transmuted wilderness, in line with the 1875 amended raise of the age to thirteen, this experience in the Welsh borderland marks her

graduation from pre-pubescence to pubescence: “I was thirteen, nearly fourteen, when I had a very singular adventure, so strange that the day on which it happened is always called the White Day” (Machen, “The White People” 72). In the chapter on Machen’s *The Great God Pan*, I focus in greater detail on the Labouchère Amendment and non-heteronormative sexuality that is a concern of that part of the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act; however, the amendment’s outlawing of “gross indecency” between males was a minor part of an act with a main purpose of “the protection of women and girls” and “the suppression of brothels.”²⁴ *The Green Book*’s narratives of sexual danger further indicts the girl as one who escaped the prerogative of society’s protection and regulation of the use of her mortal body.

The girl’s participation in sexual activities through supernatural processes with inhuman beings allows for a measure of distance on Machen’s part from any authorial approval of her activities. Yet the girl’s precocity and independence from her father’s household increase her status as a sexual participant, rather than her being an unwilling and an unwitting victim. This participation presages the expanding role for the systematic use of Tantric and sexual magic in the English esoteric orders of the fin de siècle that continues to the current period in English and non-English-speaking cultures. Rather than a reaction to modernity, sex magic is an expression of modern religion that can mark a desire to return to what was understood as pre-Christian aspects of old Pagan ways. After she recounts the final nurse’s tale, the girl writes, “Then all the old stories came back again” (Machen, “The White People” 90). The “old stories” include sexual celebrations of the ineffable and a revived understanding of paganism in contemporary practice. As I demonstrate in my introductory chapter, Machen’s opinion is that modern paganism is a mistaken break from the superior truths of Christian tradition and valid ritual.²⁵ In “The White People,” a move to restore archaic pagan rites is a reversion for the worse, and

attended by bodily and spiritual danger. “Sanctity” is the life-enhancing and constructive essence of what is sanctified, but sanctity as designated by whom? Who has the right to sanctify and the abilities to do so? As the mouthpiece for his society, Ambrose is a man whose name derives from one of the early fathers and original doctors of the Christian Church, and who takes upon himself the work of safeguarding information that he deems to be heresy and to be a threat to the entrenched power structure.²⁶ That name refers to a pagan legend, too, because another one of his namesakes is what is referred to in Celtic literature as a wonder child, in this case a male named Ambrosius.²⁷ In Machen’s story, the wonder child is female, and, in another shift, the narrative does not recognize as worthy her miraculous knowledge and abilities since she acts out of the range of the bounds drawn for her by church and state authorities.

The story gives no physical details for the girl and only a scant physical description for Ambrose, but one may picture him as the stereotypical wise old man ready to guide the younger man (e.g., Cotgrave) to an understanding about the dangers to moral safety and spiritual well-being that the girl and her green book represent. Thus, Ambrose parallels one of the Major Arcana in the standard Rider-Waite Tarot deck: The Hermit. The card’s primary meaning points to a withdrawal from the outer world of material forms for the purpose of an activation of the unconscious mind, and the hermit is meant to be the guide who teaches that way and who serves as an alternative to the Church. However, Ambrose is a false, modern hermit, who is really popular orthodoxy cloaked in the seeming form of the independent-minded individual removed to the wilderness. Ambrose, in the guise of the Hermit, presents himself to his visitors, the pilgrims of the modern world, as a person who has made the complete cycle of the journey of “withdrawal from the common life” (Machen, “The White People” 62) and the return back to the ordinary world, to share what wisdom he has gained. As Joseph Campbell writes in *The Hero*

with a Thousand Faces, “A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man” (30). Ambrose fails to be that hero. The hero of the story is the girl, but the entrenched prejudices, fears, and indifference of a modern English society, whose perception has been altered by the industrial reality, make the girl’s visionary life impossible. Ambrose is the Hermit card reversed, which corrupts the idea of withdrawal.²⁸ He denies for himself, and for those who will listen, the revelatory potential of nature. His hubris is that he claims to have a special understanding of good and evil and offers *The Green Book* as a basic moral pedagogy of what parents and guardians of the professional classes are not to do: Rather than the slack treatment afforded to the girl by her preoccupied father, the message is for adults to watch their female children, to guard their daughters, who cannot be trusted to conduct their lives without vigilant instruction via social conditioning.

IV. In the Name of the Father and of the Daughter and of the Holy Woods

No institution is natural and each is a constructed system, whether that system is the religious orthodoxy of the Church, as invoked by Ambrose’s name, or the State, as represented by the girl’s father. Here, then, we have a father of civil authority, of legislative power tied to the state, and who has his part in the rule of the domain of home and homeland. This father is not a politician who drafts laws, but a lawyer who practices and profits from those laws in the personal comfort that separates him from interaction with his family. He lives in the country, but is not of it, working long hours in his home’s office, fixated on the legal matters of his profession. He is far removed from the spirals of life and death at work in the natural space around him. His utility of the space that he has claimed recalls what Owen Schur has said about

a feature of Victorian pastoral literature: “The country-house [literature] often takes as its principal theme the proper building of a stately retreat for the wealthy landowner; the country house imposes the reality of capital and labor on the pleasure principle of idyllic play” (Schur 8).²⁹ Her father’s country house is built but that man is absent, in a full withdrawal and immersion into the material world of property and payment by the pound. His neglect allows his daughter to disobey more easily any parental orders and discipline. The daughter’s play is more than idyllic as she refuses a life of indirect experience that would be her inheritance: “My father was busy in his study, and the servants had not told about my not coming home, though they were frightened, and wondered what they ought to do, so I told them I had lost my way, but I did not let them find out the real way I had been” (Machen, “The White People” 79).³⁰ The girl recognizes that paternal society and her experiences of magic enchantment need to be isolated from one another.

Unlike the care and instruction that *The Green Book* girl received from the nurse, that girl receives from her father no support beyond the financial kind. The paternal moral base is not the daughter’s, and popular morality is often based upon what Mrs. Chevely states in Act II of Oscar Wilde’s play *An Ideal Husband* (1895): “Morality is simply the attitude we adopt towards people whom we personally dislike” (308). The enforcement of morals also may occur with the infliction of derision, which is what the girl receives with her failed attempt to discuss one of the nurse’s tales with her father: “I knew it would be of no use, and I should only get laughed at or scolded, so for a long time I was very quiet, and went about thinking and wondering” (Machen, “The White People” 91).³¹ In the Epilogue to “The White People,” the father is further alluded to as being a symbol of the business of late-Victorian materialism at the expense of his daughter. As Ambrose explains: “He had always left her very much to herself. He thought of nothing but

deeds and leases, and the news came to him as an awful surprise” (Machen 97). Her father, the household representative of society, did not nurture his daughter, and maybe lacked the capacity to do so, as is suggested by his remaining ignorant until her death about what made her special.

On the crucial brink of pubescence, the girl lost her mother; therefore, orphaned by her mother’s death and her father’s job distractions, the girl withdrew to a new reality with her nurse’s help. In a further separation of the girl from other members of society, she was not consumed with materialism, which often is a learned trait from parents or guardians who transfer the values of one’s culture. The conclusion that materialism is a learned trait also connects to the girl’s lack of the type of mindset that usually anchors an individual to modern, English commercial society. This condition of the girl’s valuing the immaterial indicates that the alleged violations that she committed instead are associated with a revelation of the spiritual through the realm of the natural—see the epigraph by John Muir that opens this chapter that finds further support from *The Green Book*’s repeated use of the phrase “the secret wood” (Machen, “The White People” 80 et al.). The presence of nymphs and ritual magic are unnatural to the workaday world of men like Ambrose, Cotgrave, and the girl’s father, because for them “civilization and education have blinded and deafened and obscured the natural reason” (Machen, “The White People” 66). A full understanding is virtually impossible of the capacity and nature of humans, let alone a comprehension of what greater reality—or realities—may exist beyond the explanations of sensual perception and scientific experimentation. In order for Ambrose to know if the sin of evil has been committed at a supra-human degree of violation, and that the girl is guilty, one would have to completely understand the natural order of the world and the workings of the numinous. The girl does not have these answers, and has no need for them. The woods are a holy grove of her visionary self, and a sacred space, too, since here is where a

sacrifice is made. She does have a faith in her abilities that she learns about from the instruction of her nurse, and the girl trains herself to use those advanced talents on her own. A sincere realization of her identity requires from her to do nothing less than this personal work in the great field of consciousness that she has found.

In mimesis with Cotgrave's experience of *The Green Book*, the reader sees nothing more of the girl's adventures of discovery once the text returns to Ambrose's possession at the start of the Epilogue, which is a scenario where the story stops but does not end. Ambrose, the moralistic father, never reveals the "sequel," if what he means by that reference is the existence of one or more written documents, those other texts alluded to by the girl at the opening of *The Green Book*: "I have a great many other books of secrets I have written, hidden in a safe place, and I am going to write here many of the old secrets and some new ones; but there are some I shall not put down at all...and I must not say" (Machen, "The White People" 70).³² If Ambrose keeps these volumes, too, in his collection, then the caution that he takes may be due to his belief that any other written work by this girl will operate as an active grimoire.³³ Whereas her language often resembles "childish prattle," to cite Lovecraft's analysis of the story, those words would contain actual potency if the girl had spelled out, explicitly, charms and incantations, and if certain arcane stories and sacred narratives were told in full, which the more cautious sections of the Green Book avoid.³⁴ She maintains control by her censoring of sensitive information: Concealed memory, incomplete details, and oral knowledge elude the control of the patriarch.

The girl has been a dutiful student of the arcane, and, therefore, she reveals in her writing less than she conceals, which is a sign of her emerging maturity and competency with her craft. Ambrose has his explanation for the girl's reserve:

‘But you have noticed the obscurity, and in this particular case it must have been dictated by instinct, since the writer never thought that her manuscripts would fall into other hands. But the practice is universal, and for most excellent reasons. Powerful and sovereign medicines, which are, of necessity, virulent poisons also, are kept in a locked cabinet. The child may find the key by chance, and drink herself dead; but in most cases the search is educational, and the phials contain precious elixirs for him who has patiently fashioned the key for himself.’

(Machen, “The White People” 97)

Previously, Ambrose attributed the girl’s violations first to conscious will and then to her unconscious, and now he refers to her instinctual drive. In his extended metaphor, Ambrose shifts gender away from the female, who suffers a fatal hurt as the price of the discovery of the symbolic key, an image with a long history as an occult image (e.g., the typical example of Renaissance magic found in the grimoires *The Key of Solomon* and *The Lesser Key of Solomon* and its *Ars Goetia*). In assigning success to the male, who makes the key and wins a “precious” glory, the gender reversal becomes a denial of the reality of *The Green Book* girl’s attainment. In an exhibition of her restraint, the girl handles potent processes like the Ceremonies with care, which, as she explains, “All of them are important, but some are more delightful than others—there are the White Ceremonies, and the Green Ceremonies, and the Scarlet Ceremonies” (Machen, “The White People” 70). She gives no further description or details about what these ceremonies consist of, but she explains that these acts are site-specific because “there is only one place where they can be performed properly,” though the girl has performed “very nice” imitations “in other places” of their true form (Machen, “The White People” 70). As Ambrose claims near the opening of the story, “Great people of all kinds forsake the imperfect copies and

go to the perfect originals” (Machen, “The White People” 62), and the girl knows the pattern, and, therefore, can perform innocuous variations without exposing herself or other people to danger.³⁵

There is a world of primary, consensus reality in the outer framing of “The White People” and a second, other world that is found in *The Green Book*, in which the cryptic creatures and rituals (e.g., the color Ceremonies and the Comedy) are rooted deeply in nature.³⁶ Despite Ambrose’s belief that the girl’s journal is an example of esoteric sin, the allegations of the sinister nature of the girl’s enchantment, her use of innate gifts, and her meetings with the white people and the nymphs are unfounded.³⁷ The white people appear from the woods and convey a connection to the wilderness and its vital powers, a place untouched and misunderstood by those men in the story who are representatives of patriarchal social capital and economic authority. The portrayal of the white people, always singing and dancing, contrasts with the restraint that the girl’s father imposes. The nurse, who is practiced in magic, strives to teach the narrator the importance of discretion, and the nurse makes the girl swear to secrecy on more than one occasion: “Then she made me promise not to say a word about it to anybody, and if I did I should be thrown into the black pit” (Machen, “The White People” 71). The demand for secrecy is due to society’s history of violent superstition and low opinion of magic practices, if ever found out or believed to be real, and suspicion about the sacred knowledge of stories that can heal and harm. The girl must be made to know that there are consequences for wrong actions. The Nurse Tales that are the underlying structure of *The Green Book* provide a narrative series on female sexual, social, and spiritual maturation that is forever interrupted for the girl who heard those tales as a pre-pubescent, and who began the end of her process of living out their structure in the pubescence of her middle teenage years.

V. What the Dead Had No Speech for When Living: The Journal Inward and Outward

The Green Book's first lines reveal the girl's desire for a space of her own, one into which she can expand and reflect, just as many girls her age keep diaries and journals.³⁸ She claims the empty book as a private place where she may be more open: "I wanted a book like this, so I took it to write in" (Machen, "The White People" 70).³⁹ In the time of her adventures, the girl lived in the earlier part of a century in which British law would undergo radical changes, but the impact of gender legislation was slow. Decades passed before the government granted suffrage to female citizens and the Married Woman's Property Act (1870 and 1882) did not receive consistent enforcement for years, even after the legislative passage by Parliament. The Nurse Tales take place in settings from an England gone before, but that indeterminate "once upon a time" and the girl's present share the truth that in marriage a woman surrendered her legal existence. The girl's warnings are these tales of the British Isles, that are both actual and from a fantastic past, and that distance of time from the Victorian era so great that social conditions for her in the present are avoided in any direct presentation. However, the girl controls what goes onto the page in the book that she found empty in her father's house; she determines the information to include and what amount of detail to give of herself and what she knows. Her assertion of agency and efforts to hide her socially unacceptable behavior presents prudent caution on her part, rather than conscious deviance. She has heard tales of women burned at the stake and expresses sympathy for them, an empathic element of her disposition tied to her innate imaginative powers. This agency does not align with Ambrose's words from the Prologue about "true evil" as "a lonely passion of the soul—or a passion of the lonely soul" (Machen, "The White People" 67). Further, the recluse chides Cotgrave to consider that "...Evil in its essence is

a lonely thing, a passion of the solitary, individual soul” (Machen, “The White People” 63). The girl appears, repeatedly, through spontaneous language and the discoveries made as she wanders, to answer a call that originates from deep within her, to seek communion and not separation.

The girl participates in the authorship of her role in the tale and struggles to make use of and develop her inchoate powers, as she proceeds without the oversights of lesson book and teacher. Her progress involves some degree of merit as she works to understand that she is part of a tradition that consists of more than her, even if she is the most-recent incarnation of a female in possession of distinct, enchanted talents. *The Green Book* presents the girl *in media res*, within the uncertain bounds of an alternative other world, a space in which she then joins—if for no more than an awful moment, and in no case with any permanence in a physical sense—a much older narrative. The nurse is not part of Ambrose’s brand of “Thou Shalt Not” philosophy of male privilege, but the woman does impart to the girl a form of doctrine. To return to the Tarot deck and the Hermit card, Rachel Pollack’s explanation of the guide’s role is relevant to the nurse’s and girl’s relationship: “Doctrine and mystery both come as the end of a process; doctrine because you first must arrange your life before you can approach the study of a special way...and ecstasy because you first must pass the archetypal confrontation with darkness and mystery” (Pollack 72). Encouraged by the nurse’s doctrine of right action and caution, the girl displays resolve and the inner strength to continue her development by herself into the dark woods.

The girl commits acts of amoral impulsivity in the first use of her occult abilities, which reflect the part of her innate being condemned by Ambrose, but she shows evidence of growth in scattered moments in her book’s entries as she recalls her recent life and the Nurse Tales. The rush of language affected by *The Green Book* forms a single, whirling set of details in its telling

of this girl's awakening to the call of the numinous; however, within the momentum of the greater work there are individual moments of mindful pause.⁴⁰ One such moment is the deliberate mental return to the long day's quest that the girl performs when alone in her bedroom on the night of the White Day: "I went to bed and lay awake all through the night, thinking of what I had seen" (Machen, "The White People" 79). This girl has ventured untended and away from instruction, which has consisted of a complicated mix of the formal and socially approved how-to-do and what-to-do provided to her alongside the nurse's instruction. She takes those new personal experiences into consideration with the Nurse Tales for her ultimate external guide as she happens upon internal changes in her understanding of who she is and what she can do. At an early stage in the development of her sensibility and sensitivity to the strictures that conventional place and family put on her, the girl takes to heart the unplanned experiences that she has had away from the household and in the wild spaces, wooded and open, where her girlhood has ceased and a liminal state of adolescence has begun, fraught with danger and excitement: "It was so strange and solitary there, and I felt afraid" (Machen, "The White People" 78). In the brief span of her life, evidence of her maturation appears in correspondence to the content and order of the Nurse Tales that help to allay her fears.

Key sections of *The Green Book* consist of the Nurse Tales, the instructive oral tales told over many years to the girl by her nurse. They feature plot elements of the phenomena of actualized witchcraft as it weaves into the lives of different female characters from low born to high.⁴¹ In my analysis of the Nurse Tales, I refer to them with the following designations: NT I (a rags-to-riches tale); NT II (the seduction tale of a hunter by the Faerie Queen); NT IIIa (a tale of pagan worship uncovered); and NT IIIb (a tale of the destruction of a powerful witch who leads the worship of NT IIIa). The rest of *The Green Book's* content is the girl's personal

anecdotes from different stages of her life, from when she was a toddler to her final year at the age of sixteen.⁴² Whether a section contains a nurse tale or biographical material, one notices the girl's word choice and phrasing, with emphasis placed on a careful concealment of her activities and of the tradition of which she learns that she is a part, and into whose realm she is thrust. In the spaces around the tales, the girl tells of the peculiarities that she spoke, heard, and saw when she was younger, which includes an ability to use esoteric languages and to see strange fair folk:

But I remember when I was five or six I heard them [her mother and the nurse] talking about me when they thought I was not noticing. They were saying how queer I was a year or two before, and how nurse had called my mother to come and listen to me talking all to myself, and I was saying words that nobody could understand. I was speaking the Xu language, but I only remember a very few of the words, as it was about the little white faces that used to look at me when I was lying in my cradle. (Machen, "The White People" 71)

Were those creatures peering at their kin, or reveling in and honoring the reincarnation of their queen (e.g., NT II)? The white people of the title, the girl's attendants since her birth, exist as if the colors of the common world cannot saturate them, and they elude standard human senses and understanding.⁴³ The sounds made by their young daughter that the parents decide to be harmless babble, or at least meaningless sounds and a disturbing occurrence, serve as a marker for the initiated who, like the nurse, find in this newborn life continuity with an ancient tradition. Each of the Nurse Tales is about powerful women, and those stories of other people merge into the stream of the girl's consciousness with her own adventures, first carried out under the tutelage of the nurse and, later, alone.⁴⁴

With their dead, forgotten, hidden, and mythic women, the Nurse Tales are useful for the girl in understanding who she is in time, with her peculiar set of abilities and under the social contract into which she was born. Events, characters, and settings focus through the point of view of this adolescent female, in descriptions delivered in the manner of a standard fairy tale: "...When she [the nurse] was telling me some of her stories, beginning with 'Once on a time,' or 'In the time of the fairies'" (Machen, "The White People" 80). The qualities of matter-of-fact statements and magic references form the imagery of a dreamlike, interior plane.⁴⁵ The girl's past divides into the exoteric, when under training with her nurse, and the esoteric, after the girl's supervision ceases and she begins her approach to the inner circle of the magic craft of which she is a genetic inheritor. The nurse is a mystagogue to the girl's status as an initiate, a vivid contrast to the static Ambrose and Cotgrave dynamic. With her mother deceased, and inured to the neglect from her father, the girl receives invaluable support and care from her nurse. However, this guide leaves the household when the girl is fourteen, two years prior to the first entries in *The Green Book*: "But she had gone away more than two years before, and nobody seemed to know what had become of her, or where she had gone" (Machen, "The White People" 92). In the nurse's absence, the girl's major theme becomes innocence alone in a hostile homeland and a strange outside, where tests and serendipitous finds transform her innocence to experience.⁴⁶ Her starting point onto the passage that the nurse initiates is much different than the point from where Ambrose begins, because the girl derives power sprung from natural, chthonic forces, while he employs knowledge that he has gathered from acquisitions of antiquarian material and occult accounts (activities that echo the work of Mr. Clarke in *The Great God Pan*).

The girl of *The Green Book* has become a part, perhaps the last, of the great chain of being that embraces the reality of the old stories told to her by her nurse, who, in turn, had been

instructed by her great-grandmother in the maintenance of a matrilineal network that began to fade two generations prior to the girl's birth, pre-Victorian.⁴⁷ While tale-telling passes on and keeps alive the content of the tale told to its audience, the girl, in her awakening to noetic potential and unique abilities, embodies a living wonder tale. She is a survival, a genetic chance configuration, the girl who would be queen, if not for the fact that the world into which she is born—industrialized England—has moved on from traditional knowledge and into the factory system division of labor, with the commodification of ability and human worth. Her sojourn to the great wood and the unmapped fields of her occult imagination results in her entrance into an unknown space, with its non-Christian metaphysics and elements, led there by the inevitable cusp of her emerging sexuality. The labyrinth formed by the transmuted landscape, in patterns and whorls and topical arrangements that emerge before her keen vision and second sight, is an emblem of apothecic escape folded in from the field of vision. There is an intensification of fauna and flora, of stone and stream, of pool and well, of ascent and descent, of a relentless movement inward, and of exit from the world of expiring forms. Preceded by the girl's moving out of her father's house to seek her path, she goes to the ecstasy of her moving into a parallel realm:

I saw nothing but circles, and small circles inside big ones, and pyramids, and domes, and spires, and they seemed all to go round and round the place where I was sitting, and the more I looked, the more I saw great big rings of rocks, getting bigger and bigger, and I stared so long that it felt as if they were all moving and turning, like a great wheel, and I was turning, too, in the middle.

(Machen, "The White People" 74)

The trope of this labyrinth is the marvelous made present in symbolic form, an image that evokes psychogeography and sacred space. Unbidden by her departed nurse's companionship, the girl's physical and mental travels culminate in contact with male generative power brought to life and activated for her. The connubial ceremony is presaged by the girl's working upon her own shaping of the male form: The formation of homunculi made from the forest clay is the girl's participation in acts of creation, and which find a correspondent in the waxen image of the manikin from NT IIIb.

The Green Book is a disrupted *bildungsroman* that starts with the girl's apprenticeship to the nurse, and once the girl exhibits the potential and capacity to learn the craft, she is in need of those Nurse Tales that anticipate her coming-of-age and sexual maturing. The structure that narrative imparts helps the tales and lore retain their integrity, from the mythopoeia of the Nurse Tales to the preparation of the girl's psychosomatic sexual communion with the God of the Woods whose eikon "that with the centuries had not blackened, but had become white and luminous" (Machen, "The White People" 97). In each Nurse Tale, the female character determines the relationship with the mortal males, with varying degrees of self-awareness, guile, and intent that is less and more ethical. Furthermore, a certain complexity arises, as it does in *The Great God Pan*, in that the men are not wicked or hardened tyrants, while the women are not helpless victims. NT I and NT IIIb more closely resemble one another than NT II, where in the former pairing the witches elude compulsory bans and defy the commands and edicts delivered by father figures. In NT II, the Faerie Queen enchants a young hunter and controls him, rather than her allowing him to complete his intention to subjugate nature and have her of his own volition. In NT I and NT IIIb, the males are unable to control their desires for women and fail in their possession attempts. Across class, females in *The Green Book* are able to relate to one

another based more on mutuality and less on strict hierarchy, though a seeming exception exists with the references to the advanced powers in NT IIIb of the Lady Avellin (Cassap). However, her exalted position derives from her exceeding skill and caliber of leadership and not from the favorable political placement of her birth, and that seeming advantage that she has in her prosaic life brings imposition by men upon her. The same cross-cutting of the Nurse Tales is there in the talents shared between the girl and one of her father's servants, the nurse.

As the stories tend to validate questionable wiles and trickery without interrogation, each Nurse Tale has a darker aspect behind its outer form, so that these texts resist unambiguous didacticism. While the main character comes upon a new and strange land where things are different from prior world experience, the plots each contain a type of sorcery in which there can be no pat, happy finale for all parties involved when the ending is a character's disappearance, an inconsolable loss, or both. There is something universally unsettling in the actions of the dark man who absconds with the girl in NT I, just as there are troubling sides to the actions of the secret society on the hill and the murders of the suitors by the witch of NT IIIa and IIIb. The stories interact with each other in that their purpose is to give indirect instruction to the girl, because the initiate must find the purpose and not be told it. There is no absolute moral to the Nurse Tales, but each part ties back in some way to the girl's supranatural encounters and habits and gifts that can be used however the possessor of those abilities chooses. NT I opens with a poor girl whose enchanted baubles and jujubes, plucked from nature, bring her fame and attention, but she is naïve like *The Green Book* girl, the latter of whom is informed enough that she does not want that once-poor-girl's fate of being taken by "the black man."⁴⁸ While no less a suitable partner in NT I than a mortal male husband who selects her (the prince), the demon lover of the ballad tradition is not an ideal mate of that girl's choosing, either, and she is taken by him,

raped. Whether the rape is beyond the outdated Alexander Pope sense remains as uncertain as the commotion heard on the other side of the sealed bride's chamber: "The screaming and laughing and shrieking and crying that came out of the room" (Machen, "The White People" 78). Out of fear that she can call the same rough male to herself, *The Green Book* girl does "a charm that came into my head to keep the black man away...to keep bad things away" (Machen, "The White People 78). NT I is the first katabasis and has a parallel to the *The Green Book* girl's descent before her ascent of the sacred hill: NT I girl goes into the pit and brings out the objects that change into the jewels and precious metals that she fashion on herself, and she does these things without self-consciousness. She wears the objects naturally, but other people see her and her accessories in a way that fits the image of what they who gaze upon her want from her. Without the slightest sense of the childish play of make believe or dress up, NT I girl is free of any conceit that she was making a fool of herself when she stood before and lived among the socially-esteemed and politically-powerful persons of the king's court.⁴⁹ NT I parallels the girl's own life, since she thwarts her father's authority by her dalliance with the luminous God of the Woods, and in her doing so she strikes a better bargain (in an instance in the girl's journal where dark and light take on standard associations of less and more beneficial).

NT II is another tale of a dark passage, this time into the unknown, and what results is a topsy-turvy treatment of passionate pursuit, one where the female comes out in the most-desirable position of any female in the Nurse Tales: The Faerie Queen is meant to be the model of femininity to which *The Green Book* girl is to aspire. For the practical purpose of her luring the hunter, the Faerie Queen does not appear as a female animal, since the hunter would not pursue her. Therefore, she appears as a stag, which the hunter will track, but his hounds and horse will not follow in an apparent support of Ambrose's earlier point: "Children and women

feel this horror you speak of, even animals experience it” (Machen, “The White People” 66).⁵⁰ However, the queen is a generative power, a commanding spirit who is of the earth and who causes herself to undergo a transgendered metamorphosis into a “beautiful white stag” (Machen, “The White People” 80). Since she will not be hunted as a common, gender-trapped woman of the time, this queen remains in the form of a fine male specimen until she reveals her true nature on other side of the hill through the door to Faerie.⁵¹ The hunter in NT II, who is a mortal male, passes through a kind of katabasis before he revives in the light of the Faerie Queen’s erotic love:

And they went through enormous woods where the air was full of whispers and a pale, dead light came out from the rotten trunks that were lying on the ground, and just as the man thought he had lost the stag, he would see it all white and shining in front of him, and he would run fast to catch it, but the stag always ran faster, so he did not catch it. (Machen, “The White People” 81)

NT II is the story of a woman’s adult erotic love that she expresses with maturity, and by her taking the lead in the affair in accordance with her prerogative. She freely gives to a partner of her choice and, when the lovers must part, the woman lets go and continues on with her existence. However, the hunter finds that he can never kiss another woman after the tryst, nor can he drink common wine after he drank her enchanted wine; he knows that the comparison will never match.⁵² The girl has no manual to explain how to gain the sovereignty of the Faerie Queen, but, in their stark contrast, NT II provides the corrective to the out-of-control female in NT IIIb.

If NT I is the witch’s immature folly of escape from the marriage contract (with resort to the demon lover), and NT II is the height of female control as queen of her own directive in

erotic love, then NT IIIb is the disaster story of the accomplished adult sorcerer who dooms herself to the pyre. The woman of NT IIIb is the distinguished daughter of a father who is representative of male hereditary rule of law; *The Green Book* girl is the daughter of a respectable lawyer, a representative of the modern rule of law. In “The White People,” the burning of the Lady Avelin is a warning about the carelessness of vindictive and scornful acts in a world where non-magical but powerful men can and will kill.⁵³ This woman with her poppet, a created lover, twists into being a gender-reversed Pygmalion and Galatea, with her making her own male lover and killing her suitors. The travesty of this powerful woman’s end is a point that *The Green Book* girl considers intently:

I thought of this story again and again as I was lying awake in my bed, and I seemed to see the Lady Avelin in the market-place, with the yellow flames eating up her beautiful white body. And I thought of it so much that I seemed to get into the story myself, and I fancied I was the lady, and that they were coming to take me to be burnt with fire, with all the people in the town looking at me. And I wondered whether she cared, after all the strange things she had done, and whether it hurt very much to be burned at the stake. (Machen 89)

Popular judgment, especially among those with the class status of *The Green Book* girl’s father, may implicate the girl’s activities as vulgar and low, but to call what she practices as commonplace folk superstition is even more inaccurate. NT IIIa, about the disappearing door and the gathering of the people on the hill, strikes down that claim since it is the common folk who cower at and whisper about the audible and infrequent physical evidence of occult gatherings (to which they have no invitation). A separation divides the secret society from the folk of the British countryside, and when detection occurs, as it did for the Lady Avelin, peril

follows. As with the story of Helen Vaughan in Machen's *The Great God Pan*, there is a fear of female alterity and of women who disregard social boundaries. The lives of these women in the Nurse Tales, especially the burning of the princess in NT IIIb, provide models and are cautionary tales for the narrator of the Green Book.

At the start of *The Green Book*, the girl admits that her journal entries redact the necessary details that would make the text into a grimoire, but what does remain in the language and content of her surviving work is much closer to a spiritual autobiography that tells of adventures of interior significance, with physical and mental requirements that provide the girl with a source of inner enrichment that was essential to her full humanity. The bodily challenges and emotional conundrums faced by adolescent girls in these kinds of tales, where the girl goes off into an other world from the common one reminds us that guardians who desire to protect their children from the unhappier, more violent elements of life often find the traditional fairy tales and nursery rhymes problematic, because often the first thing that a story does is to remove the adult influence and leave the central character to learn to cope on her or his own.⁵⁴ Many later stories by other writers and filmmakers follow Machen's pattern, which he innovated upon but did not invent: A waking dream of the virgin who enters into the fuller consciousness of spiritual becoming and who experiences her emergent sexuality at odds with propriety. Such journeys are necessary for the adolescent to pass from childhood towards adulthood.

VI. All Nature Is but Art, Unknown to Thee⁵⁵

The Nurse Tales demonstrate to the girl that she is the legacy of a very old network of similarly-gifted women, and that she has a responsibility to answer the call to join in that circle. Implicit here is that to enter into this specialized craft is to reject a patriarchal-model of femininity, the kind that George Egerton refers to in her short story "Cross-Lines" as

“fashioned...on imaginary lines” (22).⁵⁶ However, to cross those lines triggers retribution with a basis in fearful control. There is a fear that underlies Ambrose’s moral theory that Gail-Nina Anderson has identified in Machen’s use of the femme fatale and the prose poem “Midsummer”: “The fear here is that masculine suspicion that somewhere just beneath the surface of accepted social norms there lies an age-old conspiracy of women, who somehow have access to a more fundamental state of being, to special locations where the veil between the ‘real’ and the enchanted is permeable” (5). As I have shown, the apparatus of the outer narrative of “The White People” tries to make a horror of the wonder found by the girl that she celebrates in *The Green Book*. No doubt that danger attended the wonder, but Ambrose the recluse—used as Machen’s stand in as with the hermit in *Hieroglyphics*—condemns the girl as a foolish innocent who chose to play among the diabolicals: “I found her in the place that she described with so much dread, lying on the ground before the image [of the God of the Woods]” (Machen, “The White People” 97). She pays with her life and is found by Ambrose as if she were a prostrate ancient priestess cast out in the present day, one who has copulated with the genius loci that has lingered from an unrecorded past.

At the hieratic climax of the girl’s mortal journey she suffers the coitus interruptus perpetrated by paternal authority, and that is what poisons her. She had been in the act of an apotheosis, going from an immature mortal adolescent to a tutelary consort, but one of the last statements from Ambrose tries to undermine that act as one of self-annihilation: “She had poisoned herself—in time” (Machen, “The White People” 97). Thus, her death is not by the hand of men, but by her own wickedness in falling to the influence of a negative way to gnosis. However, the support is not with Ambrose. The girl’s discovery of the divine image on The White Day is characteristic of the charged sexual ecstasy of a spiritual event of sacred Eros:

I did not know what might not happen if I stayed by the wood. I was hot all over and trembling, and my heart was beating, and strange cries that I could not help came from me as I ran from the wood. I was glad that a great white moon came up from over a round hill and showed me the way....I went to bed and lay awake all through the night, thinking of what I had seen....I wanted to be alone in my room, and be glad over it all to myself, and shut my eyes and pretend it was there, and do all the things I would have done if I had not been so afraid.

(Machen, "The White People" 79)

The girl's trepid first encounter with the eikon transforms to calm upon her return. Her newly found peace and the courage to approach the site of the numinous comes from her willing surrender of the ego that had been fashioned by patristic life, though she still trembles with the dread of anticipation to make the next, fateful contact with the god of the place, its *genius loci*. The possibility for these events of mortal parley with the numinous, always rare, happen under the alignment of the right, oft-elusive conditions, as J. S. Pennethorne has explained: "But such meetings are only possible if they are unmolested, and the isolation required is vanishing quickly. So too are sympathetic witnesses" (47). Mr. Clarke, the lascivious voyeur at the conception of Helen Vaughan in Machen's novella *The Great God Pan*, is no such sympathetic witness; Ambrose and Cotgrave in "The White People" are not, either. *The Green Book* girl finds release in her joining by her own accord with the active rituals that she once watched the nurse perform in minor variations, which the girl can and does surpass in an occult union.⁵⁷

There is an abrupt end to any further exploration of the radical potential of this young witch, and the incompleteness of her story appears to reinforce what the male narration takes as her inevitable defeat, as if what could be known would be more of the same and therefore

unnecessary. The outer framing of “The White People,” with Ambrose and Cotgrave, intends, too, that *The Green Book* be evaluated from an attitude of rejection and with a considered alarm at the behavior exhibited by the girl; however, she is female and motherless and goes off to enact alternatives that present themselves to her marginalization and to her social compulsion to institutional laws. Maureen Moran has found certain tendencies in Victorian narratives of female magic that align with the dominant perception in “The White People”: “Witchcraft narratives and historical commentaries reinforce traditional concepts of femininity, associating acceptable womanliness with passivity, submission to authority, and chastity (or with guilt and repentance)” (147). The conservative narrative that frames *The Green Book* girl’s words results in the inevitable destruction of this witch figure.⁵⁸ Her life is extinguished in a much quieter fashion than the Lady Avelin in the flames of the pyre set in the public square of NT IIIb. Cast in a generic medieval tale of witchery practiced, discovered, and punished, NT IIIb serves to mirror the subversive practice of old ways of magic now made into a proto-New Woman in *The Green Book* girl (in a kind of embryonic form), who is not inclined to feminine submission. To the men, the Nurse Tales females, the nurse, and the girl represent what Egerton referred to as the danger of “eternal wildness, the untamed primitive savage temperament that lurks in the mildest, best woman” (Egerton 22). The threat of disruption of social structure is from within, even from one’s own daughter.

The girl’s reverie in tales about adepts in the cunning arts and her dawning knowledge of arcane abilities are resolved, seemingly, with her death. With her abilities and inclinations, she is a paradox that cannot co-exist in a world that opposes her with what lingers of a conservative orthodoxy of Christian faith and the ascendant mechanistic materialism with its skepticism of the existence of spirit. The framing narrative concludes as if the girl’s life is too awful to consider

beyond her being an anachronism who is inauspiciously born, and who must die. The present had no place for her. Is the girl's death what Tolkien termed the eucatastrophic, the catastrophe averted only by a sudden supernatural reconciliation, or an ordinary catastrophe, the dyscatastrophe? Which is it for the girl? The latter is the interpretation by Ambrose for Cotgrave. Her exit suggests another point argued by Moran about Victorian views on the literary treatment of witchcraft: "For all its potential metaphor for transformation, witchcraft in Victorian writing provides opportunity, not for a radical critique and refashioning of social roles and expectations, but for a conservative reaffirmation of traditional structures of influence and power" (147). The girl was a continuation of the old track re-found in her birth, when all the old stories came back again, but which could not find the social traction to refashion a space for her in the ways authentic for her.

While this view is reductive, "The White People" is a tale about a book and an adolescent female, who is the author of that book. This reduction acquires focus when that book is seen for how it is framed by Ambrose as a literary work that contains on its pages a tale of a wild, female passion that is a threat to the natural order that materialist science and orthodox belief have identified. Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) references the corrupting influence of what was named at his trial as a "poisonous French novel," the never-named yellow book that Lord Henry sends to Dorian: "One hardly knew at times whether one was reading the spiritual ecstasies of some mediaeval saint or the morbid confessions of a modern sinner. It was a poisonous book" (163). The play between the sanctioned, or proper behavior, that blurs at the line of non-normative conduct can be found throughout the middle portion of Machen's "The White People," as I state elsewhere in this chapter. Charles Webster Leadbeater, the spiritualist and prominent Theosophist, faced in 1906 his first scandal on the charges of the sexual

corruption of minors that has more variables and uncertainties than the Horos case and trial of five years prior. Leadbeater's judicial reckoning, to confront accusations that he had taught adolescent boys to masturbate (the practice of auto-eroticism or self-abuse in the terminology of the time), occurred in the same year that "The White People" was reprinted in the anthology *The House of Souls*.⁶² The medical literature and the admonishments from clergy encouraged young people (i.e., boys) to store up their sexual energies for a more moral use, rather than to expend unproductively their sexual potency. This alleged waste of energy in selfish fulfillment finds a reflection and inversion in "The White People." Nurse instructs *The Green Book* girl in modes of sexual expression when that girl's society, which I've located as mid-century Victorian, dismisses wholesale the concept of female sexuality as active or healthy.

The transformative effect of the fantastic quest predates modern fantasy, and *The Green Book* narrative's elements resemble, and in their non-Christian content undercut, the medieval dream vision.⁵⁹ The complication is that the authentic, ecstatic joy in the numinous that the girl knows before her death keeps her essence beyond the men who cast the severity of their judgment upon her. They carry out their verdict even as they keep what remains of her memory and interpret her life in accord to the exclusive measure that they agree upon in consortium. This male guard intends to enforce a specific way to read the girl's life, but a diary entry written by Virginia Woolf on 17 Feb. 1922 suggests a richer possibility: "I meant to write about death, only life came breaking in as usual." Whatever apotheosis the girl may have realized sends her out of the plane of existence of Victorian Britain and its borderlands, just as Helen Vaughan's departure from Machen's novella *The Great God Pan* receives this commentary in the last line of the story: "And now Helen is with her companions" (50). There is no compelling evidence that the girl enables her death by a rejection of what she can do because she cannot do what she desires. She

goes to what she is without malice to herself or anyone else, and the last evidence of her life is locked in the secret cabinet of a man who debases her memory under the impression that he is right.⁶¹ To guard against the corruption of minors is a worthy and socially just act, and that intention is the broad purpose of the passage of The Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885. However, in his zealous guardianship of a story where there are varying types of abuse that involve females, Ambrose defers from an acknowledgment of what value exists in the unregulated numinosity that *The Green Book* girl lives.

CHAPTER 3

AS ABOVE, SO BELOW: ARTHUR MACHEN'S "OCCULT EXTRAVAGANZA" AND WESTERN ESOTERICISM IN THE LATE VICTORIAN PERIOD

In magic, the will unites with the intellect in an impassioned desire for supersensible knowledge. This is the intellectual, aggressive, and scientific temperament trying to extend its field of consciousness, until it includes the supersensual world: obviously the antithesis of mysticism, though often adopting its title and style.¹

What was new about the more sophisticated occult groups of the 1880s and 90s was an emphasis on the exercise of the will. This is where magic parted company with mysticism, which like spiritualism is identified with the surrender of self.²

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...But we see now through a glass darkly, and the truth, before it is revealed to all, face to face, we see in fragments (alas, how illegible) in the error of the world, so we must spell out its faithful signals even when they seem obscure to us and as if amalgamated with a will wholly bent on evil.³

Which was it of the links / Snapt first, from out the chain which used to bind / Our earth to heaven...?⁴

I. The Word Unheard

Words cast a spell on Arthur Machen at the start of his childhood in Wales, when he had full access to the rectory library at Llandewi Fach near Llandegfedd, a room stocked with secular literature (e.g. *Don Quixote*), bound journalism (e.g., Dickens's *Household Words*), assorted Greek and Latin texts, and religious tracts. In the first volume of his autobiography, Machen explains: "There was always the chance, and indeed the likelihood, of making new discoveries in the happy confusion of the Llanddewi library" (Machen 37).⁵ His father's pastoral work placed the family at that spot in South Wales in 1864, a mere three miles north of Machen's birthplace,

the “noble, fallen Caerleon-on-Usk, in the heart of Gwent” (Machen, *Far Off Things* 8). Here, among the pre-Celtic, Celtic, and Roman midden that overlay the rural United Kingdom of the Usk Valley, the glamour of place, of time present and time past, lit the oft-frustrated passion that burned in Machen for the rest of his life: “He dreamed in fire; he has worked in clay” (Machen, *Far Off Things* 100-01). The trek among the hills and woods that enchanted his outer vision was coeval with the journey within the library that charmed his inner being.⁶ The space where Machen indulged a love for literature would transmogrify with his life’s modest fortunes: From the bookcases of the rectory, to the steps of a wooden ladder in a Clarendon Road garret, to the moldy basement of a Covent Garden bookseller and publisher of the occult, to the British Museum Reading Room, to custom-built furniture in St. John’s Wood. Without surprise, then, Jorge Luis Borges, with his view of the universe as an infinite library, finds for Machen a place on the shelves of one of the fractal corridors of the narrative cosmogony.⁷ In the short essay “The Mirrors of Enigma,” Borges cites Machen in a reflection upon the multitude of symbols that undergird creation: “In the psychological fragments by Novalis and in that volume of Machen’s autobiography called *The London Adventure* there is a similar hypothesis: that the outer world—forms, temperatures, the moon—is a language we humans have forgotten or which we can scarcely distinguish” (209, trans. Irby).⁸ Symbols as correspondent to a greater reality is a concept that has been central to Western esoteric traditions for parts of three millennia, and into those folds of mystery Machen joined as a writer and as a partaker in the fin-de-siècle fashion for ritual magic, but into areas prone to hoax and abuse he sought always with the scruples of a skeptical inquirer.

The history of language pairs many times over with the esoteric and the occult, in an arrangement that is not unique to the speculations of Novalis and the Romantics, Machen, his

admirer Borges, or to other writers of the twentieth century and after.⁹ This linguistic Ouroboros is a pre-modern, operative magical realism, rather than the modern, figurative kind. The word and the preternatural deed share a past in the Mystery religions, various Hellenistic philosophies influenced by Plato and Pythagoras, and the Hermetic tradition, which, from the records of the first Caliphate to European history since the fall of Byzantium, appears to be the most enduring.¹⁰ Hermeticism's legendary founder is Hermes Trismegistos (the Thrice Greatest), who is a syncretic combination of the Egyptian god Thoth, revered for powers of language and as patron of scribes, and the Greek god Hermes, the psychopomp and divine messenger who bridges realities.¹¹ Among the pages that have survived, the scrolls and sheets of papyrus, parchment, and vellum carry parts of magical codices and the processes of occult experimentation. These documents sat in the same depository at Alexandria and the scattered outposts of learning, from Ephesus to Iona, beside and sometimes in the works of hagiography, philosophy, theology, and, later, with the syllabi of the trivium and quadrivium of the first universities.¹² In the European print revolution, magical texts are counted among the incunabula: The *nóminas*, which consist of prayers to the saints used as talismans. Thus, the non-prosaic, non-orthodox content appears on the full range of writing surfaces from the start of printing in Europe, and the same use of the printed and bound page began soon after the creation of the first copies of the Bible were typeset and run off of the presses.¹³

The storage for this information varied, since to commit one's work and discoveries to the page carried risks whose end could be ostracism or the pyre (for one's writing or for oneself), so the mental image of a many-chambered library and other elaborate edifices were an integral part of the occult memory systems used to conceal and retrieve when needed the information stored in one's mind for safekeeping.¹⁴ However, the many surviving examples of magical

thinking demonstrate that authors did express themselves in the written form, often encoding sensitive content in an indirect manner (cf. the chapter on alchemy and the stylistic content of the alchemical texts of Thomas Vaughan). *Hieroglyphics: A Note Upon Ecstasy in Literature* (1902), Machen's book-length work of literary criticism, refers to the fragility of communication and the struggle to avoid the loss of meaning that is ever-present amid decaying gestures and perishable meaning: "When the secret has ceased to be a secret, the signs and cyphers of it fall also into the world of nonentity" (71). Therefore, to write can be an act of putting one's thoughts in a structured form when engaged in rational, exoteric inquiries that demand for the review of empirical data and the execution of the analysis of data points for the sake of reliable conclusions. To write also can be an act of structuring one's thoughts in an effort to reflect on one's impressions and emotions, to express the creative imagination and bouts of illogic, or to seek and to signify an esoteric, subjective knowledge.¹⁵

In *The Green Book* section of his short story "The White People" (1899), Arthur Machen creates an example of the potential grimoire, a textbook of esoteric proceedings half-told and partially-hidden in intimate journal entries, where the play of narration that is recorded in writing gestures at unknown abilities to manipulate perceived, consensus reality—this effort would not be foreign to scholars from England and other European writers of the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries, including from Machen's native Wales (e.g., the alchemist Eugenius Philalethes). On display in Machen's story are the exertions of a girl with a still-maturing body and a developing mind who has the will and talent to break through various social, cultural, and physical limits by the use of language that is and is not literary (e.g. physical and noetic methods used to communicate with non-human intelligence and the natural world).¹⁶ In *The Green Book*, NT IIIb states that Lady Avelin is proficient with a certain kind of performance: "And she could

do what they called shib-show, which was a very wonderful enchantment” (Machen 86). In his brief but insightful essay, “The Shock of the Numinous: Arthur Machen’s ‘The White People,’” J. S. Pennethorne (Johnny Eaton) reveals the esoteric significance of this allusion: “It is the *shibboleth*, the mystical object displayed as the Ultimate Revelation in the Eleusinian Mysteries” (48).¹⁷ Another issue with the physicality of language occurs not with the human body but with an ecozone whose built environment tells information to those who are able to translate its meaning. The result is that *The Green Book* girl discovers the problem of surfaces, since she has not sufficient access to language to see through all appearances and to know what they say. For example, on her travels into the wild woodlands beyond her father’s home she reaches a “high, steep wall of grass” and “went on through all those mounds and hollows and walls, till [she] came to the end, which was high above all the rest...and could see that all the different shapes of the earth were arranged in patterns” (Machen, “The White People” 75, 78). Spread before her is a landscape of anthropomorphic turf mounds and megalithic monuments, and these features are scattered with a deliberation that she does not understand. She was brought through thick underbrush and a tunnel of trees to a view of this pre-historic Wonderland after her following some unknown creature, a kind of crytzoological white rabbit. Her attempt to come to terms with this topography of terror is by the means of her journal, which, in her entries’ seeming formlessness, take on an allusive shape that is mimetic of the occult, transliterary landscape.

The use of available objects for visual depictions, of ideograms and pictograms, reaches back before the manufactured clay artefacts of the Middle and Near East, the Mycenaean Linear B tablets, and the processed plant and animal surfaces used around the Mediterranean basin: cuneiform to hieroglyphs to the phonetic alphabet. Preserved wood and stone contain some of the oldest traces of humanity’s reach for the numinous and, in the above citations from “The

White People,” the girl finds the earth’s surface as a division between the one world and an other world. Archaeologists have speculated about the rock art of the Khoisan and other aboriginal peoples as a surface representative of spiritual passage and numinous contact, and this speculation extends to *The Green Book* and certain of the markings left behind by the peoples present in the British Isles prior to the Celtic arrivals—the same type of indecipherable evidence etched in stone that Alan Moore’s narrator references in the “Hob’s Hog” chapter of the novel *Voice of the Fire* (1996).¹⁸ In this search for meaning of that which has reached us from the past, humans seek for what can be recognized and connected that either tells a story or that can be told in story form. To carry out comparative work for survivals of pre-literate evidence and for any literary text requires the researcher to be mindful of the contextual differences, the same that have led Rachel Pollack to state about narratives seemingly foreign from one another: “Medieval Grail initiations and Australian desert rites follow the same archetypal pattern; it underlies them like a grid. Yet the outer form of that pattern varies immensely” (74). The expression of the manifestations of mystery is culturally specific, and whether there is a common speech of archetypes that underlies the expressions is debatable, especially the compelling proposition of C. G. Jung and Joseph Campbell.¹⁹ In his first explorations into the occult world as a cataloger in a book-crowded London antiquarian shop, and in his position as an employed reader, Machen was an inheritor of varying streams of esoteric traditions and their attempts to capture in words what they saw and for what they sought after.

The sub-street level cataloging work gave Machen the opportunity to see the contemporary work and current engagements with occultism and the tales of its writers and their scuttles across esoteric topics, even if much of the material was re-mixed, plagiarized, uncited, and repetitive.²⁰ Machen’s biographers, Reynolds and Charlton, have emphasized the influence

of this experience on Machen by going so far as to call the job “the foundation of his knowledge, lightly carried but far-reaching, of occult matters and those who concern themselves with them, and the insatiable interest he always retained for the odd and unaccountable, took shape at this time, though the seed of it had been there since he read Nicholas Flamel as a child” (21).²¹

During Machen’s employment at Redway he wrote a playfully-annotated catalogue of alchemical books that he titled *Thesaurus Incantatus* and wrote under the pseudonym Thomas Marvell. In Danielson’s bibliography of Machen from 1923, Machen provided this description of what he had compiled in that document: “The fantastic tale of ‘The Enchanted Treasure’ is an exercise in a somewhat rare literary genre: the occult extravaganza....My effort arose from various occult readings of the ancient sort” (14). With kinds of materials that he was tasked with reading and filing, Machen’s efforts are reminiscent of Umberto Eco’s novel *Foucault’s Pendulum* (1988). In that narrative, three editors receive from their boss the task of sifting through the slush pile of a vanity press, one that operates under its owner as a kind of confidence game perpetrated on credulous occultists, ones who are desirous for the addition of the title of author to go on to their resumes and to be shared at social gatherings. Eco carries off his own occult parody where a character named Casaubon and his two fellow, and equally bored, editors, Belbo and Diotallevi, use a computer nicknamed Abulafia to make up a gleefully-absurd unified occult theory, a kind of Correspondence of Correspondences that Machen would have admired.²²

Machen’s exposure to outré materials in bulk, written with some modulations in style across different subject areas, would help to revise his own manner of writing and springheel him off into the “occult extravaganza,” and move him away from the seventeenth-century archaisms used for topics with limited appeal into which the rest of his writing from the eighteen eighties is mired.²³

Among those who engage with the fringes, Arthur Machen earns respect for his consummate skepticism about the occult and the organized modern esoteric groups and practices, and also for his consistent disavowal that any part of the fiction is a veiled mask for authentic occultism or the supernatural in actuality (or potentiality). The Angels of Mons legend is the supreme example from Machen's career that marks this integrity. He was a conscientious denier of that story as being anything other than timely, patriotic short form fiction that he invented and that *The Evening News* published (29 Sept. 1914), a newspaper known for placing short fiction, including Machen's own that he had written over many months prior, on the page beside reportorial content—though “The Bowmen” did not include in that issue the usual header indicating its genre.²⁴ “The Bowmen” is the story that contains this battlefield legend, and that one work attracted from the reading public more attention for Machen than what he received at any other point in his lifetime. Soon after, Machen and his *The Evening News* editor published *The Bowmen and Other Legends of the War* (1915), a collection of short fiction about the English and World War I that attempted to capitalize on that original story and the angelic rumors that spread amid the trappings of national pride for the war effort. However, the Machen-supplied introduction to that story collection makes clear that he invented The Angels of Mons legend from no source beyond himself: “I could not give my authorities, since I had none, the tale being pure invention” (11).²⁵ In the early months of the Great War, pandering to popular sentiment and hope for British success against all odds would have been an easy marketing move for a writer who never knew popular success, and who had been saturated in wonder tales and odd events in his own life; however, he did not capitalize on the basis of a lie, but held himself to the same standard of evidence and accountability that he demanded from others.

“The Bowmen” in the time of the Angels of Mons legend was not the only instance when fact confused with fiction in a weird tale that Machen found himself compelled to dispel in letters of disabuse, when the words of a story took on a life of their own. Machen’s allusive, potent descriptions in the “The White People” had an unintended, external effect on at least one of the more-credulous folklorists of the early-twentieth century, to which Machen would not cede credence. Machen explains the situation in a letter to Montague Summers from 27 Nov. 1941:

You mention *The White People*: This tale had an odd issue some years ago. A man with an address somewhere in Malaya wrote to me, informing me that he was interested in Malayan Folk Lore & had been surprised a good many things in *The White People* which strongly resembled Malayan beliefs & practices, & that he had cited my story in a paper he had written for a folk-lore journal. I wrote at once to him & the journal; advising both that my folklore was home-made—mainly an invention. But I was pleased to find that, apparently, I had invented on the right lines.

Discretion left as anonymous the misled admirer, but the last sentence to Summers indicates that Machen felt a bit of self-congratulation that his invented details carried glints of an other reality. That kind of response to Machen from the unknown folklorist, though a limited sample of a literary work requisitioned into a different field, proves prescient for what Margaret Alice Murray experienced with similar, farther-reaching effects with her version of the witch-cult hypothesis in *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (1921), followed up by *The God of the Witches* (1933). Unlike Murray, Machen never made any claim that his fiction was other than a work of

imagination and a blend of memories from his years at George Redway's antiquarian bookseller's shop in London.

Machen's diligent use of language in whatever genre he worked (even if the effect is not always successfully executed), combined with his skeptic's view and broad experience with arcane uses of words and phrases and cryptic literary imagery, put him in a peculiar position at the fin de siècle: He suspects that something of an authentic hidden truth, whose splinters and notes in the aether are subtle and just as easily lost, can be found in the allusions from the Hermetic texts and alchemical treatises resurrected amid the slag heap of the nineteenth century's Rosicrucians, Masons, Theosophists, and Victorian ritual magic groups. Machen was a difficult man to impress when the grandest claims about Secret Chiefs (e.g., The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn) or Masters of the Ancient Wisdom (e.g., Theosophical Mahatmas) may as well have been idols made from melted lumps of fool's alchemical gold that these modern occultists in their dress-up games earnestly rubbed with their ceremonial robes worn while sitting in circles cross-legged in darkened rooms. In the eighth chapter of Aleister Crowley's book *Magick in Theory and Practice* (185), this self-styled adept repurposes a phrase that has had lasting influence:

The whole subject of Magick is an example of Mythopoeia in that particular form called Disease of Language. Thoth, God of Magick, was merely a man who invented writing, as his monuments declare clearly enough. 'Grammarye,' Magick, is only the Greek 'Gamma.' So also the old name of a Magical Ritual, 'Grimoire,' is merely a Grammar. It appeared marvellous to the vulgar that men should be able to communicate at a distance, and they began to attribute other powers, merely invented, to the people who were able to write.²⁶

Crowley's Magick is in a different stream from the studies of modern enchantment and disenchantment that Simon During and Michael Saler have analyzed, and that is discussed in the section below. Crowley did not hide his status as a self-styled chief among the new heresiarchs, and publicly fought with more sober-minded occultists like Yeats, a personality dispute that Machen was caught up in during his 1899-1900 fugue state.²⁷ Machen's character Ambrose in "The White People" criticizes an obvious personal cult like the one that Crowley constructed for himself: "[A]s a rule, I suspect that the Hierarchs of Tophet pass quite unnoticed, or, perhaps, in certain cases, as good but mistaken men" (Machen, "The White People").²⁸ Crowley would not be confused for the ownership of any of the virtue associated with the latter part of Ambrose's statement, though Crowley's contributions to the vocabulary of modern magic persists and one would be in error to deny that fact and Crowley of that credit.

Originally recycled from older traditions by Crowley, who added an expanded terminology, "a Disease of Language" undergoes further transferral by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell who appropriate the phrase to bring this use of language into the antinomial present of modern esotericism.²⁹ Thus, when Moore and Campbell collaborated on a two-part graphic work they chose the title *A Disease of Language* (2005) as a callback to Crowley, but the phrase departs from Crowley to now refer to an innate quality within each person that linguistics is unable to structure, and that may be a symptom of the limits of linguistics. Furthermore, the essence of the phrase is other than magic in the occult sense, but is a depiction of the unlikely combinations and irrational thought experiments carried out for the purpose of creative expression, efforts that align with what Moore and Campbell in their work refer to as inspiration and imagination of heightened senses, of what Machen's *The Green Book* girl is up to in her departures and encounters. As with Blake's four-fold vision, attempts are made to describe and

define the perceptivity of both the outer and the inner worlds of existence, what Moore's and Campbell's collaboration *Snakes and Ladders* (1999) and the second half of *A Disease of Language* (2005) present as:

Art, in the human truth of it, touches the universal. Seeing Art, we recognize a thought we had but could not utter, are made less alone. The eerie sense that there's just one of us. As species or as individuals, these are our only stairs, no route save up into the brilliant haze, from past to future. Every instant is a rung that we shall never tread again. In soul, dead matter is redeemed, mute loam revealed as a receptacle of meaning. Deathless information, endlessly refracting in a stainless glass. (35-36)

Though no record exists, the Eleusinian Mysteries told a story, and the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the Gnostic gospels tell a story, just as Alan Moore's performance does from Conway Hall at Red Lion Square, London, which Campbell illustrates in *Snakes and Ladders*. This last work tells a story through pictures, words, and the storytelling in which those elements perform as united parts in a communication to the audience that is the most potent of language's symptoms that there is, a performance that could not have been possible if Arthur Machen had not existed. In *East Coker*, the fourth part of T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*, the speaker states that "our only health is the disease" (152), "and that, to be restored, our sickness must grow worse" (158). To borrow an allusion from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*: Upon the antique breaths exhaled by the opening of the mouths that spoke the disease of language from texts of illumination, or at least as the late Victorians and Edwardians imagined to be the experience of the learned persons among the ancient Egyptians and Coptic cultures, the fin de siècle dabbled in a reformed magic that toiled to connect older forms of thought to modern inquiries of the mind and its abilities.

II. Via Esoterica

Between 1885 and 1886, while in the employ of George Redway, Machen wrote reviews in *Walford's Antiquarian Magazine and Bibliographical Review* for books such as *The Gnostics and Their Remains*, and that title is an apt place to start since what once existed and what remains from that elusive past are central points to the history of Western esotericism.³⁰ One of the first questions to pose is the one that asks what is meant by esoteric pursuits as a serious topic of study, and what is meant by the interest during Machen's lifetime in Hermeticism and Gnosticism that a number of solemn, accomplished professionals devoted their efforts to learn and to write about: "...I can bear better I think the (more or less) Occidental Idiot, who will speak of Shin—the letter of the Hebrew Alphabet, not the delicate portion of our anatomy—attribute it to the Tarot Trump called the Fool, & just throw in a reference to Salt, Sulphur, & Mercury" (Machen, *Things Near and Far* 278). Machen here references the syncretic tendency of the ritual esoteric groups and certain overly-confident adepts to relate Kabala to Tarot to Alchemy, mixing symbols, in a way that obfuscates and that causes a further loss of clarity—a lack of understanding that manufactures a sham claim to have found enlightenment.³¹ Antoine Faivre, who defined esotericism as its own field of inquiry, has insisted that the best way to refer to Western esotericism is as a form of thought rather than there being an occult tradition or similar terminology of a distinct, unbroken legacy, which makes sense due to the mire that one arrives at caused by the intrigue and disputes from those groups and their sources that lay expansive claims to histories of reputable descent and exclusive knowledge that confound verification.³²

Too often those skirmishes over legitimacy distract from the materials to which they are tangential, like the above-cited fight between Yeats and Crowley, or, from an even earlier age, between Giordano Bruno and the cleric authorities who persecuted him. Here, then, is a standard

definition used among specialists who otherwise disagree on many other points about the history and meaning of esotericism from Kocku von Stuckrod: Esotericism refers to those efforts “wherein a seeker attains higher knowledge through extraordinary states of consciousness” (10).³³ A competent history of Western esoteric thought began to develop gradually after the Edwardian decline of the ritual magic groups and the parlor-room Spiritualism that had peaked by the eighteen eighties, though the gasping, lowest point may be Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s ill-advised belief in the Cottingley Fairies in the early nineteen twenties.³⁴ At the pinnacle of interest at the fin de siècle in occult groups, the earliest work of note starts with the publications of A. E. Waite, like the not-exactly-skeptical, but at least less-credulous history of the Rosicrucians told in *The Real History of the Rosicrucians* (1887), which disputes many of Hargrave Jennings’s claims that had drawn Machen’s interest prior to his meeting George Redway, which Jennings facilitated. The fallout from the Horos Trial in 1901 (cf. “The Darkling World” later in this chapter) and the egotistic infighting split the esoteric lodges and led to the scattering, and subsequent loss, of membership. Even with the administrative structure long gone, Israel Regardie’s writings have held continued interest in their preservation of the Golden Dawn’s teachings. The unceremonious use of those materials as evidence in the 1901 trial exposed the documents to public view. On the brink of the twenty-first century, some vestige of the Golden Dawn remains, since Alan Moore performed *Snakes and Ladders* for an audience of the Golden Dawn Society in the metropolitan, workaday region of Holborn. This area of London is the same that Machen cites in “The Holy Things,” from *Ornaments in Jade* (1924), as a place as likely as anywhere else in the world for one to experience a preternatural vision: “But now as he walked stupidly, slowly, along the southern side of Holborn, a change fell. He did not in the least know what it was, but there seemed to be a strange air, and a new charm that soothed his

mind” (44). This unnamed character has no currency with magical acts of will, and his creative imagination had numbed to the point where he “had lost the faculty of making” (Machen, “The Holy Things” 45). Yet even his anomie is not impermeable, and he is struck by a strange transformation of place via a synaesthesia of sensual hyperintensity that takes him beyond sense, in a moment in and out of time—an event that would draw the envy of his contemporaries engaged in the fin-de-siècle mental practice of astral travel.³⁵

The pattern of frayed, hopelessly knotted threads that emerges at the fin de siècle is that the higher ideals of esoteric pursuits were lost among the many spats, whereby hierarchy and authority interfered for the worse, as it so often does, and led to whatever tentative communities that did form to dissolve and re-emerge along divided lines and further weakened: Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers formed the Order of the Alpha et Omega; Dr. Robert William Felkin and John William Brodie-Innes established the Order of the Stella Matutina; A. E. Waite created the Order of the Independent and Rectified Rite; and Crowley involved himself with the Ordo Templi Orientis and then made his Abbey of Thelema. As these attenuations led to the dissolution of most of the groups by the end of Prime Minister David Lloyd George’s service, what emerges next is some of the better work on the occult and theorizing, as in C. G. Jung’s understanding of synchronicity. More detailed analysis in the context of the history of ideas did not appear until the work of Dame Frances Yates and then Antoine Faivre in his seminal *Western Esotericism: A Concise History* (1992), followed by the more-recent updates and challenges provided by Kocku von Stuckrad, Hugh B. Urban, and Henrik Bogdan.³⁶ However, the period after the Latin Middle Ages, particularly the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, was the time when the first revival of interest in Hermetic materials and ideas occurred, when the groundwork was

laid and significant emendations were written by some of the best minds in Europe: Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, Paracelsus and Crolius (cf. n. 30).

Yet the two thinkers who dominated the views on the occult sciences and their public reception also pressed with the strongest opposition on orthodox grounds for the eradication of their study and practice: Augustine of Hippo's continued influence on the European worldview and the works of Thomas Aquinas.³⁷ Other than that unfortunate legacy of prejudice against non-orthodox materials as malicious superstition, Early Modern Europe did impart an important categorization of the uncommon event: *mirum* (a "wonder"), which is an event regarded as extraordinary in some way (e.g., witchery); *occultus* ("hidden"), which refers to a thing that is natural but current knowledge cannot explain its workings (Hermeticism's worldview of a dispersed divine presence); and miracles, which are of supernatural origin and "came from 'above nature,' which means they originated with God and involved suspension of the ordinary laws governing nature" (Maxwell-Stuart 3). Though the practice has diminished in a financially-linked and science- and technologically-driven European Union, the study of the central traditional Hermetic sciences continues independently and in advanced university programs: alchemy (the transmutation of matter and spirit); astrology (the guidance of human fortune by means of foreknowledge); and magic (not sleight of hand, but the ability to influence outcomes through direct means that involve manipulation of the natural world and order).³⁸ Together, these are the Hermeticist's trivium, the three parts of the wisdom of the whole universe, the same parts about which Waite and Machen debated many times during their long friendship: Two persons with mystic temperaments who looked for the same end, what the magical orders called henosis, a term for union with the Godhead (or Monad) that marks the influence of Neoplatonism.

With the re-discovery in Western Europe of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, which has not been lost since de' Medici's acquisition of a copy, interest developed in henosis as obtainable through theurgic acts, which are best understood in Machen's writing as the "ecstasy" that is present throughout *The Green Book* of "The White People."³⁹ During the late Victorian period, the Masonic orders and Madame Blavatsky's version of Theosophy drew their crowds, but the ritual magic of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn had the closest link to the traditional Hermetic sciences. In the final year of Victoria's reign, Machen sought succor in ritual magic after Amy's, his first wife's, death. As Machen did, one needs to keep in mind that appearance and reality are always at stake with these groups and their approach to theurgy, even when, as was often the case, most members conducted their efforts in earnest to better themselves: The ritual magician's work to transform herself or himself is the clearest link to the Hermetic practices of the third century CE, all other legacy claims aside. The internal problem of magic that arose with the ritual groups at the fin de siècle is that sides were taken about the version of magic rituals that one chose to practice and use as a guiding influence. What Machen's character Ambrose refers to in "The White People" as the two paths to ecstasy, that of the saint and of the sinner, of "sorcery and sanctity," finds its counterparts in Goetia and theurgy (62). In his *Apologia* (1487), Giovanni Pico della Mirandola identifies these two types of magic, which are completely opposite of each other. Goetia, from the Greek term *goēteia* ("sorcery"), is known as the dark arts or black magic and relies upon an alliance with evil spirits (i.e., demons). Theurgy is the other path, a type of magic reliant upon an alliance with divine spirits (i.e., angels, archangels, gods).⁴⁰ In a defense of the magical arts that would have parried well with Ambrose's position in the Prologue to "The White People," Pico della Mirandola argued that the art of the magician is a beneficial and godly practice that can produce an effect that brings the wonder of God (a kind of

ultimate “mirum”) to humanity, but is something other than the saint’s asceticism.⁴¹ These deliberate actions result in a profound religious expression and are not the corruption that is goetic sorcery, the kind encouraged and taught by Aleister Crowley, who is a modern performer of the goetic arts, where grotesquerie and the humiliation of other persons trumps the humbling of oneself.

In the context of Machen’s work, the goetic arts are among the practices of Dr. Lipsius and his gang of diabolicals in *The Three Impostors* (1895) who pursue “the young man with spectacles” (i.e., Yeats), and theurgy operates within *The Green Book* girl’s rituals, which are magic in nature and performed by the girl to invoke the action and favor of the God of the Woods after her first sighting of that eikon on the White Day. On her second approach to this sacred herm, an appropriate term since the sculpted object does mark borders of realities, the girl achieves union with the divine and enters henosis. This death of her material self is in conjunction with an other, higher reality to which she offers her ultimate effort and that leads to the expiration of the physical manifestation of her selfhood. For Machen’s writing, I use the term henosis in its classical sense from Neoplatonism, as the word for oneness or union with the Real that is the end of gnosis and also a word that carries the same sense that Ambrose refers to as the intention to “forsake the imperfect copies and go to the perfect originals” (Machen, “The White People” 63). Furthermore, gnosis means the access to special knowledge, a direct spiritual knowledge into cosmology and metaphysics that is attained via oral lessons and applied, practical knowledge of *The Green Book* girl’s nurse, since that woman has a superior level of experiential knowledge. Nurse serves in a guide capacity at the initiatory stage, since the girl does not know the concepts as an adept does, nor does she understand the vast consequences of what she has access to, but this girl is open to learning and does exhibit a reflective capacity that

indicates that she can excel. As her language runs from one incidental encounter to the next, of the there and back again trope of the hero's journey, the interdependency of the two primary types of gnosis emerges: The intellectual knowledge of magic and cosmological gnosis, and the experiential knowledge of mysticism and metaphysical gnosis. Rudolf Otto's feeling-state of the negative numinous appears in the references to evil and fear that Ambrose makes in "The White People," who subscribes to and attempts to persuade his audience to take the same position that *The Green Book* girl's cosmological gnosis is attained by moral violations: "Evil, of course, is wholly positive—only it is on the wrong side" (Machen, "The White People" 63). The girl's life is a little larger than the universe of the inflexible, rules-bound mindset wielded by the modern witch-finder generals, the pure rationalists and positivists, who grind their realism through their intricate briefs of known laws.

Machen knew that ritual magic did not claim that it was itself the direct experience of higher, ecstatic knowledge, but rather a means to, and, thus, a mediation between the macrocosm of the living universe and the microcosm of mortal lives. In the tradition of Persian philosophers and Sufism, Henry Corbin cites in his studies of Eastern influences on Western esotericism an identification of the "imagination as an autonomous world of intermediaries, the *mundus imaginalis* [*alam al-mithal*, or Mythic World of the Persian Sufis], where visions, apparitions, angels, and hierarchies occur independently of any perceiving subject" (Goodrick-Clarke 6).⁴² To gain access to this invisibly present mesocosm and its intermediaries has been a primary objective of the magic orders of the Western world since Ficino's translations of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. Corbin describes the reality behind the idea as one that is not passive, and is itself a source of emanation:

The world [of the mesocosm] is as real and objective, as consistent and subsistent as the intelligible and sensible worlds; it is an intermediate universe ‘where the spiritual takes body and the body becomes spiritual’ ...The organ of this universe is the active Imagination; it is the place of theophanic visions, the scene on which visionary events and symbolic histories appear in their true reality. (Corbin 4)

This reference to imagination in an alternate reality of betwixt and between reminds one of Moore’s and Campbell’s interpretations of a Disease of Language, but also carries shades of Neoplatonism, too, the same that are present in references from Machen in two works from opposite ends of his career. In *Hieroglyphics*, Machen writes, “And to suggest...the presence of that shadowy, unknown, or half-known Companion who walks beside each one of us all our days” (30). While in his short story “N” (1935), a group of old friends, the same age as Machen, discuss how “it is possible, indeed, that we three are now sitting among desolate rocks, by bitter streams...and with what companions” (“N” 14). The conversations involve the peculiarity of a periodic sighting of an impossible garden, witnessed by a variety of individuals who visit Stoke Newington, northern London, a vision that is perhaps a symbolic construct of the prelapsarian Logos. As I discuss in my chapter devoted to the unique adolescence within Machen’s “The White People,” Moore has stated in interviews a belief in an intermediary hierarchy of being that staggers from Godhead to humans. This belief is comparable to the esoteric mesocosm, which is an independent world of preternatural hierarchies and spiritual intermediaries that link the microcosm with the macrocosm, a binding of the unseen, unknown multiverse.

After the Victorian occult revival in the ritual magic groups, and before the development of the scholarly studies of Western esotericism, there falls Max Weber’s pronouncement in 1917 of “disenchantment” (i.e., *Entzauberung*), when, simultaneously, the powers of Europe were

killing one another in mechanized, entrenched warfare and starving its populations. In Weber's oft-quoted statement, he says that "the fate of our times is characterized by rationalism and intellectualization and, above all, by the 'disenchantment of the world'" (155). The new magicians, who remain in other configurations since the time of Wynn Westcott and MacGregor Mathers, and the outliers of the occult, like Machen and Algernon Blackwood, are counters to Weber. Other responses are the special effects in film, the industrial light and magic of the movies that include computer-generated imagery (CGI), and the crossovers from the worlds created by Conan Doyle's tales of crime and detection, Lovecraft's cosmogony of horror, and Tolkien's epic mythmaking, all of which have flourished since Weber. In *Modernity and Enchantment*, Saler provides a lucid and persuasive explanation of what has attracted "Western elites" to an interest in, and an approval of, the conclusion of Weber's expounding that modern life is disenchanted:

One might respond that certain aspects of the disenchantment narrative are compelling: the modern Western world has lost the overarching meanings and spiritual purposes formerly provided by religious world views; the prevalent emphases on scientific progress, technology, and instrumental reason can be dehumanizing; the rapid changes of modern existence can yield feelings of anomie, fragmentation, and alienation; and so on. But there are corresponding enchantments to the modern world that, on the whole, have not been as widely and repeatedly rehearsed. (693)

Contrapuntal materials abound at the fin de siècle, amid the blasts of degeneration from Lombroso and Nordau and the overconfident claims of positivist science. In "The White People," a narrative that cautions a disenchanted world and that is embedded with a version of

enchantment in the binding power of *The Green Book's* language, there is a dismissal of such a state within its framework that tries to void its own gestures to alterity: "Children and women feel this horror you speak of, even animals experience it" (Machen 66).⁴³ The "this" and the "it" are the numinous, the *tremendum fascinans* of the religious experience that Rudolph Otto as a concept in 1917, the same year Weber's words directed attention and reflection elsewhere.⁴⁴

Machen is the skeptic who is not beyond belief, and who directs his honed incredulity at the conceited claims of the occult in practice and at the fanciful, grand histories of certain strands of Western esotericism that refer to the existence of an unbroken legacy, such as one that stretches back to concepts and practices that date from the days of the Old Kingdom pharaohs. In *Things Near and Far*, Machen states that "there is one thing that I hope I may be spared, that is the comment of the Oriental Occult Ass" (277, and see n. 20 below). This hope to avoid the convoluted conceits of the esotericists appears in Machen's long story *The Great Return* (1915), where critics have noted the text's attack of "the self-righteous observations of typical esoteric know-it-alls" (Pennethorne 49).⁴⁵ Like the later story *The Secret Glory* (1922), *The Great Return* is part of Machen's turn to an interest in the Holy Grail (or, *San Graal*) as a pre-Anglo-Saxon relic—the kind of object that German occultists searched for in the years that followed, and since then memorialized and fantasized in film and print.⁴⁶ Many chapter titles in *The Great Return* suggest for Machen a move away from the morass of the late-Victorian and Edwardian esoteric and occult interests, and a shift toward the mystic aspects of the Celtic Church: "The Rumour of the Marvellous"; "A Secret in a Secret Place"; "The Rose of Fire"; and "The Mass of the Sangraal." At the time of this shift in interest, documentation exists for another criticism from Machen of the philosophical chassis of the modern, organized esoteric groups. In a letter from 1905 to his close friend A. E. Waite, Machen writes:

And: another point: the average secret society presupposes, as you yourself have said, that the initiator is, in a certain sense, superior to the initiated, superior, that is, because he possesses certain information which he imparts to the neophyte, who is, by this process, admitted into a circle of knowledge outside which, (by the hypothesis) he stood, before his initiation. Now, imagine if you will, a society which makes no pretence of knowing anything which the outsider, the neophyte, does not know; which has no temple or circle to which admittance is given; which bids its members look within, & uncover, & remove, & Behold, & Make the Great Interior Entrance—from Within to Within, instead of from Without to Somebody Else's notion of Within. (*Selected Letters* 35)

The quote suggests the disagreement between Machen and Waite, which is about the value of those systems of ritual magic like the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and their supposed stores of occult knowledge, where exteriority rules over the movement of interiority. After all, Waite would go on to lead one of the splinter lodges of the Golden Dawn once the central organization dissolved. Machen's position, after his association with the Golden Dawn and his own personal inquiries into the new Hermetics, continued to value interiority, which returned him much closer to the mystic's path of a seeker of heightened experience from within.

Martin Heidegger's pessimistic assessment of technology and related claims tend to present him as a great naysayer, in particular about how in futility control is exerted, attempts to interfere with and manipulate reality are harmful, and where discoveries made will result in knowledge that uncovers the human essence and its position in the phenomenological world as that of limited participants. One can make a comparison of Heidegger's assertions to Machen's personal outlook on technology and scientific experimentation expressed in a lifetime of essays

(e.g., the anti-vehicular “A Country Lane in August,” 1916) and in his fiction, particularly the primary works: *The Great God Pan* and the disastrous experiment of its transcendental scientist, Dr. Raymond; “Novel of the Black Seal” and the horrid discoveries and fate of an anthropologist, Professor Gregg; “Novel of the White Powder” and the chemical poisoning of Francis Leicester and the awful pronouncements from two scientists in the dénouement; and “N,” where the multi-layering intersections of *perichoresis* can evoke terror for what they reveal of other dimensions that are immeasurable and unrecordable beyond surface impressions. “In the White People,” Machen uses a character, Ambrose, who otherwise is belligerent in his opinion of magical practices and critical of heterodox beliefs, to concede this point: ““Yes...magic is justified of her children. There are many, I think, who eat dry crusts and drink water, with a joy infinitely sharper than anything within the experience of the ‘practical’ epicure”” (63). By financial want, and not economic choice, Machen knew such a diet in his first years in London during the eighteen eighties, where the seeming grey squalor of the metropolis had its hidden realities that called to him. The long lean time of penury and loneliness broke after he met the woman who would become his first wife (Amelia Hogg), the man who would become his life-long friend (A. E. Waite), and then he found work in the field of literature that was preceded by his wide reading of outré subjects. The combination of the human, the literary, and the suprahuman would lead Machen to a very strange final year of the nineteenth century, a kind small notch on the great cosmogonic dial of Western esotericism on which he cast his poor shadow.

III. Like One that Hath Been Stunned

“As above, so below” is a phrase that appears in many Hermetic texts and is a concept that appears throughout occult and magical circles. As circuitous as the path was for him, Arthur

Machen had an unsettling period where the pieces of life appeared to arrange themselves about him for a dumb show acted for his lone self as the confused audience. The symbolic concept is first laid out in the second line of *The Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus* (see n. 38 of my chapter on “The White People” and *The Green Book*): “That which is Below corresponds to that which is Above, and that which is Above, corresponds to that which is Below, to accomplish the miracles of the One Thing.” Consider the “One Thing” in the Neo-Platonic sense of the final intention of henosis, a pan-tidal cycle of some other law of the conservation of energy that tugs and bonds with infinitesimal gluons the mesocosm to the macrocosm and the microcosm. In occult mysteries, there are horizontal correspondences among objects and sensory experiences of this world, and there are vertical correspondences between this world and transcendental reality, an idea that abounds in Neoplatonism and the works of the Hermeticists. A. E. Waite’s magical *coincidences*, or “synchs,” find expression in the Rider-Waite Major Arcana card “The Magician,” whose hands form into a gesture of the phrase that there is a great, occult chain of being from the stacked and intersected astral planes to and with the earth: Robed and wreathed, this figure raises one hand to the sky above his head, and the other points beneath his waist to the ground, as if his body is to serve as a conduit of energy. Long before Antoine Faivre’s studies, a foundational component of the form of esoteric thought has been the idea of correspondences between the total parts of the universe seen and unseen, in a metaphysical, supranatural conception of the visible and invisible. Within the massive work *Of Occult Philosophy (1531)*, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim states what is known as the law of resonance, which is correspondence by another name: “Nothing is concealed from the wise and sensible, while the unbelieving and unworthy cannot learn the secrets....All things which are similar and therefore connected, are drawn to each other’s power.” Eco cites the same material from Agrippa in

Foucault's Pendulum that then becomes Casaubon's three rules of *tout se tient*, "all is held" (179, 289), which is taught to him by way of Aglié, the poseur to the title of the Comte de Ste. Germaine, that historical legerdemain who is a kind of inverted Nicholas Flamel. Thus, one of the intrinsic characteristics of esoteric spirituality is that of correspondences; the entirety of nature connects not causally but symbolically because the word is sundered from both the deed and the meaning that it cannot represent.⁴⁷

Machen demonstrates throughout his writing a knowledge of the principles of this symbolic field of action (i.e., "as above, so below"), and the evidence is there from the height of his creative powers in the eighteen nineties, to the last years that he wrote before the outbreak of another world war and the decline of his health. For instance, Machen writes the following in *Hieroglyphics* (as stated elsewhere, a work written in 1899 but published in 1902, which creates its own kind of correspondence to the passage of time, the labeling of social epochs, and Machen's life before and after his first wife's death):

If we, being wondrous, journey through a wonderful world, if all our joys are from above, from the other world where the Shadowy Companion walks, then no mere making of the likeness of the external shape will be our art, no veracious document will be our truth; but to us, initiated, the Symbol will be offered, and we shall take the Sign and adore, beneath the outward and perhaps unlovely accidents, the very Presence and eternal indwelling of God. (139)

Then, in Machen's short story "N," which first appeared in the year of King George V's Silver Jubilee celebrations, a prosaic account of a trans-temporal and trans-spatial encounter precedes a string of evidence that points to unrealized spaces that intrude upon the common field of vision.

The story starts with three friends, Harliss, Perrott, and Arnold who are “talking about old days and old ways and all the changes that have come on London in the last weary years” (Machen, “N” 1). In a final reflection upon a trio of eyewitness accounts of a garden of ecstasy, not of this world but some leftover measure of the first light of being, the character Perrott states:

‘Yes, but have you allowed for the marvellous operation of the law of coincidences? There’s a case, trivial enough, perhaps you may think, that made a deep impression on me when I read it, a few years ago. Forty years before, a man had bought a watch in Singapore—or Hong Kong, perhaps. The watch went wrong, and he took it to a shop in Holborn to be seen to. The man who took it from him over the counter was the man who had sold him the watch in the East all those years before. You can never put coincidence out of court, and dismiss it as an impossible solution. Its possibilities are infinite.’ (14)

Unlike the overtly religious allusions that close out the *Hieroglyphics* passage, the main subject of “N” is a *parousia* that points to the Greek term’s classical meaning of an arrival, and not the New Testament’s meaning of a Second Coming (at least not of a Messiah). The enigma of arrival would not be unfamiliar to the symbolic works of the Hermeticists and their alchemical brethren: “But whence did Perrott’s cousin receive the impression that he not only saw a sort of Kubla Khan, or Old Man of the Mountain paradise, but actually walked abroad in it?” (10).⁴⁸ The unpredictable presence of the Stoke Newington secret garden, which crosses the plain, shabby Canon’s Park, also illustrates “Elsewhere and Otherwise,” another popular phrase of occultists.

On the last day of July, 1899, Machen went elsewhere and otherwise, a trip precipitated by the death of his wife, Amelia. Before looking at the implications of that chain of events, as

Machen went from bereaved husband to harried Londoner, his short story “The Red Hand” (1897) provides a glimpse of the coming apart of sensible connections that the writer would experience. In that story, Dyson and Phillipps, the same pair of amateur detectives and flâneurs who cluelessly saunter through *The Three Impostors*, return once more to assert a faith in acausality. Dyson explains his means of detection: “I will tell you how I work. I go upon the theory of improbability. The theory is unknown to you?...It is the only scientific principle I know of which can enable one to pick out an unknown man from amongst five million” (18).⁴⁹ These two men locate their human quarry, but the non-human revelation is such that their methods do not provide an adequate preparation for a glimpse of what exists on the other side of the veil of consensus reality. Since 1893, Machen knew, intellectually, that his wife’s diagnosis of cancer would hasten the end of her life, but six more years with her did not prepare him emotionally for the loss. He outlines the weird days of the first year without her in chapters IX and X of the second volume of his autobiography, *Things Near and Far* (1923), and in the introduction to the 1923 Knopf edition of *The Three Impostors*. In the autobiography, he provides an impressionistic outline of her final moments and what followed for him:

I had borne what had to be borne with some measure of solidity and stolidity; the torture of six years of lamentable expectation had, as I supposed, seared and burned my spirit into dull, insensitive acquiescence: but I was mistaken. A horror of soul that cannot be uttered descended upon me, on that dim, far-off afternoon in Gray’s Inn; I was beside myself with dismay and torment; I could not endure my own being. (Machen, *Things Near and Far* 270)

The couple was one month shy of their twelfth wedding anniversary: On 31 August 1887

Machen married Amelia, daughter of Frederick Metcalfe Hogg, of Worthing, Sussex, a woman

thirteen years older than he was and who was well-acquainted with the arts in London, a new world that she introduced him to. In the *Things Near and Far*, Machen gives a concise description of their relationship: “I was no longer the lonely man of earlier chapters” (209).⁵⁰ He commemorates her death on 31 July 1899 in a similar manner: “Then a great sorrow that had long threatened fell upon me: I was once more alone” (*Things Near and Far* 261). Machen’s mourning consists of a bizarre interaction with place, persons, and self that brought him closer to the ritual magic groups than he ever would be again.

In the strange year that followed from midsummer, Arthur Machen’s direct experience with the occult has more to do with internal changes precipitated by a ghost.⁵¹ However, the relevant definition of a ghost here is that of the felt presence in memory of the absence of a person who is no longer with us, of the emotional and psychological hurts that attend the loss of love and physical closeness, and of a sensitivity to a city haunted by past and present, before the beginning and after the end. Ghosts as manifestations of deceased persons have little to nothing to do with esoteric matters, certainly not in the established Hermetic traditions and the ritual magic groups that are my focus throughout this chapter. Machen, the writer, learned what he may have suspected, that without significant action taken then what he was going through would remain unbearable or turn to something worse: His own mental collapse and quickened death. No source exists for a delineation of exactly what action he took, and the description that Machen does give, in all its vagueness, could be taken from a page of *The Green Book* for the care taken to avoid explicit details:

And then a process suggested itself to me, as having the possibility of relief, and without crediting what I had heard of this process or indeed having any precise knowledge of it or of its results, I did what had to be done—I hasten to add

without any more exalted motives than those which urge a man with a raging toothache to get laudanum and take it with all convenient speed. I suffered from a more raging pain than that of any toothache, and I wanted that pain to be dulled; that was all. Well, I made my experiment, expecting, very doubtful, almost incredulously, certain results. The results that I obtained were totally different from my expectations. (*Things Near and Far* 270)

Those results did not bring closure, a stupidly facile pursuit, anyhow, and resulted in his pain's dulling but his senses' misfiring. Machen exchanged the variables of the unbearable equation of husband who suffers the void opened by his companion's death, and who must now find a way to arrange his life, to the individual whose creative imagination becomes dysplastic, and who finds language and physical manifestations scrambled. His account refers to the consequences of the "process" as the entrance into an exalted state that he refers to as Syon, before a descent into a twilight realm that he identifies as Bagdad.⁵² By the end of 1900, the oddness of a less-than-physical world and on-the-street encounters led Machen to join the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn at A. E. Waite's urging, in a futile search for the balm that would ease what had pulled from beneath him and that now surrounded him. Machen, interested but skeptical of all things occult, would not join lightly an esoteric organization whose members regularly engaged in astral projection, but links had snapped and an unbound change resulted from within.

From Machen's descriptions, the Autumn of 1899 marked for him a *perichoresis*, whereby the existence of a hidden life emerged from behind the material stuff that once marked that which once appeared most sure. "N" is the only documented source where Machen uses this ancient Greek term: "I believe that there is a perichoresis, an interpenetration" (14).

Furthermore, the term draws in the earlier reflections upon Western esotericism, that phrase a

Disease of Language, and the specialized vocabulary used by the European Hermeticists and their inheritors, the ritual magicians and the later studies in Western esotericism. Hassler's biography highlights Machen's appropriation of the term: "*Perichoresis* refers to the idea of an interpenetration of times and spaces, and is one of the ways in which people can touch the 'hidden language' masked by the material world. Not only did ancient mystery religions seek to invoke these 'lost words'" (*n. pag.*).⁵³ In "The White People," a story with various references to the Mystery Religions, the lullaby sung in *The Green Book* by the nurse to the girl begins, "Halsy cumsy Helen musty" (Machen 90). While "musty" is the word "must" spelled to complete the rhyme scheme, the word alludes to mystery, and, therefore, "mustes," for the girl who writes in *The Green Book* is an initiate. Mystery derives from *musterion*, that which is primarily known to the *Mustes*, who are "the initiated." In a standard orthodox use of the term from the New Testament, mystery for Machen is like the *musterion* that denotes that which is outside the range of unassisted apprehension. And, for sure, Machen was in need of assistance:

It was somewhere about the autumn of 1899 that I began to be conscious that the world was being presented to me at a new angle...there certainly came to be a strangeness in the proportion of things, both in things exterior and interior. And it is in these latter that I held and still hold that the true wonder, the true mystery, the true miracle reside. There is the old proverb, of course: 'Seeing is believing' and, for once, the old proverb is widely astray. All phenomenal perception is apt to be deceitful, and very often is deceitful. This is in the nature of things, as Berkeley pointed out a very long time ago. (Machen, *Things Near and Far* 262)

Thus, in Machen's life, there exists a mystery of mutual immanence, a reciprocity and communion of varying states: One is the entropic reality of decay, where Amelia leaves him, and

the other being the superunknown, which is what presents itself to him, in symbols spilled about him in such a manner that their density and frequency bewilder him.⁵⁴

After his use of the “process,” and London transfigured into some oddball Araby that would not stop, Machen relented to Waite’s patient insistence and went in for a brief stay as a member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, whereupon Machen located new targets for derision.⁵⁵ The order’s darkened-room parlor games did not do much for Machen, though there was a temporary salve provided to him, as he admits: “I must confess that it did me a great deal of good—for the time...all this was strange and admirable indeed...an addition and a valuable one, as I say, to the phantasmagoria that was being presented to me” (*Things Near and Far* 285-86). Before his giving the group that acknowledgement, Machen seeks to clarify that “I did not seek the Order merely in quest of odd entertainment,” because “I had experienced strange things—they still appear to me strange—of body, mind and spirit, and I supposed that the Order, dimly heard of, might give me some light and guidance and leading on these matters (*Things Near and Far* 281). The Golden Dawn, which Machen refers to under the obvious pseudonym The Order of the Twilight Star, did not clarify for him what was happening internal or externally. The disturbance of his thoughts and the derangement of his senses bring us once more to the “process” that he enacted. Neoplatonism influenced the Hermetic tradition in such a way that practical magic flourished, especially after the popularity of *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* by Philostratus in the second century CE, a work that, like similar accounts, was meant to counter the rise of Christian hagiography and its threat to the core of the pagan religious and philosophical tradition. The key idea here is what Simon During has emphasized about the Neoplatonic influence on Hermeticism: “The divine order is so disjunct from the human order that connections among the two can happen only as mystery” (7). No chance of direct revelation

exists in this system's view of being and becoming, since word and deed are not in accord (cf. the French Symbolists). Also, those who have believed in such an outlook (and the inward journey) have done so with the understanding that magic works in Neoplatonism because the living world is one soul that is bound by forces of sympathy and participation. Since these forces are manifestations of divine love, Plotinus is able to make this claim in *The Enneads*: "The action of any distant member [is] transmitted to its distant fellow. Where all is a living thing summing to a unity there is nothing so remote in point of place as not to be near by virtue of a nature which makes of the one living being a sympathetic organism" (316). Thus, however much time and effort Machen spent talking about and reading about what remedies may have existed for his disturbance, he was not on his way to a cure until he performed the actions of the "process."

Machen's theory of improbability that he proposed before Amy's death, the *tout se tient* from Eco, Agrippa's resonances, the esoteric correspondences from above to below and at and from all sides, Jung's synchronicity, and the rest of the occult and noetic terms for acausality of the mesocosmic reality all may be at play in Machen's very strange year. There are many ways to debunk what passed.⁵⁶ In the same chapter where Machen tells about that time, he claims that "the stories may be—occasionally, not always by any means—the veils of certain rare interior experiences of mankind; experiences, I may say, which are best avoided" (Machen, *Things Near and Far* 290). Eco's diabolical-dodging editors in *Foucault's Pendulum* would wonder at and critique the frenzy that stirred up Machen's interiority, perhaps naming what happened to him as a harmless conspiracy of superficially-interlocking intrigues that he created for himself, and, therefore, experienced only by himself, projecting motives and conspiracies where none existed. Paranoid concepts tend in the occult traditions to take the unrelated to be revealed as surprisingly

related. Reynolds and Charlton propose an explanation that tries to explain away what Machen went through, if not from paranoia then from something self-made: “The psychological state in which he was writing, the daze following his wife’s death, through which he looked at a world simplified but also stultified by the removal of logical links between phenomena” (Reynolds and Charlton 71). Despite, or perhaps because of, Machen’s openness to speculate and the criticism from others about what he experienced, and in the context of the fin de siècle, a consideration can be made for an important ideal that Neoplatonism bequeathed to the Hermetics, who, in turn, affected the ritual magicians. In Iamblichus’ book *Theurgia, or the Egyptian Mysteries (De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum)*, an occult classic and an important influence on Christian sacramental theology and the effectiveness of prayer, he writes: “It is the performance of mysterious acts which surpass all understanding, duly executed in honour of the gods, and the power of unutterable symbols, intelligible to the gods alone, that affects the theurgic union” (217). At a time when Machen questioned the death of his beloved, some intermediary state sprung forth from the mythosphere opened within the microtubules of his mind, which preceded the formation of new life. This state’s own twilight star shone its light upon him, if only for an extended season before the next flux in his career.⁵⁷

IV. The Drunken, Darkling World

An alternative henosis appears in Machen’s novella *The Great God Pan* (1894), where Helen Vaughan and her companions are not players in a pageant of the individual soul and its ultimate union with divinity via the mediation of Wisdom (i.e., Sophia, or the *nous* of the Neoplatonists), the type of divine mediator that Jacob Böhme presents in his foundational writings of Christian theosophy. The difference for Helen is that worship consists entirely of natural acts of sexual expression, a type of sex magic removed from Crowley’s version of do

what you will, and, therefore, closer to the ideals—though, importantly, not the practices—that Paschal Beverly Randolph and Ida Craddock professed.⁵⁸ Sex magic at the fin de siècle is what Hugh B. Urban has defined as “not simply the use of sexual union as a metaphor for spiritual experience but, rather, the explicit use of sexual intercourse and genital orgasm as a source of creative magical power that can be harnessed and manipulated by the practitioner” (“Magia Sexualis” 696). However, with its male characters as jury, the primary male narrative of *The Great God Pan* judges Helen as guilty of corruption and as a source of decay, whose preternatural actions via sexuality require death as the only proper sentence. The explanation given by Villiers of Wadham to his colleague, Austin, about the purchase of an executioner’s rope, is the literal end of the exclusive need of these men for control of non-orthodox practice. The self-styled tripartite of judge, jury, and executioner states that “it is the best hempen cord, just as it used to be made for the old trade” (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 44), a trade whose acts of violence destroyed both women and men in the European witch trials and persecutions of earlier centuries. Comparably, in “The White People” Ambrose considers *The Green Book* girl a sorceress, and, while unfortunate, her death is a just end due to the store of social disruption that she holds in potential, some of which she has converted in practice. Chronologically, *The Great God Pan* is an earlier work, parts of which Machen wrote in 1890, and he finished “The White People” in 1899; yet across a decade, Machen’s major works argue for a heteronormative interpretation of sexuality and magic wherein these practices combine in acts of corruption.

Machen’s distaste for what he deemed to be sacramental perversions appear a final time in the fourth chapter of his novel *The Hill of Dreams* (1907), where a particular reference to the ritual wine connects with his time in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and a key section of his interlocking novel of short stories, *The Three Impostors*. The Romano-British site of

Siluria in Lucian Taylor's vision in *The Hill of Dreams* fixates on Faunus rather than Pan, which is fitting since that former figure's aspects are more like those of Dionysos, plus the Latin name for this vision's site, Isca Silura, is the former garrison town of the Second Augustan Roman Legion (and now the location of the National Roman Legion Museum of Wales). At one point in the reverie, the character Lucian hears the following statement: "The wine of the siege, the wine that we saved...look for the jar marked *Faunus*; you will be glad" (Machen, *The Hill of Dreams* 153). There are intra-textual resonances with these earlier references, when Lucian Taylor says to himself that "only in the court of Avallaunius [the man of Avalon] is the true science of the exquisite to be found" (Machen, *The Hill of Dreams* 151). This line slightly modifies the same phrasing from a few pages prior, also spoken by Lucian: "Only in the garden of Avallaunius is the true and exquisite science to be found" (Machen, *The Hill of Dreams* 143). Machen's occult name as a frater in The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was Avallaunius, and the jar reference was first used in the "History of the Young Man with Spectacles" section of *The Three Impostors*. In that section, associates of Dr. Lipsius do not refer to "the jar marked Faunus" but to "the wine of the Fauns":

They gave me red wine to drink, and a woman told me as I sipped it that it was wine of the Red Jar that Avallaunius had made. Another asked me how I liked the wine of the Fauns, and I heard a dozen fantastic names, while the stuff boiled in my veins, and stirred, I think, something that had slept within me from the moment I was born. It seemed as if my self-consciousness deserted me; I was no longer a thinking agent, but at once subject and object. I mingled in the horrible sport and watched the mystery of the Greek groves and fountains enacted before me, saw the reeling dance, and heard the music calling as I sat beside my mate,

and yet I was outside it all, and viewed my own part an idle spectator. Thus with strange rites they made me drink the cup, and when I woke up in the morning I was one of them, and had sworn to be faithful. (222)

This description suggests that the liquid in which this young man imbibes is an entheogen wine, the kind that Dionysos brought with him on his return from Nysa. A number of spiritual traditions, including the shamanic, make use of entheogens for the psychoactive properties in their chemical structure that assist to induce spiritual visions. Some variety of ritual accompanies the ingestion of an entheogen, and, in the passage above, the rituals are part of a Dionysian orgy where sex magick is central to transgression.⁵⁹

In his enlarged search for psychic succor after he induced the “process,” Machen reached out to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, whose work and outlook left him underwhelmed. He did not doubt the sincerity of the majority of persons who applied themselves to the socializing of these magic gatherings, and a prestigious list of members were there at the meetings that Machen attended: The leader at that time was one of the order’s founders, the respected Crown’s Coroner Dr. Wynn Westcott; Machen’s friend A. E. Waite was active; George Moore participated due to the urging of W. B. Yeats; and the actress Florence Farr and co-founder MacGregor Mathers’s wife, Moira, held leadership roles.⁶⁰ But for all those accomplished individuals, Machen’s opinion was that these members were mistakenly obscuring for themselves what he believed should have been obvious:

They ought to have known better after a year’s membership or less; but the society as a society was pure foolishness concerned with impotent and imbecile Abracadabras. It knew nothing about anything and concealed the fact under an impressive ritual and a sonorous phraseology. (*Things Near and Far* 286)

More importantly, Machen found himself disturbed by the possibilities for abuse in these magical systems. What he gleaned from his observations at lodge meetings and from talks with Waite is that the Golden Dawn and competing groups “exercised no real scrutiny onto the character of those whom it admitted, and so it is not surprising that some of its phrases and passwords were to be read one fine morning, their setting one of the most loathsome criminal cases of the twentieth century” (*Things Near and Far* 286). The extra sting in his recollection of 1899-1900 in that volume of his autobiography and the 1923 introduction to *The Three Impostors* derives in part from the fact that the Horos case and trial occurred a year after Machen turned in his magician’s cloak for his trademark Inverness cape.

The Horos case and trial in 1901 sped the dissolution of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, whose divisions had begun over the previous few years due to numerous personality conflicts and the type of viewpoints that Machen and Gonne expressed, who each sought for spiritual and psychological development but did not find either addressed satisfactorily in organized ritual magic. The case began when London police from the Marylebone station arrested a couple who went by the names of Theodore and Laura Horos, which were aliases for Frank Dutton Jackson and Edith Jackson.⁶¹ In the autumn of that year, the Marylebone police court transcripts from each stage of the criminal proceedings and the trial records from the Old Bailey refer to the male defendant as Theodore Horos, and the female defendant is named Swami Laura Horos—I will hereby use those names, minus the title Swami. The police remanded the couple on 26 September 1901 after numerous complaints of theft and rape perpetrated under the cover of an organization called the “Theocratic Unity and Purity League.” The story’s sordid details led to Trans-Atlantic coverage, with references made in papers on the East Coast, such as the *New York Times*, and farther inland, like the *Paducah Sun*

(Paducah, KY). A common feature is the frenzied interest in the case, which is represented well in the article “The Horos Case” from *The Scotsman* on 19 October 1901: “The case still excites a great deal of public interest, as the doors of the Court were besieged at an early hour in the morning, and a number of people collected in the street, being unable to gain admission to the precincts of the Court” (12). The American sources include overlapping information from the news wires that focus on references to unnamed government officials who make the severe prediction that they “expect the prisoners will receive life sentences” (*Paducah Sun*, 16 Oct. 1901, n. pag.), and also highlight the sexual currency of the story, such as the portrayal in the *New York Times* edition from 11 October 1901 that sets a very specific scene at the preliminary hearing: “The court to-day was half-filled with young and pretty girls waiting to testify against the couple” (9). The moral outrage and the puerile details were played out as often as possible to sell copies.

The prominence given to the sexual components of this case are not unique to the American periodicals, and concerns over how such trials affect the public’s mental health led to an article in *The Lancet* that uses the Horos case as a basis for a point about transparency and the trial system in the United Kingdom. In the 23 November 1901 issue of *The Lancet*, the article “The Public Hearing of Indecent Cases,” the unsigned article states:

The persons who gloat over the details of acts of lust given in evidence in courts of law are not generally in attendance for any useful purpose, and their moral tone will not be raised by what they hear....However, on the side of public hearing of all cases in open courts there is a strong feeling in British breasts. We are, as a nation, averse from anything that savours of the secret tribunal and private

inquiry, and the matter has its practical aspect apart from any prejudice or unreasonable fear of suffering an unfair trial in a British court of justice. (1426)

Machen was alarmed by the possibilities for individuals to use the trappings of ritual magic and, under the cover of secrecy, to perpetrate fraud and abuse. There were strong feelings of justification then that the English court system was able to present for prosecution crimes committed under the veil of pseudo-occult secrecy. The Horos case gives credence to Machen's concern and invokes the same aspect of The Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 that I discuss in the chapter on "The White People."

By way of a couple of different schemes, one of which led to prosecution under that 1885 amendment, the Horos couple carried out their abuses on young girls, most of whom were between the ages of fifteen and twenty and lured to the couple's residence on Park Road, Regent's Park, London. The first part of the scam involved Theodore Horos (i.e., Frank Dutton Jackson) who would buy marriage advertisements in local papers, which then led young women to be cheated and defrauded of their jewelry and cash.⁶² Vera Croysdale was the primary victim and witness on the theft counts, and she provided the prosecution with the necessary evidence for how that confidence game worked. The other method is one in which the Horos couple used the façade of ritual magic and belief to lead the unwary and unprotected to abuse and rape: The Horos couple used the language and symbols of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, with some superficial dashes of Theosophy, and gathered a small group of adult members with good public standing as a front of legitimacy. Under this cover, the Horos couple, apart from the other adult members, would isolate girls in their mid to late teens and Laura Horos would hold down the girl while Theodore Horos raped the victim. The primary witness for these charges, Daisy Pollex Adams, aged sixteen, was sent by her mother, a member of a Christian sect near Brighton,

to live with Horos couple under the impression that the “Theocratic Unity and Purity League” would teach Daisy practical work skills (typing and sewing) and provide her with religious instruction. Instead, Daisy, isolated by the lack of friends and family in London, and financially dependent, was sexually assaulted. Her age at the time qualified the prosecution to try the Horos couple under Section 3 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, the same section under which M. P. Shiel would be prosecuted in 1914.⁶³

While Theodore Horos was found guilty and sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment on charges of theft and violations of Section 3, and Laura Horos received seven years imprisonment for aiding and abetting her partner, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn lost their own battle in court, though no legal charge of guilt was filed against the order or any ranking member. The case demonstrates what Dinah Birch has argued that “sex magic acquired a popularity that was hard to control, and here the secrecy of magical orders could become a baleful mask for exploitation” (Birch 22). When remanded, the Horos couple claimed that they were part of the inner circle of the Golden Dawn, and when brought before the police court magistrate on 23 November 1901, Laura Horos during cross examination declaimed the following about one of the founders of the Golden Dawn, MacGregor Mathers: “He is a traitor! He is a traitor! The sworn enemy of to the British Empire” (cf. *The London Observer* 24 Nov. 1901). During that same cross-examination, detective-investigator Kane clarified that as part of the investigation Mathers was found to be uninvolved with the case in any relevant manner.⁶⁴ However, the December trial continued to vilify the reputation of the Golden Dawn with the worst type of publicity, the same potential for doom that alarmed Machen when he quit. The Horos case and trial does not mark the end of interest in ritual magic, but the reputation of any one group would never be seen in the same manner or attract the same level of interest among a varied,

professional membership as what existed prior to 1901, especially with Aleister Crowley's growing influence later in the Edwardian period and after.

V. Conclusion

The Alpha and the Omega have a meaning other than the symbolic reference from Revelation 22:13 for those letters, since beginnings and ends flow throughout the work of the Hermeticists and the ascending and descending paths of the Western esotericists. The basic order of *The Great God Pan* appears to follow a Gnostic structure, reflective of the Demiurge who created a flawed world, since the act of inception in that novella's first chapter, "The Experiment," culminates in the violent pieces of the final chapter, "The Fragments," by which time London has become "a city of nightmares" (36). As I have examined Machen and select works by him for what they may show us of the nexus for the occult revival at the fin de siècle, a piece that he wrote in his second writing career, as a journalist, expresses some of those questions that his contemporaries investigated and that individuals continue to pursue, both as amateur practitioners of new religions and professional scholars. In *The Evening News* article "A Book I Should Like to Write" (1917), Machen asks:

What on earth were the mediaeval magicians talking about? Were they crazy; mere uncertified lunatics? Were they elaborate practical jokers, who did not grudge years of labour to the concoction of manuscripts which would deceive a comparatively limited circle of dupes after the magician's demise? Or is it possible that magic has some sort of correspondence with actuality; as a physician's prescription, barbarous and unintelligible to the layman, a mixture of doctor's Latin and abbreviation and Apothecaries' Measure symbols, undoubtedly has correspondence with actuality? (41)

Umberto Eco and John Fowles (cf. the novel *The Magus*, 1966, revised 1977) found the material of the medieval, the Renaissance, and the modern magi worthy as the inspiration for elaborate literary jokes and ironic, soplipsistic drama. From the position of his skepticism, Machen had definite views on what he observed and experienced, but he kept himself ready and open to the possibility of mystery and what is still yet to come.⁶⁵

The departure of those whom Machen loved and the arrival of visions that he did not understand, his ascent to a London transfigured to a Kabbalic Syon and a descent to its twilit Bagdad, returned him to the familiar and newly strange streets, alleys, breeze ways of the Gray's Inn Road. The final prose poem from *Ornaments in Jade*, "The Holy Things," exemplifies the transformation of a common setting in working-class London's Holborn district, an area that is as fit as Canon's Park in Stoke Newington for perichoresis. That work's unnamed narrator first finds nothing in a catalogue of sounds and sights to commemorate the place as other than noisy and garish, and some early lines suggest that this outlook has been the case for him for a while:

He had felt, a little while before, that from the highest to the lowest things of life there was no choice, there was not one thing better than another: the savour of the cinders was no sweeter than the savour of the ashes (*Ornaments in Jade* 42).

However, and in spite of this man's gloom and general resistance, the place undergoes a temporary change, in and out of time, starting from the same effects of sight and sound that a moment before meant to him nothing more than compounding annoyance: "He looked and saw the Holy, White, and Shining Mysteries exhibited—in Holborn" (*Ornaments in Jade* 46).⁶⁶ The counsel here is the same that the character Glanville gives in the short story "N": "Look again" (Machen 8). For Machen, as for the Hermeticists and esotericists, appearances are a part of realities whose elegant bulk and wordless being are not known because they are not looked for.

In the twenty-first century, new life has sprung forth in the study of the mind that hearkens back to the work of the ritual magicians, who directed their efforts to seek the actuality of mental processes through techniques like astral projection, whose rough ancestor is John Dee's Angelic magic (i.e., what modern occultism refers to as Enochian magic).⁶⁷ Columbia University is one of the first major research universities to integrate psychotherapy and spirituality at levels of funding and staff rarely applied before to work with clients and client care.⁶⁸ As Alex Owen and Janet Oppenheimer have argued, the current direction and developments for psycho-spiritual approaches in the mental health sciences may not exist in quite the same way if not for the modern magicians at the fin de siècle. That quest for an effective process continues.

CHAPTER 4
THE TRANSMUTATIONS: SPIRITUAL ALCHEMY AND ARTHUR MACHEN AT
THE FIN DE SIÈCLE

Alchemy as a subject is not just mystifying, it is intrinsically improbable.¹

The day-dream of mankind has ever been the Unattainable. To sigh for what is beyond our reach is from infancy to age, a fixed condition of our nature. To it we owe all the improvement that distinguishes civilised from savage life,—to it we are indebted to all the great discoveries which, at long intervals, have rewarded thought.²

But it is thus, I suppose, that the man of the imaginative cast of mind pays, and pays heavily for whatever qualities he may possess, and it will always be a question whether the price exacted be not too dear and beyond all proportion to the value received....all beautiful things are raised to a higher power by the fire of their passion; the whole world is alchemised.³

I. My Old Conception of the Universe Has Been Swept Away

The second and final appearance of Machen's work in the Keynotes Series from John Lane's Bodley Head Press is *The Three Impostors* (1895), a work of interconnected short stories inspired by Robert Louis Stevenson and Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson's *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter, the Story of a Lie* (1886). *The Transmutations* is the other half of the title for Machen's book, which consists of *nouvelles* in the sense that he has written a collection of romantic and fantastic tales. Hardly a new idea when Darwin published *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, organic evolution was called "the transmutation of species" during his lifetime. Machen's choice for the secondary title operates on more than one front, since the basic structure of the sections presents a prefatory tale that is often titled "The Adventure of..." and with a dénouement that is a lead-in to a "Novel of the..." so that by the last part of the story cycle what

transmutes are narrative elements in a kind of final reveal of goetic criminality in the contemporary metropolis.⁴ Yet Machen's readers must consider, too, that transmutation is a key form of esoteric thought, meant in its best version to refine the spiritual properties latent in humanity in an aspiration to enlightenment with the Godhead (the *unio mystica* of henosis).⁵ Since metaphysical gnosis hopes for a complete transcendence of the gross material workings of creation, the requirement is for the direct perception or knowledge of hidden, esoteric aspects of the cosmos, which is the path that Evelyn Underwood and F. C. Happold have defined as the way of the mystic. In Machen's short story "The White People," Ambrose refers to the persons who devote themselves to the acquisition of metaphysical gnosis as the workers of "sanctity," and he regrets that "the materialism of the age...has done a good deal to suppress sanctity" (68). Furthermore, "the saint endeavours to recover a gift which he has lost," though the means of that endeavor occurs by passive receptivity, of a systematic emptying of the senses (Machen, "The White People" 65). However, the more speculative side of alchemy is not mysticism but is the work of the other branch of gnosis, the cosmological. This type requires material knowledge to reveal the various correspondences between subject and object and, for the speculative alchemists, between humanity and the natural world for the purpose of the refinement of the former from a baser state to a higher one that can surpass nature.

The history of alchemy finds that the alchemists often had both a material goal and a spiritual goal for carrying out the enterprise of what is referred to as the Great Work, or *opus alchymicum*, whose details and legends Machen puzzled over from his youth.⁶ There does exist a sizeable cache of documents preserved from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when alchemy flourished in Europe, and, through the twentieth century, the commentaries and references from scientists and historians of science often refer to these texts and many of their

muddled labors with a degree of annoyance, and even a measure of disdain. Scholarship has tended, too, to be dismissive of alchemy's speculative stream with its, allegedly, more spiritual ends. Recent historical work provides abundant evidence to support the claim that the majority of alchemical experiments undertaken in early modern Europe were by persons who sought for a material substance by the use of physical methods.⁷ For example, manuscripts describe a method for the doubling of *asem*, the gold-silver alloy known as electrum. That same volume of *Household Words* that Machen knew as a boy also weighs in on the issue of alchemy's effect on a sound, scientific method: "Alchemy, which aimed at securing unlimited powers of self-reward...tended toward the final establishment of useful science" (Dickens 135). Questions remain about why the revolution of chemical science lagged behind other of the sciences, and the extent of the role played by alchemy in either blocking or furthering the development of chemistry. Yet the research of historians such as Newman, Grafton, and Principe concedes that medieval and Renaissance alchemy played a part in furthering a scientific aim with practitioners who emphasized material production, quantification, and the analysis of results.⁸ More often than not, only men had access to the education and supplies necessary to practice the alchemical arts, with the occasional female alchemist the exception who proves the rule (cf. Maria Prophetissa, whom the Islamic tradition refers to with the highest respect as the Daughter of Plato).⁹ Traditionally, the physical component of alchemy has involved the attempt to transmute base metals into gold, which, in its crudest form, would be to turn scrap materials into commodities of greater value, or to attempt a confidence game that would attempt to fool others that such a trick of elemental change is a reality (cf. Ben Jonson's play *The Alchemist*, 1610). With the surge of interest in alchemy at the Victorian occult revival, Principe and Newman have asked whether to reject that there even was a spiritual component of alchemy. As Machen

discovered with the Golden Dawn's Cipher Manuscripts, there is evidence to support that some classical alchemical sources at the fin de siècle and in the years prior were adulterated to give weight to any spiritual aspects.¹⁰

However, that there has been a spiritual aspect of alchemy is not a trick or forgery of the Victorians, and has involved the utilization of a variety of symbolic processes whereby one refines one's inner-being: That is, the transformation of that which is referred to as a soul into a greater work that comes out of the ethical baseness and lack of moral direction from which any one of us begins. Post-Alexandrian Greek contact with Egypt and the confluence of Coptic scholarship and Middle Eastern technology, particularly metallurgy, led to Western alchemy's development of a double approach of the operative, extraverted model, and the more contemplative, speculative model that turns inward.¹¹ Jung and those who follow him have given emphasis upon the psychological components of the latter model for the purpose of individuation (von Franz 23); however, Machen's work directs its interest onto the more speculative, spiritual components of the alchemical tradition.¹² In Machen's writing, he often alludes to alchemy as a kind of para-scientific inquiry, rather than a pre-scientific practice. In *Things Near and Far*, Machen tells how, when eight or nine years old, he first read about the subject of alchemy in a volume of *Household Words* that he found on a shelf in the family's rectory at Llandewi Fach. Later, after his years of book cataloguing in London in the eighteen eighties and his intermittent interest in the subject, he was able to identify the author of that short series of papers on alchemical topics, a name he does not divulge, but whom he judges to be "singularly well-informed and enlightened" (37). In that volume of autobiography, Machen clarifies that he has little interest in whether transmuting metals is a scientific possibility, but he considers that which he has read to be a "very fascinating doctrine which maintains, or would

like to maintain, that the great alchemical books are really symbolical books,” texts that “hide under these figures intimations as to a profound and ineffable transmutation of the spirit” (*Things Near and Far* 37-38). He does concede that the descriptions are part of “a fascinating theory,” but as to “whether it have any truth in it I know not” (Machen, *Things Near and Far* 37-38). Machen did not lack the fortitude to commit to a position but, as with his views on ritual occultism, he would not abandon his skeptic’s scruples to follow a set of claims whose evidence rested upon crisscrossed, oft-impenetrable language alloyed to referentially opaque graphics, a sum more aetherial than the figments of Ariel’s merry chase after some unimaginable zero summer. Less invested in the occult in practice, but as a reader and writer with a deep interest in the occult as a subject of study, Machen’s literary output underlines in antinomy the tensions between belief and reason.

As I state in the chapter on adolescence and Machen’s short story “The White People,” *The Green Book* has resonance with a text from antiquity called *The Emerald Tablet*, and while Machen kept his incredulous distance he was aware of the allusive potential in such documents.¹³ Since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Hermeticists of the Western alchemical tradition have considered *The Emerald Tablet* to be the founding text of alchemy, with an unverifiable origin from ancient Egypt but likely finalized at the alembic crossroads of culture and cultic beliefs that blended during Coptic rule. The traditional attribution of this work’s authorship is given to Hermes Trismegistos, much as texts in the Bible receive their alleged authorship from David or Solomon. This seminal text names the final work as the *una res*, or “one thing,” which is seen as a source for the phenomenological world’s creation and alludes to Neo-Platonic and Gnostic ideals, each of which has a vital interest in henosis. If one could acquire and access the vast store of energy held by this “one thing,” then one could perform

miracles, much like the harnessing of the telluric currents that are part of the grand hoax of a plot in Umberto Eco's novel *Foucault's Pendulum*, with its various groups of diabolicals who scurry about in the belief that they have found the means to the power source for which they covet. However, behind the cover of the secret plot is merely a story manufactured in an editorial lab whose tools are a computer that a trio of vanity press editors programmed to concoct a disease of language. Those who straddled those borders of alchemy and chemistry, like Robert Boyle and Sir Isaac Newton, were unlike Eco's diabolicals, who are those self-important individuals who hope to ascend as a new demiurge and rule as king of the material world upon which they will look down. Among his other work, Newton expected to achieve the *una res*, as many of his papers reveal his interest in and pursuit of alchemical studies, accessible online via The Newton Project.¹⁴ Of the quartet of *nouvelles* from *The Three Impostors*, "Novel of the White Powder" gives one of the finest examples from Machen's writing of a man of medical science who has witnessed a vision on the other side of the indefinite, suprasensual boundary. This character, Dr. Chambers, who makes a late, epistolary entrance into the narrative, remarks to his colleague, Dr. Haberden, on a shared position from the past:

I remember the scorn with which you have spoken to me of men of science who have dabbled a little in the unseen, and have timidly hinted that perhaps the senses are not, after all, the eternal, impenetrable bounds of all knowledge, the everlasting walls beyond which no human being has ever passed.

(Machen, *The Three Impostors* 208)

The chimaeric work of Newton and his contemporaries would have sounded some familiar note for Machen, who had his own history of border crossing and straddling of mental ley lines.

Through the Victorian period, the professions of post-Newtonian science, especially chemists, scoffed at the alchemists and their ciphered, symbol-dense texts whose deliberate obscurities seem to point nowhere worth following, like prayer books of numbers, diagrams, and sketches whose chants are unpronounceable and whose intended audience is not only invisible but whose final end is a nonexistent delusion. Obsession and paranoia incite the creation of many incoherent works whose enlarged claims of significant meaning try to cover over the crudeness and bare leavings of whatever mental fits underlie their contents.¹⁵ There is a definite temptation to use the same criteria to dismiss the work of the medieval and Renaissance alchemists, both operative and speculative, as frauds or deliberate literary misfits and pseudo-scientific pranksters. Yet Kenneth Rexroth makes a suggestion that we can do well to bear in mind when considering this topic of what is alchemy other than the half-fired product of stupid science:

It is inconceivable that so immense a body of literature in so many languages over so long a period should be no more than an infinitely complicated rebus or cryptogram for a relatively simple discipline of the nervous system which can be revealed in a sentence and explained in a few pages. (249)

Friends, colleagues, and associates of Machen, in particular Waite and Yeats, and with the disclaimer that none were scientists, did find inconceivable that nothing more was in the texts that Paracelsus, Ficino, Boyle, Newton, and those who followed them wrote, translated, and elaborated upon; Symbolists and artists of the fin de siècle were enamored of the creative possibilities on those pages.¹⁶ Machen indicates this attraction to alchemy's creative expressiveness in a statement from Ambrose's sermonizing to Cotgrave in "The White People": "I am afraid you have neglected the study of alchemy? It is a pity, for the symbolism, at all events, is very beautiful" (96). In spite of what beauty, in language and visual design, that one

may find in the alchemical texts that were made prior to the Scientific Revolution, a richer store can be found in the spiritual component, one that existed before the late-Victorian occult revival.

As noted above, Machen had doubts about the efficacy of alchemical techniques on personal development; however, he did not challenge that a spiritual direction had been a part of alchemy long before Rudolf Steiner's system of Anthroposophy or the rituals of the Golden Dawn, or even Mary Anne Atwood's book *A Suggestive Inquiry into the Hermetic Mystery* (1850), which introduced alchemy into modern occultism.¹⁷ A section of Machen's short story "N" (1935) quotes from a false document, an otherwise unremarkable book titled *A London Walk: Meditations in the Streets of the Metropolis*, written by a Reverend Thomas Hampole and published in 1853 (eight decades prior to the main story's present day):

It is said that the experiments of the alchemists of the Dark Ages...are, in fact, related, not to the transmutation of metals, but to the transmutation of the entire Universe....This method, or art, or science, or whatever we choose to call it (supposing it to exist, or to have ever existed), is simply concerned to restore the delights of the primal Paradise; to enable men, if they will, to inhabit a world of joy and splendour. It is perhaps possible that there is such an experiment, and that there are some who have made it. (Machen, "N" 6)¹⁸

Both prior to and after Ficino's contributions, a consensus existed among Hermeticists that alchemy can serve as a necessary component to the theurgic arts and be put to work at the mental and spiritual loom of correspondences that pass through the mesocosm. Though post-Victorian adepts such as Crowley and other goetic influences did seek, and have sought, as an end to possess power over other persons and to gain material bounty, the contemplative, spiritual alchemists, classical through Renaissance, sought mastery over one's self. Alchemy, as a key to

theurgy, was a primary aid for acquiring this illumination. Resonances of this latter ideal of alchemy occur in Machen's story "N," with an unpredictably-recurrent fragment of paradise that appears upon a thin place in Stoke Newington, in the final stage of the mortal life of *The Green Book* girl in "The White People," at her *mysterium coniunctionis* with the God of the Woods, and in the imago of those fragments that conclude *The Great God Pan*.

Machen knew of this fantastic world from the alchemical texts that he was responsible for cataloguing at George Redway's business and from his friendship with A. E. Waite, who had a prodigious knowledge of the medieval and early modern alchemical traditions and philosophies (the two Arthurs first met at the British Museum Reading Room). The spiritual nature of the alchemical quest is there from the early alchemists like the Coptic Zosimos of Panopolis (fourth century CE) and various of his work, on to the Islamic tradition with Al-Ghazālī (eleventh century CE) and his work *Kimiya-yi sa'ādat* (*The Alchemy of Happiness*), and then to a European Renaissance grimoire like *Arbatel: Concerning the Magic of the Ancients* (*Arbatel de Magia Veterum*, 1575).¹⁹ As the tragic end of Giordano Bruno's life shows, a commitment to esoteric beliefs could put a person on the wrong side of inquisitors and then be set aflame for heresy, rather than to be fired symbolically by a new level of gnosis. Thus, social conditions at the height of European alchemy necessitated the cryptic expression of non-orthodox beliefs. However, many alchemists were convinced that their search for the truths of nature and for the betterment of one's soul might be conceived in terms of a religious quest, complementary to their baptismal promises in work that intended for a greater knowledge of the Creator. The natural and the supernatural combine in typical fashion in the writings of the sixteenth-century author Richard Bostocke, an English Paracelsian. In *The Difference Betwene the Auncient Phisicke, First Taught by the Godly Forefathers, Consisting in Unitie Peace and Concord* (1585), he

defines medicine as “the searching out of the secretes of nature,” whose end can be accomplished by the “Mathematicall and supernaturall precepts, the exercise whereof is Mechanicall, and to be accomplished with labor” (16).²⁰ Bostocke admits that the work is esoteric and “is part of Cabala and and is called by auncient name, Ars sacra, or magna, & sacra scietia, or Chymia, or Chemeia, or Alchimia, and mythica, and by some of late, Spagirica ars” (16). This art is known by many names, but all of them gesture to the non-operative, non-exoteric reality of alchemy as a speculative, esoteric application of individual will.

In A.E. Waite’s book *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Paracelsus* (1910), the author translates the *Alchemical Catechism* (1766) of Théodore Henri de Tschudi; the significance here is that the content helps the reader of Machen’s work to consider certain appropriations from the alchemical tradition due to Tschudi’s explanation that alchemical metals serve as a symbol.²¹ Waite presents in the form of a dialogue Tschudi’s account of symbolic metals:

Q. When the Philosophers speak of gold and silver, from which they extract their matter, are we to suppose that they refer to the vulgar gold and silver?

A. By no means; vulgar silver and gold are dead, while those of the Philosophers are full of life. (qtd. in Waite 303)

In “The White People,” NT I of *The Green Book* features a girl for whom natural objects transmute into materially valuable objects, including pure gold, just as her station in life goes from her being “quite poor” to the exalted station whereby “the king’s son said he would marry her, and the king said that she might” (Machen 77).²² Many of the allusive details in *The Green Book* involve young characters who lack control of their abilities and their surroundings, so that the changes that do come over them are not always beneficial. That lack of control leads these

young characters to acts of concealment to protect themselves and that requires secrecy. *The Green Book* can be read as a grimoire, but one altered to hide the potency of the processes contained on its pages, much as the speculative alchemists used ciphers and symbolic language to hide their potentially-heretical pursuits. Bolos of Mendes, the pseudo-Democritus (second century BCE) and another of the classical alchemists in the Western tradition, declares that “the pledge has been imposed on us to expose nothing clearly to anyone” (qtd. in Rexroth 247), a pledge that, from the surviving evidence, many writers took seriously. The alchemist Roger Bacon calls the alchemist’s discretion “the tricks of obscurity” (Dickens 136), a phrase which is reminiscent of *The Green Book* girl’s multiple references to “secrets.” Some of the oldest evidence of alchemy, a pair of Babylonian tablets from the thirteenth century BCE (copied from older originals, cf. Oppenheim 1966) contain references to ritual and the call for secrecy, themes that recur in the alchemical literature since then, whether exoteric and esoteric.²³

Indirectness has been the rule in alchemical source texts, for reasons that include the desire to hide the truth of imposturings, to protect oneself from charges of heresy at the stake, or to guard insights that one believes require initiation to read and to learn. In the aforementioned reference to Machen’s tale “Novel of the White Powder,” Dr. Chambers concludes his letter with this final statement that echoes with the *tremendum fascinans* of Otto’s numinous, but in the negative: “My old conception of the universe has been swept away, and I stand in a world that seems as strange and awful to me as the endless waves of the ocean seen for the first time, shining, from a peak in Darien” (Machen *The Three Impostors* 208).²⁴ The sweep of the alchemical past is found through assorted works of Machen’s fiction from the eighteen nineties, and a new conception does not easily transplant those states of being that are entrenched and old—and a sacrifice and a death are often a requisite.²⁵

II. Wyrđ Chymicks

In his fiction, Machen refers to a place in South Wales that he calls Caermaen, which is his name for the section of the Welsh county of Gwent. This area includes Venta Silurum, which was the nearby Roman market town that is now Caerwent, and the Roman legionary fortress of Isca Augusta (or, Isca Silurum), which is now Caerleon-on-Usk, Machen's birthplace.²⁶ The location matters because forty miles away in the Welsh Mid Lands of Brecon, and two-hundred-and-forty-two years earlier, two of the best-known members of the influential Vaughan family were born: Henry and his twin, Thomas Vaughan, who, in his alchemical writings, signed his works as Eugenius Philalethes. In the Renaissance Hermetic tradition, Thomas Vaughan played a vital role in the introduction of source materials when in 1652 he translated and published the first English editions of the Rosicrucian manifestoes: *Fama Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis* (1614) and the *Confessio Fraternitatis* (1615).²⁷ Vaughan was unusual among alchemists of the time because he worked closely with his wife, Rebecca, which has a resonance with William Blake, who trained and worked with his wife Catherine in their infernal printing house at Lambeth, No.13 Hercules Buildings. Vaughan was a self-described member of the "Society of Unknown Philosophers," a play upon the occult nature of the group, perhaps invented by him, and a gesture to the humility and self-effacement required of the individual in pursuit of *nous*. In a common dual identity for a man of his training and inclinations in the seventeenth century, Vaughan worked in exoteric and esoteric alchemy, and his involvement with Rosicrucian thought marks a pre-scientific stage. As Goodrick-Clarke has noted in *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction* (2008): "That original Rosicrucian current of inspiration and apocalyptic expectation of reform...would in due course be superseded by the exoteric, empirical concerns and interests of science committed to manufacture, navigation, and technology" (125). In their

acknowledgment of the reverie that Machen felt for his native land, Reynolds and Charlton have made a pertinent comment about the twin brothers Henry, the Silurist and metaphysical poet, and Thomas, the alchemist: “The brothers Vaughan had found the same spiritual quality in their native [Welsh borderland of] Breconshire two centuries earlier. Thomas, being inspired by it to some of the most imaginative prose of the seventeenth century” (5). The brothers lived during a favorite period of Machen’s, whose literary tropes and style he attempted to imitate in his early works, like the pseudo-scholarly non-fiction of *The Anatomy of Tobacco* (1884) and the picaresque novel *The Chronicle of Clemendy* (1888). These early works contain the stilted archaisms in style and pedantic matter that resulted for Machen from his enthusiastic adolescent reading of seventeenth-century English prose. He discarded that style by 1890 when he published in *The Whirlwind* the short story “The Experiment,” which would become the first chapter in *The Great God Pan* (1894, Keynotes Series Vol. V), a work in which Thomas Vaughan’s influence surfaces in alchemical references that are central to the life and death of the daughter of Pan, Helen Vaughan.

While compatriotism is part of the reason for why Vaughan drew Machen’s attention, the greater influence on Machen derives from the philosophical alchemist’s references to a substance known as the *tenebrae activae*, which is the magician’s heavenly chaos and the first matter of all things (cf. *Anthroposophia Theomagica* and *Lumen de Lumine*, 1650 and 1651, respectively). This primal substance with its paradoxical qualities is of the same stuff that Paracelsus calls the *prima materia*. The Renaissance alchemists describe the *prima materia* as “our chaos” and a “dark lump,” which in some texts is said to result from the fall of Lucifer and Adam, an odd reference where the Gnostic’s demiurgical belief of the flawed conception seeps into the view of Hermetic immanence. The *prima materia* is the original stuff of creation. For elevation of that

chaos matter to the prized *lapis*—the philosopher’s stone of the alchemists or the hidden stone of the Rosicrucians—skill and sustained effort are required to “bring fallen creation back to its paradisaal, primal state” (Roos 14-15). In “The First Matter” section of *Lumen de Lumine*, Vaughan writes of a unique chain of being:

When I seriously consider the *System* or *Fabric* of this *world*, I find it to be a certaine *Series*, a *Link* or *Chaine*, which is extended *a non Gradu ad non Gradum*, From that which is *beneath* all *Apprehension*, to that which is *above* all *Apprehension*. That which is *Beneath* all *Degree* of *Sense*, is a certaine Horrible Inexpressible *Darknesse*. The Magicians call it *Tenebrae Activae*.

(44, emphasis Vaughan’s)

In Machen’s mindset that was forged by his sense of natural wonder and spiritual inclination, and tempered by the pessimism stoked by his parents’ illness, the economic disorder of his childhood, and his poverty in his first half-decade in London, Vaughan’s discussion of this dark material held a special attraction. Reynolds and Charlton make the compelling claim that “here, and not in Poe or the French decadents, we have the inspiration of Machen’s dissolution” of the human form and the horrors of degeneration (46). Vaughan’s phrase finds a parallel in the chemical and symbolic killing of the ingredients during the nigredo stage of the alchemical process. The nigredo, or blackening, reduces the ingredients to the *prima materia*, an act of necessary violence meant to provoke a *sympatheia* between the “pathetic situations” of the substance and its innermost being.

The symbolic decay before reconstitution of *coagula* becomes the problematic image of biochemical degeneration in Machen’s fiction of the eighteen nineties, as found in the climax of *The Great God Pan*, in the short story “The Inmost Light,” and in the *nouvelle* “Novel of the

White Powder” from *The Three Impostors*. For these narratives, a representative description from “Novel of the White Powder” captures the horror of the degenerative dissolution, where the human body is ruined to “a dark and putrid mass, seething with corruption and hideous rottenness, neither liquid nor solid, but melting and changing before our eyes, and bubbling with unctuous oily bubbles like boiling pitch” (*The Three Impostors* 207).²⁸ This presentation from Machen is of failed transmutation, and the inmost light of the human form’s central being exists as an exile of matter, in which the assumption is that there is some interior median where the life force dwells and from there it can be ruined by the loss of moral integrity and the loss of anatomical and physiological integrity—a Blakean image of the human form’s being struck by the invisible worm of mortality and immorality in its protean manifestations.²⁹ Since the alchemists believed that for the transmutation of a substance to occur that it first had to be dissolved by the *solve* into the *prima materia*, or “killed” in the language of the alchemical texts, then that original stuff of creation becomes necessary to cleanse the impurities and to ensure that the intended results of the experiment are reached. *Solve et coagula*, to dissolve and then to reconstitute, is one of alchemy’s oldest maxims. The experimenter in the alchemical process of solution invokes a conversion of a solid, which is the body, into a fluid, which is the spirit, and coagulation converts fluid spirit into a solid body. With each cycle of the *solve et coagula* the pure material (i.e., *prima materia*) is to set into a new and more beautiful form so that matter becomes purer and more potent.³⁰ In the context of the larger alchemical work, Vaughan’s *tenebrae activae* is the primal matter as a descent to mortal components, and is the stuff that is meant to lead to an ascent of reconstitution; a problem with the latter occurs in Machen.

Getting started is often one of the greatest challenges, and when the evidence is seen of this stage of nigredo, when the *prima materia* emerges, Machen’s use of it is as literary device of

protoplasmic reversion that will not advance.³¹ At the conclusion of “Novel of the Black Seal,” after the impostor Helen, as Miss Lally, has told Mr. Charles Phillipps about Professor Gregg’s discovery of the “transmutation of the hills,” Phillipps departs to outline a “little work to be called ‘Protoplasmic Reversion’” (Machen, *The Three Impostors* 175). Other parts of the nigredo stage include the *caput mortuum*, or “dead head,” which is a term used to refer to the leftovers that remain from an experiment (after the descent to the *tenebrae activae* of the *prima materia*). The alchemists considered the scraps to be worthless and they represented the residue from a chemical operation with a stylized human skull, literally a death’s head. Rather than entering a state of nigredo and then moving on, Mrs. Black of “The Inmost Light” and Francis Leicester of “Novel of the White Powder” have fallen to a revolting, unanimated uselessness that is the epitome of irredeemable descent and final decay.³² The failure of renewal of what these characters reduce to is due to the stories in which they appear. Mrs. Black is the hapless wife of a doctor of transcendental medicine to whom the misogynistic narrative has her submit her entire being: Her husband’s dangerous whims remove her soul and trap it in a gemstone, and then the husk of her body is taken over by a daemonic being in some confused law of the vacuum state in nature. Francis Leicester is a stressed and anxious law student who takes a tainted drug that disorders his entire biological system, but also he is the narrative prop for one of the impostors, Helen, who uses the alleged young man’s life as a lure for her audience in the hope of extracting information to aid her in a manhunt to destroy a fugitive body. Unlike “The Inmost Light” or “Novel of the White Powder,” something other than the disaster of reversion without regeneration occurs in *The Great God Pan* with its alchemical content.

The state of nigredo presages the rejoining of essences into a purer, more-refined form, and the third chapter of *The Great God Pan*, “The City of Resurrections,” suggests, but then

inverts, the expected state. In that chapter, Villiers of Wadham happens upon a friend from his college years, Mr. Charles Herbert, the latter of whom reveals the circumstances that led to his total loss of social rank and financial penury.³³ However, part of Herbert's description involves troubles within his marriage and his wife, with whom he held an imbalanced relationship (elements of Lilith are present, particularly of the woman on top of the relationship and in control). With those details and the title of the chapter, Machen refers to essential components of the *opus alchymicum* that mark the end the nigredo stage. Symbols of darkness and death are standard at the *coniunctio*, the next level after the *solve et coagula* ceases, and, on one level, Machen's flat, underdeveloped male characters and voiceless Helen Vaughan are themselves parts moved by the central narrative in a Mystery play on the streets of London—and in its private residences and into its bedrooms. Villiers provides to an associate, Austin, some relevant commentary about a situation that involves Helen Vaughan, the semi-divine being born from contact made in the experiment of the first chapter between the vitalistic *prima materia* (with the Pan force as the *tenebrae activae*) and the mortal woman, Mary: “It is an old story, an old mystery played in our day, and in dim London streets instead of amidst the vineyards and the olive gardens” (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 43). The mystery of the successful chemical wedding of the *coniunctio* is that of regeneration from decay, but in this story the features are of ritual sex magic and a resurrection that seemingly does not occur.³⁴ In his attempt to lift the veil of consensus reality and get at the truth underlying material reality, Dr Raymond “mapped out in lines of light, a whole world, a sphere unknown” (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 2).³⁵ Flawed by reckless motivation and a positivist's stereotypical outlook, this scientist releases the Pan force into his laboratory, which, as the dark matter of the *tenebrae activae*, enter an individual person, the young woman Mary, who is unconscious and unprepared

for the contact. That scientist then abandons the results, just as Dr. Victor Frankenstein did to his work, with fatal consequences.³⁶

Once one reviews the standard description that defines the alchemical stage of nigredo, one finds an uncanny resonance to the depiction of Helen Vaughan's demise. What appears as death, of the work's failure and fall into total stasis, instead signifies no more than a temporary state, one with the same kinetic potential as that in the vital form of Pan's daughter: "At the dissolution, the soul and spirit of the matter rise ...separated from the body, which lies below, blackening and putrefying" (Abraham 135). The significance of nigredo leads to a reality outside the scope of discernment of the men who confront the being known as Helen Vaughan. Rather than the alchemist's chamber, the bedroom serves as the setting for this process of "blackening and putrefying," where a metaphysical transmutation occurs in the physical space of a socially fashionable household's constructed domesticity. These men threaten Helen with the choice of submission to patriarchal hegemony or self-annihilation (by use of a noose purchased by Villiers). In this tale of closeted passions of divine revelate, the semi-divine being chooses to exit this deposition of fools who pursued her as part of their morally righteous monster hunt. They block the continuous inversion that should occur for a process when the states of matter are being constantly reversed, which itself is known as inversion (Abraham 186-87). Maria Prophetissa (the Jewess, Maria Hebraea) stated: "Invert nature and you will find that which you seek" (Patai 180). The idea of going against nature to progress to the next stage is known by the phrase "*opus contra naturam*" (Abraham 108). For the nigredo stage, the image used commonly is that of a prison, since the putrefying matter becomes trapped in the alembic (the distillation vessel) and is thought of as similar to a dungeon or prison, and the body of putrefying

matter is viewed as undergoing a kind of torture from the alchemist's fire (cf. Paracelsus and Vulcan).

I focus upon the sexual aspects of *The Great God Pan* in the chapter on that work and section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, the Labouchère Amendment; however, my claim has been that Machen relies on numerous alchemical referents within that same text, from the first chapter to the last, that holds significance for the meaning for the death of Helen Vaughan. This content is not haphazard, but instead serves to develop an important element of the plot. Considerable evidence is there in addition to nigredo: the first chapter's title is called "The Experiment," which along with its laboratory setting calls to mind the *opus alchymicum*; there is a reference to Oswald Crollius and a quote from his work; the being referred to as Helen carries the surname Vaughan, which one may argue refers to Thomas Vaughan (Eugenius Philalethes); lastly, Chapter VIII depicts the *nigredo* stage of the alchemical process rather than unredeemable degeneration.³⁷ Of the trio of men who confront Helen Vaughan and witness her radical change between forms, the words of the medical witness, Dr. Robert Matheson, contains a wealth of alchemical references:

'I knew that *the body may be separated into its elements by external agencies*, but I should have refused to believe what I saw. For here there was some internal force, of which I knew nothing, that caused *dissolution and change*....I saw the form waver from sex to sex, *dividing itself from itself, and then again reunited*. Then *I saw the body descend* to the beasts whence it ascended, and that which was on the heights go down to the depths, even to the abyss of all being. The principle of life, which makes organism, always remained, while *the outward form changed*. The light within the room had turned to blackness, *not the darkness of*

night, in which objects are seen dimly, for I could see clearly and without difficulty. *But it was the negation of light...* in such a manner that if there had been a prism in the room I should have seen no colours represented in it.’

(Machen *The Great God Pan* 46-47, emphasis mine)

As the Elizabethans referred to the winding sheet in that double meaning of the bed linens and also the death wrappings of a corpse, the bedroom is the grave of Helen Vaughan who receives no burial, and no removal of remains is mentioned.

At the stage of nigredo, the grave is the alchemist’s vessel, and, for the being that is Helen Vaughan, the former embrace of Thanatos and Eros is present at a chemical wedding between that inner matter of semi-mortal and semi-divine and the start of Helen’s next stage. In the final lines of the work, Dr. Raymond pronounces, “And now Helen is with her companions...” (Machen *TGGP* 50). However, this concluding statement from Dr. Raymond is meant to refer to a rendezvous with a diabolical consortium, an assessment of that departed being’s place that he can make due to the authority vested in him by the narrative structure. But, as with Ambrose in “The White People,” the diagnosis is incorrect: The female has departed, but not as degenerate slime. Helen Vaughan goes from that microcosm to become a more-refined form beyond the men who thought that they knew her (and did not know themselves). In Machen’s prose poem, “Psychology,” the male character, after a review of his notes about all of his thoughts from an entire day, considers that “we lead two lives, and the half of our soul is madness and half heaven is lit by a black sun” (Machen, *Ornaments in Jade* 27).³⁸ The reference from Dr. Matheson to a negation of light signifies the alchemical Black Sun, the *Sol Niger* (the Sun at Midnight).³⁸ Hermetic doctrines identify a double sun: the “philosophical gold” of a bright spirit sun, and the “material gold” of a dark, natural sun (Roos 13). In the *opus*

alchymicum, the latter corresponds to dissolution and the former coagulation; the climax of the work is the conjunction (*coniunctio* or chemical wedding), the marriage of the male and female principle, of heaven and hell.³⁹ Robert Fludd, a prominent Paracelsian physician, alchemist, and Rosicrucian apologist from the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries, placed the sun at the heart of the macrocosm: At that precise position a pyramid of light and one of dark intersect, and the life-giving cosmic soul dwells in this “sphere of equilibrium” of form and matter (Roos 22). Fludd presents this cosmology in *Utriusque Cosmi* (1617), where the source of matter, the *prima materia*, forms from the darkness, and, without this stage, the ideal, final state cannot be achieved, thereby remaining earth-bound at the lowest elemental level.⁴⁰

The Black Sun that lights the bedroom in Soho for Helen Vaughan’s exit is a type of eclipse, the conjunction of the sun and the moon. In a typical, alchemical paradox, the Black Sun’s unlight oversees the visible that becomes hidden—Helen Vaughan dies materially and renews as divine spirit—and the secret becomes known: The men have parleyed with a rotten social code and scapegoated another being in their rush to save themselves. There is a movement of outside to inside within the *The Great God Pan*’s opening chapter that lays the work for “The Fragments” that are the story’s final chapter: In the darkness of the laboratory’s inner sanctum, there Dr. Raymond’s secular invocation of preternatural force is disastrous for a society strained by the challenges to orthodox belief and scientific discoveries, and the loss of the Anglican influence that lingers culturally but that is infrequently practiced. This child of the Pan force is the agent in self-dissolution and then reconstitution: “Then the ladder was ascended again” (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 46). None of the men present have demonstrated the spiritual advancement or ability to act as, or to motivate, an external force for their own internal change, and none can manipulate such a force to affect the philosophical alchemist’s hope for

initiation of the process of the *opus*. Helen Vaughan has that ability to initiate and to attain transformation from their profane world, where to the men the forms of her essential substance are an abomination. The men form a *massa confusa*, or confused mass, who assign their confrontation as self-designated sound, substantial flesh and blood. Helen Vaughan is representative of a Hermetic pagan force, conceived from the *tenebrae activae* and in contact with it, who then, to the dismay and error of her earth-bound witnesses, ascends.

III. In Awfully Wedded Bliss

As with mysticism, alchemic Hermeticism (i.e., esoteric, speculative, or philosophical alchemy), has an interest in descents and ascents, and a death-like katabasis precedes divine ecstasy. The occult handbook of terms that Machen uses in *The Green Book* of “The White People” is part of the figurative representation of place as a metaphor of the girl’s advancement from apprentice to adept.⁴¹ Before the narrative’s move from the built environment to the natural world, Machen sets the dialogue of the outer frame in a cottage surrounded by an insular garden. From here, Ambrose assigns his dogmatic views on the meaning of the girl’s life, and his place contrasts with the transmutation of the landscape into which the girl journeys and experiences emotional and psychological growth, before her final meeting with the Geniscus, or tutelary presence. As I demonstrate in my chapter on “The White People” and *The Green Book*, Ambrose rejects the value of what the girl discovers of those truths about herself and existence, found by methods that are non-orthodox in the extreme. As he theorizes in the prologue and epilogue about her as an example of sorcery, the girl tells her tale within tales in *The Green Book* about her practical pursuits for what are preternatural ends—though she does not see the goal in those terms. *The Green Book* girl tends to a garden of her mind and inner being that brings her to act out a kind of enchanted play (cf. n. 71 on the topic of *Līlā*) in the wildside of what remains

of the trackless woodlands and old growth forests of Wales (e.g., the Gwent Woods), an ecozone already vanished by the time her story is told to Cotgrave.⁴² The girl's use of nature is part of a spagyric quest, whose legacy begins with Paracelsus, and her end is the *mysterium coniunctionis* with the God of the Woods. Modern research into the history of alchemy suggests that the alchemical marriage derives from pre-Christian classical Greek and near-Eastern tradition, which predates the corresponding mystical marriage of the Church Fathers (Abraham 35).

Spagyric is a term unique to alchemy and that Machen was familiar with and used as the title of a false document named on the title page of *Thesaurus Incantatus* (1888), his playful catalogue of occult books.⁴³ The term is probably a neologism of Paracelsus, who uses "spagyric" in his book *Liber Paragranum* (1530) to refer to alchemical work, texts, and physicians, whose art is of the mind for the benefit of the practitioner's inner being. The word derives from the Greek words *spao* ("to tear open") and *ageiro* ("to collect"), and is a process of separation and combination that begins with ingredients from nature in what appears to be similar to the alchemical process of *solve et coagula*. Paracelsian belief sees nature as both raw and unfinished, and because the present state of things holds the status of being as not fully evolved then the individual person has a responsibility to develop both the materials at hand (e.g., into medicine) and one's self (e.g., into a better self, cf. n. 17). *The Green Book* girl goes to the natural world, away from the antagonism of her household's paternal law and towards the agonist, the hidden God of the Woods, whom she meets in an occult logic of coincidence. As with the alchemist, without the effort involved in the work required of the experimenter, such a meeting of *coniunctio* cannot occur. Thus, the girl must first make her ascent, which has both a literal and corresponding Hermetic meaning, as with any action that is meant to have esoteric significance.⁴⁴ Her first climb up the central hill rewards her efforts with a sight of fertile,

gargantuan nature, but also with reminders of violence: “There were two mounds like big beehives, round and great and solemn, and then hollow basins, and then a steep mounting wall like the ones I saw once by the seaside where the big guns and the soldiers were” (76). The references to “big guns” and “soldiers” represent the violent, mechanized force of male industry against which a female child is powerless; however, this narrator is atypical and has means to negotiate her way out of this narrow confinement. While part of a standard trope of flight from the industrial sphere in an attempt to go back to the wild, the movement marks the girl’s entrance into a world of vegetative forms (the rhizome), outside of and departed from her father’s world of forms (a traditional branch of knowledge: financial and real estate law), and also his distant supervision of the girl’s form school and her household lessons—none of which can allow her to develop the esoteric arts in which she is gifted.

On the biological cusp of puberty to pubescence, *The Green Book* girl enters a stage of uncertainty, and then crosses into a land with its own traditions and rules where she must use her wits and inborn talents to complete the *opus alchymicum*. A reminder of male threat is preceded and compounded by the stones that she must pass: “Some were like horrid-grinning men; I could see their faces as if they would jump at me out of the stone, and catch hold of me, and drag me with them back into the rock, so that I should always be there” (Machen, “The White People” 73). Harmony between the sexes does not exist at this stage, nor is there a balance between human and natural life—the female and the male principles are at odds. Rather than the philosopher’s stone (*lapis philosophorum*), an object that is not given but that must be earned, the girl encounters the hardened, inflexible materials that would trap her and sabotage her progress. However, she is not discouraged in the work: “But I only laughed and sang” (Machen, “The White People” 74). With images of terror and rot at her sides, the girl does not falter in her

will to continue up the hill. Besides the snippet of a prayer that the girl earlier recited to herself after a recitation of NT I, here is the only other reference to a distinction between pagan and Christian belief systems, with an emphasis placed on male gender and the divine at a harrow: “It was so strange and solemn and lonely, like a hollow temple of dead heathen gods” (Machen “The White People” 76).⁴⁵ Otherwise, the power of women who do not accept submission is a key feature of the *The Green Book* girl’s story, and the accounts told to her by her nurse (e.g., NT II and NT IIIb), and the lessons that often involve a command exerted over the male form (e.g., the creation and manipulation of male poppets, and the formation of a homunculus whose method of production the nurse teaches to the girl). The obstacles of these false stones do not waylay the girl: “But I wanted to get up to the very top of the big round mound, so I lay down flat on my face, and took hold of the grass with my hands and drew myself up, bit by bit, till I was at the top” (Machen, “The White People” 73). In an act measured out in blind faith, and as if she is a supplicant to a force with no name, voice, or identifiable form, the girl exerts herself as she has never before been required to do (or required from herself).

That more than one variety of stone appears along the girl’s climb is significant, since the philosopher’s stone is the prized object in alchemy, whether exoteric (and an actual substance) or esoteric (and a symbolic substance), which is an object with the power to transmute and is a sign of successful attainment of transformation of materials or human spirit. That menace from the “ugly grey stones,” those false objects, changes as the girl “went on and on a long way till at last I liked the rocks, and they didn’t frighten me any more,” and, in a measure of her sympathy with preternatural forms, the girl “put [her] arms round [the stone] and hugged him” (Machen, “The White People” 72-73). On her completion of ascent to the symbolic top of the world, the girl also finds that she is at a centerpoint with a very different type of stone:

And so I went on and on the through the rocks till I came to a round mound in the middle of them...and it was like a great basin turned upside down, all smooth and round and green, with one stone, like a post, sticking up at the top. I climbed up the sides, but they were so steep I had to stop or I should have rolled all the way down again, and I should have knocked against the stones at the bottom, and perhaps been killed. (Machen, "The White People" 73)

Danger attends to her exertions to reach the post stone, this hitching point of the occult world and a composite image that suggests the philosopher's stone, the omphalos, and a version of the *lapis exillis* (i.e., what von Eschenbach refers to as the Holy Grail in *Parzival*, thirteenth century CE).⁴⁶ As with the alchemist's materials, the same items that can lead to injury or death (Ambrose's reference to "virulent poisons") can be the ones that produce the "precious elixirs," and those grey stones that appear as a primitive security system to discourage the girl and lead her to turn back and abandon the work then become markers that point upward to the next stage.

At the harrow's summit, the girl does not embrace the post stone but seats herself upon it, for now she is not only her own person who has traversed with courage through peril but also she is the female principle who has made her way through the lower, deathly stage of nigredo—the stones "like dead people lying on the grass" and the "black terrible woods...like seeing a large room hung with black curtains" (Machen, "The White People" 72-73). The claim of this spot as a center is supported by the grand motion that the girl watches, as vortices of what had appeared to be solid, substantial earth now spiral about her:

I looked again, but still I saw nothing but circles, and small circles inside big ones, and pyramids, and domes, and spires, and they seemed all to go round and round the place where I was sitting, and the more I looked, the more I saw great

big rings of rocks, getting bigger and bigger, and I stared so long that it felt as if they were all moving and turning, like a great wheel, and I was turning, too, in the middle. (Machen, "The White People" 73-74)

At that moment, a very short guide to the history of sacred space is seen by the girl. The small circles inside big ones refer to the ancient turf mounds, earthworks, cairns, and henges of megalithic Old Europe; the pyramids are those structures from Egypt and the Americas; the domes represent classical Greek and Roman architecture (e.g., the Parthenon, Hagia Sophia); and spires are the cathedrals (e.g., Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres, etc.). From the girl's vantage point on the hill upon which she seats herself, she is immersed in an aetherial whirlpool that is a prelude before she is drawn to the discovery of the ultimate stone: *Occultum lapidem* (the Rosicrucian Hidden Stone), found as the eikonic herm of the God of the Woods after her return to the woods and second ascent of the hill.⁴⁷

With the significance of the stone references noted, *The Green Book* girl also describes the hill as if a bowl inverted, and, rather than the contents depleted, the world, as transmuted before her and with her as part, is awash with these changes. Like an alchemist's ablution, the girl is ready for the next stage.⁴⁹ On her return for her next ascent of the great hill, the experience for the girl is as if there is present a memory set upon the land of the behaviors, rituals, and cultic actions of the past, and which plays like a drone upon her nerves, as if conducted by those beehive-like mounds that she can glimpse in the distance from the height. The invisible plotting and mapping of psychogeography and sacred space requires activation by human effort and agency, which is what Paracelsus spoke of with the spagyric art that brings one into the natural world for an interchange between one's abilities and those items gathered and resources met:

From the great mound, sitting on the stone, I saw all their amazing circles and rounds within rounds, and I had to sit quite still and watch them as they began to turn about me, and each stone danced in its place, and they seemed to go round and round in a great whirl, as if one were in the middle of all the stars and heard them rushing through the air.⁴⁸ (Machen, “The White People” 93-94)

The locus of centrality repeats when, in wonder, the girl finds the motion of stone that once threatened her now “turn about me,” and here is she on the post stone as omphalos.⁵⁰ This omphalos has served the girl as a kind of philosopher’s stone of the esoteric path and a catalyst for interior change. The girl’s mental will and physical efforts to ascend her journey’s central point is indicative of an interior journey upon which she is en route. What she observes in the exteriority of the dance of the natural world and the cosmos, signified by “as all the stars” and the grand spirals that again move about her, still and still moving, represents the interior shift that her initial efforts set in motion and her subsequent work has maintained. An inner change is evident because she began as a naïve child in the care of her nurse, but now she is the initiate who has crossed the threshold to go towards the knowing experience of adolescence along with the spiritual development required for the *mysterium coniunctionis*.

This metaphysical form of the Hermeticist’s chemical wedding is a perfect union of the male principle of creative will and inventive power with the female principle of wisdom, and the end is to produce pure love that is the “child” or the “stone” (i.e., the transformed self), not the portentous moonchild of goetic sorcery like Crowley’s (Abraham 37).⁵¹ With the many instances drawn from *The Green Book*, creative will and power certainly are not exclusive to males (e.g., NT II and NT IIIb), though the elder Ambrose disparages the girl’s intelligence and abilities as degenerative cunning. Nor is the primal, metaphorical act of sex that the Epilogue

implies as occurring between *The Green Book* girl and a blasphemous pagan idol the foul act that Ambrose attempts to hijack the significance of. Rather, the girl's meeting with the God of the Woods is an act of the super-conscious joined in the henosis hoped and worked for by the Platonists and Neo-Platonists, if by different means, and with the full consciousness at which Eliot's *Four Quartets* gestures, threaded as those poems are with mystic symbolism from the spiritual traditions of the East and the West.⁵² The girl's withdrawal from the world is not made out of shyness or meekness as she goes away from the material reality of her father and toward the spiritual, revelatory world of that wild wooded realm through which the numinous courses. She withdraws from her father's world to enter an alternative with the potential for higher understanding closed to her if she were to stay home, a condition that itself would be a kind of death. The withdrawal, too, is one where she must sacrifice her notions of self in order to allow for receptivity to the vital force within life, betwixt and between, which the religious traditions have called spirit.⁵³ After the second descent from what could be the hill of dreams of a Hermetic alchemist—and not the comedown of Machen's pathetic character Lucian Taylor from the novel *The Hill of Dreams*, 1907—the girl finds “the most wonderful sight I have ever seen...so wonderful and so strange and beautiful” (78).⁵⁴ In Machen's *nouvelle* “Novel of the Black Seal,” there is another “awful transmutation of the hills” (Machen, *The Three Impostors* 172), but in that narrative of a twice-told tale, from the impostor Miss Lally, a scientist, Professor Gregg, cites a transmutation of degeneration with no redeeming features whatsoever; Ambrose attempts the same imposition upon *The Green Book* girl's life.

The marriage of opposites is the end that is the beginning for *The Green Book* girl, a marriage which is the *mysterium coniunctionis* and its reconciliation of the forgotten forest eikon and *The Green Book* girl, who was born into a society with no place for her.⁵⁵ The event of that

union occurs with no direct witnesses, and only a summary account of what passed is delivered by the elder, Ambrose, who was not there and who holds the position that no sympathy is due to the girl. Even though, as he admits, “there was not a word to be said against her in the ordinary sense” (Machen, “The White People” 97). To the girl’s authentic life, Ambrose is the false elder, and the eikon is a true figure to respect, a relic from the unrecorded past that lives: “I came to the place where the elder was” (Machen, “The White People” 93). As told in the Epilogue, the search for the girl’s body reveals a statue dedicated to a figure whom Machen identifies in other of his stories as both the Great God Pan and Nodens, with the latter a reference to a Romano-Celtic deity whose tributes are “The God of the Deeps” and “God of the Great Abyss” (cf. *The Great God Pan*).⁵⁶ Rather than the expected weathering and damage from exposure, this is a statue that ““was of Roman workmanship, of a stone that with the centuries had not blackened, but had become white and luminous”” (Machen, “The White People” 98). Here is the tension in the inner and outer narratives of “The White People,” which differ substantially about the power of the stone, about whether it is an object that is the *occultum lapidem* or a wicked idol of goetic sorcery to be chiseled to dust by decent men.⁵⁷

Through the intercession of the stone and the resultant sexual contact with the immanence of divinity in nature, *The Green Book* girl experiences a transmutation to her final material stage. For her, there is henosis from the conjunction of sacrificial escape. To Ambrose, the girl has been a dupe of a daemon in an affair far worse than the Horos case and its criminal exploitation of gesture without any meaning beyond the abuse of other human beings who are impressionable and vulnerable marks for manipulation.⁵⁸ As Ambrose declares to his audience: “In the Middle Ages the followers of a very old tradition had known how to use it [the eikon] for their own purposes. In fact it had been incorporated into the monstrous mythology of the

Sabbath” (Machen, “The White People 98). The varied processes taught to the girl under the tutelage of her nurse, and that the girl learns with superior ease because of her innate capacity, prepared her for her presentation to the spirits and elementals (the white people and fair folk), and then for her engagement with the white and shining form of the Geniscus, the esteemed tutelary presence of the dark woods.⁵⁹ This male aspect of the numinous is a force that replaces and precedes Christian worship, owing to the object’s pagan origins, and supersedes parental and guardian influence and access to the girl, due to her ability to worship such a figure that continued in their ignorance.

Thus, as a violation of consensus belief, the eikon must be, and is, smashed by Ambrose into parts that will not reform—human violence halts the *solve et coagula* that occurred by that stone. As he explains to Cotgrave, “I sent for tools, and we hammered it into dust and fragments” (98). Ambrose partakes in the statue’s destruction because the continued existence of such an abomination is not permitted in a modern purview of disenchantment, and he concedes regretfully about other rustic survivals:

‘The persistence of tradition never surprises me...I could name many an English parish where such traditions as that girl had listened to in her childhood are still existent in occult but unabated vigour.’ (Machen “The White People” 98)

With the eikon gone, and as I have argued in the chapter on “The White People” and the treatment of adolescence, Ambrose keeps what is left of the girl: The voice held in the journal. He forbids any allowance for the legitimacy of the girl’s experiences and her processes as anything other than sinful horrors carried out in the naïveté of youth. I suggest that we view her death not as a result of “poisoning” of her soul’s essence due to her engagement with arcane practices of witchcraft and sorcery and an unholy intimacy with the life principle, but that her

end is due to the stifling, constrictive judgment and punishment by male holders of authority over her that just legislation and ethical practice did not correct in her lifetime. Whatever binding spells the girl may have cast between herself and natural, spagyric materials, or is suspected of having casted, the possession of the *Green Book* by a hostile male inquisitor keeps her bound, postmortem.⁶⁰ Whereas her male elders view her as one who fell as a victim to temptation from dark, goetic forces, in her own right she was an active recluse in the creative laboratory—not a passive collector of oddities as Ambrose has become.

While never taking vows but once, since *The Green Book* girl existed outside of orthodox faith and single-vision dogmatism—as did Giordano Bruno and numerous pre-Newtonian Hermeticists—the girl did follow a vocation that culminates in the *mysterium coniunctionis*. The effect, and possible consequence, of that union may be considered further in a quote attributed to Tertullian that appears on the title page of the first edition of *Comte de Gabalis*, a Rosicrucian text published anonymously in Paris in 1670: “Quod tanto impendio absconditur etiam solummodo demonstrare destruere est.” The first English translation in 1680, anonymous, interprets the line to say, “When a thing is hidden away with so much pains merely to reveal it is to destroy it.”⁶¹ As an introduction to the Rosicrucian text that it precedes, the quote implies that there is a mystery hidden from the human mind that, as all other esoteric groups and occult organizations have claimed, can be accessed with the proper guidance and sustained effort of the will; however, to uncover what was secret is not the end. The difference from the Hermetic texts and the claims of the modern esotericists is that the quote suggests a kind of quantum mechanical puzzle, that once the observer reaches the edge of discovery, when the grand uncovering of the secret is to happen, a kind of literal vanishing point results—dissipation and decoherence, if not quantum-lock (i.e., the Quantum Zeno effect, which is exemplified by Steven Moffat’s Weeping

Angels from *Dr. Who*). Like a data point without context, the reality becomes like the dimensions of the house in Mark Z. Danielwski's novel *House of Leaves* (2000), where the unreliability of observed phenomena is the rule that thwarts the attempts to measure and to mark. However, the idea of observation as an act that precedes some form of destruction or a death has relevance to Machen's work, since at the moment of finding the "one thing," *una res*, *The Green Book* girl dies.

What is destroyed for the girl is the life that is no longer possible in the social world of her birth, and what begins is a life "elsewhere and otherwise."⁶² If viewed through the perspective of Ambrose, this girl's death does appear to fit a pattern of punishment in Machen's fiction: In *The Great God Pan*, at the moment when the avenging men confront Helen Vaughan in the bedroom, that being can no longer exist and transmutes to what appears to them as obscene baseness, a seething vitriol that will drip through the ceiling like the substance that was once human in "Novel of the White Powder" from *The Three Impostors*. However, Machen, or at least the dominant narrative voice, seems to have forgotten his past with its enthusiasm for the Mysteries of Eleusis and Demeter, who suffered the death-like loss of her daughter Persephone to Hades (Dis Pater). However, that female who was lost to the world of material life finds existence at a new stage, since Persephone weds the numinous.⁶³ The loss in order to reap gain is the exit of *The Green Book* girl.

IV. As if I Were Filled with Fire

The lit tinder and hearth fires of the alchemists of medieval and Renaissance Europe had a practical use in their experimentation, and those flames carried a crucial symbolic meaning in correspondence to the esoteric pursuit of the craft: This elemental heat that purges and regenerates in a phoenix glory is a redeeming inversion of the torturous infernal and purgatorial

fires from which assorted characters speak to Dante in the lower planes of post-material existence in the *Divina Commedia*. To Paracelsus, a premier example of the exoteric and esoteric alchemist, the Greek god Vulcan equated to the manipulation of fire by the physician or alchemist—the physick alchemist, or the alchymick physician—since Paracelsian medicine involved physical healing through medicinal discoveries and spiritual healing and refinement through the sympathetic effects of ritual work with philosophical materials (i.e., the philosophical sulphur and the argent vive, the state of nigredo, etc.). One need only to look at the full title of some of his books to see the interplay that existed for Paracelsus between the medical and alchemical pursuits, especially this title: *Labyrinthus Medicorum: Concerning the Book of Alchemy, Without Which No One Can Become a Physician* (1538). From this text, in a precursor to the Anthroposophy developed after the Victorian occult revival (e.g., Steiner), and synonymous to the work of his contemporary Agrippa von Nettesheim, Paracelsus describes how the act of heating and the distillation of nature’s bounties for medicine corresponds to the *anthropos*, which is the transforming power and creative potential for spiritual advancement that exists, but often is inert, within the individual person. In a representative description from Paracelsus of this concept, he writes, “He who is Vulcan has the power of the [alchemical] art...All things have been created in an unfinished state, nothing is finished, but Vulcan must bring all things to their completion” (144, trans. Jacobi). The *tenebrae activae* of Thomas Vaughan is synonymous with the Paracelsian understanding of the *prima materia*, which precedes the awakening of the individual’s *anthropos* and the initiation of the *opus alchymicum*: “Everything is at first created in its *prima materia*, its original stuff; whereupon Vulcan comes, and develops it into its final substance...Nothing has been created as *ultima materia*—in its final state” (Paracelsus 144). As I have shown, the manner in which “Vulcan comes” varies in the

works of Arthur Machen, from the *mysterium coniunctionis* of *The Green Book* girl to the reversion into the nigredo state of Helen Vaughan. The former change happens within the context of ecstatic ascent that the gross uncertainty of the latter leaves unresolved.

The fact that NT I in *The Green Book* contains transformations of states is unsurprising and prepares the way for the girl to complete the vows, and vowels (e.g., the Aklo letters, the Chian language, the Ceremonies), of the *mysterium coniunctionis*. However, what happens in NT I is not what occurs for *The Green Book* girl at the eikon. Not only has that girl heard from her nurse the NT I story and taken precautions against an abortive union that would be out of her control, but also, since then, she has progressed in her caution beyond falling into the dire end of the woman in NT IIIb, a woman whose use of control and craft was self-destructively vindictive.⁶⁴ Within the folkloric matter of NT I with its demon lover, a series occurs: lesser objects become other, higher-valued objects; the NT I girl changes social rank and class status; this girl who was present becomes the girl who is absent; and the possession of her as the would-be princess becomes dispossession of that girl by the prince who believed himself to have her, but who loses her to the “black man, with a dreadful face, standing in front of the door” (Machen, “The White People” 77). The NT I girl is the feminine principle and bride brought to nigredo, who is now met by the figure who represents the masculine principle and is the groom, both of whom must unite and afterwards they leave behind only “thick black smoke” (Machen, “The White People” 78). During the process at this stage, with the bedchamber as the alembic, the hermetically-sealed door bars any outsider from entering and interrupting. However, two things occur that suggest that NT I is a corrupted *opus alchymicum*: The sounds that the royal audience and personages hear outside of the chamber suggests sexual violence, and, after

remembering NT I, *The Green Book* girl performs a protective charm. Therefore, these details point to a failed work for the girl of NT I.⁶⁵

From whatever fiery column of his mind's oft-frustrated source that Machen led forth the allusive details of "The White People," and before those inspired bits could turn to the dried and broken clay of another unfinished idea, NT I and NT IIIb of *The Green Book* have the audience-choking smoke in the former Nurse Tale and the witch-burning fire of the latter, but there is no purifying fire.⁶⁶ Herakleitos chose fire as the closest and most complete embodiment of the process of Becoming, a choice that rejects as insufficient the abstract, and static, notion of Being. All phenomena are in a state of continuous transition: From non-existence comes existence, and from the actuality of existence comes the nullity of non-existence, statements that suggest the cycling of *solve et coagula*.⁶⁷ Thus, fire is the elemental principle of empirical life. As stated in Fragment 22: "All things are exchanged for Fire, and Fire for all things, even as wares for gold, and gold for wares" (Herakleitos, trans. Burnet). And, to recall a final detail from NT I in *The Green Book*, the girl "wore a gold crown," even though her own Becoming ends fearfully (Machen, "The White People" 77). Prior to the *prima materia*, from the primordial flame, all things, including the soul, grow by way of a concentrating power, and, while Herakleitos was no alchemist in the classical sense, that fire appears to fit as the catalyst for the *prima materia* to urge it towards the *ultima materia*. Resolution of the binary either/or—of that which is and is not—is in the philosophy of Herakleitos in that fire of everlasting Becoming. The soul is nearest to perfection in death because only then is the soul closest to the fiery breath that was the start of its creation, which is not unlike the breath of gnosis and the related alchemical symbol of air. To clarify, the purpose is not to die, to willingly lose one's life in some kind of Heraklitian surrender that Herakleitos has never been found to advocate, but, as for the girl in *The Green Book*, the

goal is to incite an ignition of that fire of *anthropos* within her (though *gyn-* should be the term's prefix in her case).⁶⁸ Then, she can and does set out to henosis. Machen signifies this change in the allusive language of esoteric alchemy, which can be found in *The Green Book* girl's final entry: "The dark nymph, Alanna, came, and she turned the pool of water into a pool of fire...." (Machen, "The White People" 96). Here, then, is the fire of epiphany of the spirit, and not the flames and the smoke of those flames that kill and consume the Lady Avellin (Cassap) in IIIb. Now, *The Green Book* girl meets the herm that is the outward form of the living God of the Woods and becomes the exalted omega of the finished work, the *lapis exillis*.⁶⁹

To riff from Iain Sinclair's psychogeographic travelogue of London, *Lights Out in the Territory: 9 Excursions in the Secret History of London* (1998), fires are out in Machen's *rus in urbe*, where a weirding of place often takes from the natural world and infuses those chthonic elements into the settled landscape as part of the transmutation of the individual's experience. This pattern occurs for Mr. Clarke before the awful experiment of *The Great God Pan* and with the characters Edward Darnell and his wife, Mary, in Machen's novella *A Fragment of Life* (1904), who retreat from a socially-respectable conformity of the London suburbs and the small horrors of conventional lives: "Day after day, he lived in the grey phantasmal world, akin to death, that has, somehow, with most of us, made good its claim to be called life" (Machen, *A Fragment of Life* 121). After an awakening from the tiresome life of a clerk's salary and the demands of holding on to a middle standard of other people's expectations, where this couple heads to next "has the semblance of the stories of the Graal" (Machen, *A Fragment of Life* 171). The mental beam that illumines for the couple a greater possibility, other than the workday boredom that they have known throughout their life together, suggests what occurs in Machen's prose poem "The Holy Things" from *Ornaments in Jade*, with its vision transplanted upon a

mindset stuck in a rut of ennui. However, in the context of *anthropos* and alchemy, even more telling is a moment occurs prior to the Darnells' coda:

Darnell knew by experience that man is made a mystery for mysteries and visions, for the realization in his consciousness of ineffable bliss, for a great joy that transmutes the whole world, for a joy that surpasses all joys and overcomes all sorrows. He knew this certainly, though he knew it dimly; and he was apart from other men, preparing himself for a great experiment.

(Machen, *A Fragment of Life* 156)

This story is unlike the chemical misfortune of law student Francis Leicester from “Novel of the White Powder,” who mistakenly ingests an ingredient of the *Vinum Sabbati* (not the alchemist's supply of white sulfur), and the adverse effect upon the consulting physician, Dr. Chambers, whose mindset has been irrevocably altered by his seeing the dross of what remains of Leicester's once-human form. Edward Darnell's readiness marks a change for Machen in the years after the 1899-1900 period of distress: From the dissolution of sorcery to the transfiguring power of sanctity through ritual.⁷⁰

In the philosophical aspect of the *opus alchymicum*, there is the venture into the dark wood of personal experimentation, of refining the good of the self and not material goods, and here, often in made in a laboratory book or journal in symbolic notations and records of past attempts, remembrance may mingle with reflections on the fear felt at the time. Machen presents his moments of alarm, disappointments, and wonder in a manner that he scatters about the three volumes of his autobiography, and the same happens in the biographical materials of invented characters from his fiction. There are many times when *The Green Book* girl attempts to mentally map out her experiences in order to reignite the *tremendum fascinans* of the territory

that she covers on that wondrous journey that she calls The White Day, where the living girl meets a living stone charged with the numinous:

And I pretended I was following the brook over again, and I went all the way in my mind...and then in the dusk I saw something that made me feel as if I were filled with fire, as if I wanted to dance and sing and fly up into the air, because I was changed and wonderful. But what I saw was not changed at all, and had not grown old, and I wondered again and again how such things could happen, and whether nurse's stories were really true, because in the daytime in the open air every thing seemed quite different from what it was at night, when I was frightened, and thought I was to be burned alive.

(Machen, "The White People 90-91)

As the European alchemists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were at or over the edge of the Catholic Church's inquisitorial line of heretical beliefs and practices, they sought to provide their literary works with the necessary veneer of orthodoxy, if imaginatively expressed (cf. the title page of Vaughan's *Anthroposophia Theomagica*).

Heterodoxy and orthodoxy and the individual's visionary path, often through the narrow court of public groupthink and to a confrontation with the harsh and final judgment of authority, are present in the historical and literary materials that I have presented here. To go to the flames, as Giordano Bruno did in 1600, strikes up the forbidding lines from Deuteronomy 18:10 and its dictum: "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch" (KJV). Bruno was not a practicing alchemical Hermeticist, nor did he compel or teach anyone other than himself an understanding of divine cosmology informed by Neoplatonism, Islamic

astrology, and the Renaissance Hermeticism received from Ficino and expanded upon by Pico della Mirandola. In reply to the charges made by his inquisitors in Rome, and prior to his transfer to civil authorities for execution, post-trial records state that Bruno made this defiant statement: “Perchance you who pronounce my sentence are in greater fear than I who receive it” (Bruno 179, trans. Singer).⁷¹ A nonconformist like Bruno and contemporary philosophical alchemists in the Renaissance Hermetic tradition found opposition to their work and beliefs from a codified moral ruthlessness inherited from notions of Old Testament fury that formed a background threat that could be foregrounded with the Inquisition’s juridical speed. However, a New Testament passage is closer in its description to the illumination that these individuals sought: “And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled...and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” Acts 2:3-4 (KJV).⁷² While obscured in cryptograms and John-Dee-like invented languages, the articulation of the alchemists’ metaphorical quest was the heart of light that they sought, from within and without the bounds or orthodox hierarchy.

Machen had distinct qualms about beliefs in past lives and cellular memory, and his incredulousness of mediums, like Browning’s Mr. Sludge, and other parlor room tricks and clumsy experiments of pseudo-science would have made the writer a likely candidate for the Society for Psychical Research.⁷³ In *The Evening News* article “A Book I Should Like to Write,” where Machen speculates about an idea for a work titled *Sirens’ Songs* that would examine the known unknowns of existence, he refers to what he sees as an enigma of the nature of alchemy:

As to the medieval alchemists; were they, simply and merely, people who anticipated modern science by six or seven hundred years in teaching that one

‘element’ can be transmuted into another. . . . Or is it true, as some have maintained, that alchemy, in certain writers, at all events, was a system of sublime symbolism: that the Great Work, the Operations of the Wise, was not concerned in turning lead into gold but with a mysterious and amazing transmutation of the human spirit? Were there people who knew the secret of recovering Paradise—and if so, did they veil their knowledge under this scientific, or pseudo-scientific, terminology of sulphur, salt and mercury? (41)

In his writing, Machen treats of physical transmutations of body and landscape, and these changes can come with strange, even ill consequences. Some of the other incidents attend to a fascinating mystery that remains insoluble for what it may mean (i.e., 1899-1900), while Machen also tells of spiritual transmutations, most of which have been read, by Machen included, as the misled efforts of sorcery that can be made under a guise of the human spirit’s aiming for nobler ends and refinement.

During the late-nineteenth century in Britain and continental Europe, there was a turn to the subject of alchemy, in its exoteric and esoteric iterations, by a range of persons. People with backgrounds from the professional classes pursued alchemy as a topic for research, study, and practice, and they did so with devotion that had not been the case for over two hundred years. The concentration of talent and personalities who partook of the Victorian occult revival at the fin de siècle has not recurred, but the post-Jungian interest in alchemy remains across multiple disciplines, which include psychological studies, the history of ideas, literature, philosophy, and theology. The scholarship of Adam McLean on his *Alchemy Website*, and his moderation of discussion forums that are dedicated to the academic study of alchemy, have encouraged a variety of critical conversations. Other analyses of alchemical plot elements and allusions of

more-recent works of fiction have been carried out by writers such as John Granger, who has written extensively on popular fiction and J. K. Rowling's use of alchemical references. In Granger's *Touchstone* article, "The Alchemist's Tale: Harry Potter and the Alchemical Tradition in English Literature" (Nov. 2003), he claims: "Rowling conveys the world's magic as a traditional English writer writing within the traditions of her genre. And one of these traditions is the use of alchemical symbolism to convey spiritual realities." In addition to the individual scholarship, academic and other professional collections and exhibitions have been a part of the continued interest in alchemy in the twenty-first century. The Chemical Heritage Foundation (CHF) in Philadelphia has an ongoing exhibition, as of Fall 2012, called *Transmutations: Alchemy in Art*, which draws from the selected holdings of the Eddleman and Fisher Collections. In addition, the CHF currently has displayed a special collection, *The Alchemical Quest*, an exhibit that features rare alchemical books from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries that exclusively uses the collections of the Othmer Library of Chemical History. In 2009 at the Beinecke Library, Yale University hosted the exhibition *Book of Secrets: Alchemy and the European Imagination, 1500-2000*.⁷⁴ The individual efforts, scholarly exhibitions, and academic resources suggest a vibrant study of alchemy from multi-disciplinary approaches.

With his itinerant life among various cultures and libraries, Giordano Bruno repeatedly found that "we are a profound shadow" ("*umbra profunda sumus*"). These words from *On the Infinite Universe and Worlds (De l'Infinito Universo et Mondi, 1584)* have a renewed relevance for the more recent endeavors in the search for knowledge and the role of philosophical alchemy and its permutations. Bruno occupied the non-alchemical borders of Hermeticism before the scientific revolutions of the century that followed his death. Our work is carried out under a Gauguinian shade of transit between an unknown beginning and end (before conception and after

death). The rending darkness of solve and the binding light of coagula continue in their cycle of one to the other as a host of studies in the sciences and the humanities attempt to fix sources, or a unified source for a field, and to find meaning. The access made possible by digital archives and special collections has brought nearer the classical, Renaissance, and modern alchemical texts and has allowed for the critical analyses of them.

However, even a lifetime spent in the British Museum Reading Room or in research databases would not bring to life the transmutation of personal perception that Machen's quote about his wonderful, terrible year claims as a requirement. In that second volume of his autobiography, Machen states his life's dictum:

And it is utterly true that he who cannot find wonder, mystery, awe, the sense of a new world and an undiscovered realm in the places by the Gray's Inn Road will never find those secrets elsewhere, not in the heart of Africa, not in the fabled hidden cities of Tibet. 'The matter of our work is everywhere present,' wrote the old alchemists, and that is the truth. All the wonders lie within a stone's-throw of King's Cross Station. (Machen, *Things Near and Far* 206)

Machen's citation of a popular alchemical saying is closer to the immanence of the Hermetic alchemists than to the transcendence as a necessary escape from materiality of the Gnostics and mystics. Perhaps, and in a small way that is tangential but not non-existent, alchemy has brought the nearness and the strangeness of alternative modes of thinking and creative thought to a history where the dominance often is with the scientific method and positivist methodology in its latest version.

Machen considers what possible divergent thinking and unknown dream quest went on in the alchemist's workshop of the self and its manifestations. These formations of selfhood

redeem what *The Great God Pan* refers to as “the melting ruins of the earthly tabernacle” (39). In his essay “The Literature of Occultism” (1899), he muses upon the possible glories that were known:

But no one could look into the alchemical writings of the Middle Ages and deny them the name of literature. Alchemy, in spite of all confident pronouncements on the subject, remains still a mystery, the very nature and object of the quest are unknown. The baser alchemists—there were quacks and impostors and dupes then as now—no doubt sought or pretended to seek some method of making gold artificially, but the sages, those who practiced the true spagyric art, were engaged in some infinitely more mysterious adventure. (42-43, cf. n. 16)

Machen’s attempts to communicate in literature the awful transmutation of the hills of his native Gwent, the boyhood impression left by the *Household Words* article “Alchemy and Gunpowder” (1850), and the labyrinthine streets of the London metropolis and of adulthood were part of a more mysterious adventure. The rich and strange alterations of the female form in *The Great God Pan* and in *The Green Book* of “The White People” do not negate the conservative presentation of gender that pervades those narratives. However, the new body that resurrects from what seems to be a decay of *ultima necat* is a regeneration of form that adds complexity that complicates each text and the primary female character. The philosophical alchemical references are a key to see these complexities.

CHAPTER 5

THE SHADOW THAT CROSSES THE FIELDS: LATE-VICTORIAN SEX SCANDAL IN ARTHUR MACHEN'S *THE GREAT GOD PAN*

What is peculiar to modern societies is not that they consigned sex to a shadow existence, but that they dedicated themselves to speaking of it ad infinitum, while exploiting it as *the* secret.¹

If this secret [of sexual magic], which is a scientific secret, were perfectly understood, as it is not by me after more than twelve years' almost constant study and experiment, there would be nothing which the human imagination can conceive that could not be realized in practice.²

The result of Machen's 'ransack[ing] the whole British Museum' (*Standard Review*) to dig up Solinus, and Payne Knight, and Roman artifacts of a 'peculiarly horrid' nature was to bring back to the Pan motif possibilities that had lain buried for centuries, to counteract the pretty sterilities of the minor poets and provide the first major example of a Pan in modern prose fiction.³

The book is, on the whole, the most acutely and intentionally disagreeable we have yet seen in English. We could say more, but refrain from doing so for fear of giving such a work advertisement.⁴

I. The Pain of the Goat

After a series of pendulous false-starts in pseudo-scholarship (e.g. *The Anatomy of Tobacco*, 1884), tedious pastiches of fiction (e.g., *The Chronicle of Clemency*, 1888), and pedestrian translation projects (e.g., *The Heptameron* and *Casanova's Memoirs*, 1886), Machen graduated from the eighteen eighties to leave behind his use of unhelpful conventions of phrasing and seventeenth-century literary posing and now to draw upon the deft, adventurous prose style and content matter of Stevenson.⁵ The first chapter of his novella *The Great God Pan*, "The Experiment," was published in 1890 as a stand-alone tale by the short-lived periodical *The Whirlwind*, but, with the other parts of the narrative finished by late 1891, there was no

publication interest for what Machen had completed. In the Introduction to the 1916 edition (publ. Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent), he explains how his work was rejected by, among other places, *Blackwood's*, which “shrunk from its central idea,” and by *Belgravia*, which initially commissioned the short story “The Inmost Light.” Influenced by themes and plot devices from *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Machen found success in 1894, when at that time the publisher John Lane selected the work as Vol. V for the Bodley Head Press Keynotes Series. Lane recognized that Machen’s fiction fit what the publisher wanted from that new series and paired *The Great God Pan* with “The Inmost Light,” but the full content was a matter of dispute between publisher and author. The record of this correspondence exists, and, in a letter to his publisher that dates from 8 Mar. 1894, Machen makes his case for the inclusion of all parts of what he had written, with no excisions of what he judged to be the centrality of the first part:

The only case of ‘won’t’ is the suggestion to cut out the 1st chapter ‘The Experiment’ and with it the motive, from *The Great God Pan*. The ‘credibility,’ the whole effect of the story rest on this. If I were writing in the Middle Ages I should need no scientific basis for the reason that in those days the supernatural *per se* was entirely credible. In these days the supernatural *per se* is entirely incredible; to believe, we must link our wonders to some scientific or pseudo-scientific fact, or basis, or method. Thus we do not believe in ‘ghosts,’ but in *telepathy*, not in ‘witchcraft,’ but in *hypnotism*. If Mr. Stevenson had written his great masterpiece about 1590-1650, Dr. Jekyll would have made a compact with the devil; in 1886 Dr. Jekyll sends to the Bon Street chemists for some rare drugs.

(*Selected Letters* 218)

Machen's advocacy for "The Experiment" was a success, and his work's first, full appearance in the Keynotes Series became one of its most successful titles, a volume that went into a second edition the next year.

Machen plots cross-genre elements into a fast-paced structure that gradually reveals how the pieces of its central mystery fit, the type of tale that a publisher could appreciate for its sales potential. The horror of the answer when the mystery's solution is found is a theme in Machen that H. P. Lovecraft admired, and can be found in the opening narration of Lovecraft's short story "The Call of Cthulhu" (1928): "The piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality" (167). In *The Great God Pan* there is no closure afforded by what is found: Knowledge causes further disturbance. The adventures of Stevenson and the investigations of Conan Doyle have their place in the vision of Machen's divided bodies and society. The science fiction of *The Great God Pan*'s first chapter features the barbarity of a surgeon whose borderline madness, or at least psychopathic disregard for human life, results in an operation that is based on speculative theory—specifically, transcendental neurosurgery. Critics and readers recognized the mark of Stevenson in the first chapter's hubris of scientific Positivism. Like Dr. Jekyll, Machen's Dr. Raymond discards the prudent advice from a colleague and the result is the destruction of an innocent life, in this case an adolescent female whom Dr. Raymond rescued from the streets. In addition to the play upon fears of science executed without scruples, *The Great God Pan* uses a free-wheeling detective plot as characters of the English upper classes search for an elusive figure who travels by various aliases and under assumed identities. The evidence of this being's true self is gathered by various means: There are hints in oral narratives from a distant borderland, in the countenance of a ruined man on the streets of London, in a police report about disturbing rumors, in the artwork of a dead artist, and

in the final correspondence of the men who were responsible for the start and the finish of the text's violence. The purpose of this detection is to solve the mystery behind the violent deaths of high-ranking men, to protect the reputations of the living from disastrous shame, and to stop more tragic loss of life. Machen's use of amateur investigation, focused on one of the heirs of privilege, Villiers of Wadham, relies on the popularity and absence of Conan Doyle's Sherlock from the marketplace ("The Final Problem" appeared a year earlier). *The Great God Pan* incorporates the fascination that scandal generates for the public and recalls the sensation novels first popularized in the eighteen sixties (e.g., Wilkie Collins). Machen combines these generic elements of science fiction, detection and mystery, scandal and sensation in the setting of urban Gothic horror in scenes of the West End that pass between fashionable Mayfair and the perceived dangers of sex and class abyss in Soho.

A mark that a writer has gained a measure of success and acclaim (notorious or not) is when the writing receives the honor of reference in parody. Two works whose target is *The Great God Pan* are from other Arthurs: Compton-Rickett's "A Yellow Creeper" (from *Lost Chords—Some Emotions Without Morals*, and originally titled "The Great Boo Plan and the Utmost Fright," 1895), and Sykes's "The Great Pan-Demon: An Unspeakable Story" (1895).⁶ These parodic stories take aim at Machen's willingness to provide gross detail in some parts of the narrative, and criticize the fall to total silence and repeated obscurity in others. These criticisms account for a single, genre-specific use of silence. However, there are additional uses of the reticence in Machen's text. For instance, Susan J. Navarette in her book *The Shape of Fear* (1998) argues that *The Great God Pan* reflects Machen's belief in the ineffability of non-rational experience:

The omissions and ellipses of Machen's story disclose an essentially decompositive strategy, betraying language's constitutional vulnerability to the entropic forces that surround and beset it as they simultaneously induce the emotional and intellectual short-circuits in which reason gives way to elemental human emotions—to fear, anxiety, and shame.” (201)

Those techniques of emotional manipulation in *The Great God Pan* (1894) brought Machen the publicity and sales that he would not know again in his lifetime, but the story implicated him with the Decadents and the Yellow Nineties, which ceased to be a benefit to his career once Wilde's trial began the next year. The rank odor of the goat did not dissipate easily.

The problem from the preceding years, with Machen's trying to place his finished manuscript, seems minor to the next set of problems that arose once *The Great God Pan* reached print. The publicity from negative reviews and the parody versions indicate that Machen succeeded in getting the type of attention that could sustain a modestly-successful career. However, a large amount of that attention was ambivalent when not scornful, and much of the latter came as a backlash over his blurring of the borders of highbrow literature and low, popular writing. These complaints are in line with at least a tinge of irony since Machen's narrative attacks a central character who crosses unreal, fabricated categories. In her study *Fictions of British Decadence* (2006), Kirsten MacLeod makes this point a focus in her analysis of Machen's writing at the fin de siècle:

In their zeal for literary homogeneity, these critics were insisting on distinctions between kinds of literary works, with these kinds being determined according to readership. Books like Machen's, and indeed those of other Decadents, threatened to erase these distinctions by promiscuously mixing elements of high

and low. These critics were offended at being catered to by a book that also addressed low brow or juvenile tastes. (123)

The manner in which Machen executed his tales that was a cause for offense to certain sensibilities of contemporary critics is a major factor for what brought the writer to the attention of later writers, especially H. P. Lovecraft.⁷ However, though Lane published Machen's *The Three Impostors* as Vol. XIX in the Keynotes Series, the next dozen years contained large gaps of time between when Machen completed finished work and when that work entered print, a gap opened by the varied responses to his work.⁸ The quandary came from publishers' aversion post-Wilde to the acceptance of and support for writing adorned with or that gestured to Decadence without a clear didactic purpose, and operated in combination with the Machen's expanded use of horror subjects and quasi-mysticism. Between the occasional literary publication (post-1902) and reams of journalism from his second career, there is a set of apexes that mark Machen's public life as a writer at points separated by two decades: *The Great God Pan* and that small charge that it caused and then the patriotic fervor of the Angels of Mons legend from "The Bowmen" (1914).⁹ Though Machen's version of Pan has had a lasting influence on the literary supernatural (e.g., Lovecraft, King, Straub, M. John Harrison, T. E. D. Klein, Alan Moore), his professional plight was not improved by his deployment of a version of the Great God that had none of the refinement from minor poetry, which Merivale refers to in the epigraph that I cite above.

What is called "Pan" by Machen's narrative is what David Weir means by the "lost *arché* or origin" (Weir xviii), and, furthermore, as I have shown, this preternatural force that begins with "The Experiment" is Paracelsian *prima materia*, the invisible field of Thomas Vaughan's *tenebrae activae* of dark matter brought incarnate on the page.¹⁰ Machen presents vitalism as an

accursed embodiment of nature that contorts any sanctimonious divine revelation and presence: “ET DIABOLUS INCARNATUS EST. ET HOMO FACTUS EST” (*The Great God Pan* 14).¹¹ My previous reading of the androgynous Helen Vaughan’s death as representative of the nigredo stage subverts that reading of the “diabolus.” Machen’s narrative intends for this Pan daemon to be a sinister repulser of common virtue and a debaser of conservative moral values and established social organization. Instead, borne (and born) from the first chapter’s experiment, this daemon that migrates from the country to the city is a challenge to heteronormative values and protected identities of the class of men who fret over their public reputations and their legal standing. Besides the artist’s creative imagination, Machen places his version of fused horror in temporary human form behind an avatar that involves more than one tributary, or stream, to use the terminology of Hartwell to refer to the understructure of English literary supernatural and horror.¹² English Decadence, under the influence from French Symbolists (e.g., Arthur Symons’s *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, 1899), considered Baudelaire as a spiritual, and for some an infernal, patriarch of the movement. In the poem “Une Charogne” (“A Carrion”), the speaker, who addresses his female lover, requests for his partner to recall a specific summer’s morning that they once shared. That memory is set in the summertime, the season of love’s height on Northrop Frye’s archetypal wheel for the typically romantic—and, of note, Machen’s Helen Vaughan is conceived, born, and dies during summer.¹³ Every male’s attachment to Helen Vaughan become a psychosomatic terror created out of what was once a passionate ardor, and, as in Machen’s story, the poem exploits from the outset the expectation of a standard love reverie to which the beloved is asked to attend before a gross reality of physical decay is unveiled.

Instead of a revel in idyllic romance for either the poem or the story, the erotic and the morbid form a symplegma. Baudelaire's speaker uses high romantic diction in his choice for a term of endearment, "mon âme," which appears to place the sentiment in Amor rather than Eros, and does so temporarily. In Chapter III, "The City of Resurrections," Mr. Charles Herbert makes the text's first reference to the adult Helen Vaughan, his former partner whose first days of life together was filled with apparent bliss, since she was a person "who seemed to thrill [his] heart" (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 16). The seeming quality is important here as it is in the poem: On the start of a summer's day, with all those vague possibilities of life yet to come, the poem's coupling first suggests an extension of that single moment of past to the present and then gestures with a hope for a life in the future for the couple. The decay and tableaux of *memento mori* in the twist that is the poem's next stanza, as signified by the flies and the corpse on the path, represent a kinetic and not static or passive process at work. Similarly, Helen Vaughan fulfils no passive, domestic role, since Machen's character moves between partners as frequently as her stays between a townhouse in high-end Mayfair to the Dorset Street rookeries and houses of assignation in Soho; the same dynamism is present at her seeming death. As in the later stanzas in Baudelaire's poem, the final chapter of *The Great God Pan* presents that being named Helen's death in graphic detail, as the narrative's attempt to represent the external decay of an overcharged internal corruption.¹⁴ The medical doctor on the scene for Helen Vaughan's exit, a Dr. Matheson, remarks in this manner upon his instinctual response to the cycling dissolution that he witnessed: "Revolting nausea rose up within me, and an odour of corruption choked my breath" (Machen 46). In reference to artists of the late-nineteenth century in France and England, David Weir finds that "never before have so many artists and writers been so obsessed with various processes and manifestations of decay—and drawn so much life, so much creative

energy, from the very decadence they decry” (Weir xii). For Weir, “Une Charogne” contains the quality of realism necessary to detail a corpse without the moral dualism that relies on the categories of pure and impure, and supplies “the arch, ironic commentary on the comforts of religion” (Weir xii). Machen never cites Baudelaire by name, not in any commentary on *The Great God Pan* from his autobiographical writings or in introductions or prefaces to later editions of the story. However, Helen Vaughan can be counted among the Baudelarian *femmes damnées* because of how the many male characters perceive what that being is and how it can and does ruin their circle of privilege.¹⁵

In further consideration of the “comforts of religion” that Weir finds Baudelaire’s poem to cast into doubt, in the first half of Machen’s literary career, at the mid-1890s with the Keynotes fiction, there is the raw, chthonic power of an older, less-easily-controlled pagan faith that one finds in *The Great God Pan* and in the “History of the Young Man with Spectacles” segment of *The Three Impostors*.¹⁶ *The Great God Pan* contains elements of 1890s British Decadence and the progressive scientific method of the Positivist school gone wrong, as MacLeod has detailed. The outré scientist of the transcendental, Dr. Raymond, releases a horror from the natural realm that allies with the mystery of ritual in a place and time where such ritual is no longer recognized, practiced, or believed in—the loss of ritual is part of Machen’s despair. In his introduction to *The Angels of Mons: The Bowmen and Other Legends of the War* (1915), Machen indicates his acerbic opinion of the current state of organized religious belief in England, and he implicates the problem as caused by clerical authority:

Well, I have long maintained that on the whole the average church, considered as a house of preaching, is a much more poisonous place than the average tavern...
And the main responsibility for this dismal state of affairs undoubtedly lies on the

shoulders of the majority of the clergy of the Church of England....They pass their time in preaching, not the eternal mysteries, but a twopenny morality...a sorry transubstantiation, a sad alchemy, as it seems to me. (21)

Machen found the Evangelical revival no less distasteful, with what he perceived as a puritanical, self-righteousness. Yet his works resist, even reject, as Machen did privately, major parts of the Decadent and Aesthetic movements and, by proxy, those who were members. As an example, a general feature of Decadence is that art and artificiality are awarded with superiority to nature.

The incipient horror in *The Great God Pan* derives from the artificiality of Dr. Raymond's unstoppered synthetic chemicals in their vials and flasks and his surgical technique of transcendental medicine, which releases from the mesocosm the vitalistic force of nature incarnate. In a summation that closes the novella's final chapter, Dr. Raymond admits that he committed grave errors in his process: "I broke open the door of the house of life, without knowing or caring what might pass forth or enter in" (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 50).

Gentlemen of wealth and leisure are the characters in *The Great God Pan* who fall in with, and whose lives fail, as a result of their contact with what entered in from that experiment that the doctor conducted twenty-three years prior. These men suffer an interruption of the comforts that they had enjoyed, and not a comfort from religion but from their privilege in the last days of the British Empire. Yet they appear, from the mortal effects and shock to their system, to be more sensitive than their fellow Londoners are to harm from the vitalism that they meet, an indication that their financially- and politically-assured public identities conceal more precarious positions.¹⁷

With its death of Helen Vaughan, the fragmented end of *The Great God Pan* is a kind of literary Rorschach test that shows something of the regenerative and degenerative possibilities in

the historical decade of the eighteen nineties, “when yellow bookery was at its yellowest” (Machen, *Things Near and Far* 98). In spite of the standard indifference of time, and in a typical human tendency with the end of a millennium, a century, a decade, or a year, the fin-de-siècle heard the clamorous heteroglossia of renewal fantasies (e.g., Positivist science may be counted here), new age prophecies with their claims of old wisdom or more-inclusive membership and direct experience of the numinous (e.g., the Spiritualists, the Theosophists, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn), and predictions of doom from wholesale degeneracy (e.g., Cesare Lombroso’s disciple Max Nordau).¹⁸ In the social anxiety and the unrest, the ethos of traditional beliefs operates as the medium for aspirations and animosities, and Machen’s Keynotes fiction taps into those prophecies and hype that gather to summon portentous visions of cultural decline. This bluster can be a good marketing strategy, which John Lane knew, and a convenient way for an ordering of the fin de siècle into an ur-narrative, as Chris Baldick has suggested: “Emphasize the recurring pattern of anxiety or dread in the cultural products of the period, yoking them under the dominant myth of degeneration” and “speak of the period in terms of decadence and the fin de siècle, and tend to conjure up a Phobic Nineties” (20). *The Great God Pan* is part of the literary sample from the late-eighteen eighties and nineties of femme fatales that embody, and that disembody, a phobic dread of external and internal loss of control. Situated chronologically between H. Rider Haggard’s *She* (1887) and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* and Richard Marsh’s *The Beetle* (both 1897), Machen’s novella shares with those works a tableaux of vigilant males who collaborate to defend their modes of existence from a monstrous outsider threat to their notions of health and traditional order. Machen’s outsider, known as Helen Vaughan and by other names, disturbs the men’s carefully fabricated social and psychic equilibrium.

As in those novels of invasion that precede and succeed *The Great God Pan*, fashionable bourgeois London is the main scene, and in that place the identified threat to the metropolis arrives from somewhere to the east in a tone of pessimism that rises over the proceedings. The descent into Machen's story is not of some bogey from Eastern Europe or the Near East, but the vital, chthonic truth of Arcadian myth from the Eastern Mediterranean with "new" attributes of the late-nineteenth century affixed: the New Woman (though, more accurately, Women), the New Journalism, and the New Fiction.¹⁹ What was earlier for these gentlemen a setting "of those mysterious incidents and persons with which the streets of London teem in every quarter and at every hour" (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 14) then becomes a place that causes one among their ranks to exclaim, "I shall leave London to-morrow, it is a city of nightmares" (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 36). In a lament of modern, mechanistic carnage, Eliot's speaker in *The Waste Land* (1922) names London and Vienna among the ruined capitals of empires that no longer exist. However, there is another literary parallel relevant to the current discussion of Machen and an invasive force with sexual danger that leads to dissolution among ranking members of imperial society. In 1900, Arthur Schnitzler, the acclaimed Viennese artist and medical doctor, published his controversial drama *Der Reigen* (*Round Dance*), with a carousel of lovers cast from the high and low stations of the author's Viennese society that counts flawed, lust-driven mortals but no monsters among the ranks. Yet in its series of sexual exchanges, the work depicts the same theme of invasion at play in two notable British literary works of monstrous invasions from earlier in the British fin de siècle: *The Great God Pan* and Stoker's *Dracula*. Schnitzler's work presents a promiscuous intermingling of classes and the danger of sexually transmitted infection, in remarks on the author's writing at the turn of the century. However, Laura Otis notes how Schnitzler "explores the destruction that can result from belief in barriers and paranoia

about penetration,” and that there “begins to develop a new concept of individuality that takes this openness into account” (Otis 120). Such a concept of openness then preys upon a mix of fears, many real but often exaggerated, of one’s vulnerability to the newfound threat of openness that can lead to the violation of one’s body and to the loss of social norms to which one subscribes.

In Machen’s novella, this threat of violation and its actuality travel along pathogenic and mental causeways, dissolving the integrity of body and mind. In work presented immediately prior to Machen’s finished draft of *The Great God Pan*, Theodor Meynert’s lectures on clinical psychiatry (collected in 1890) actively counter the use of what he judged to be the danger from the psychosomatic influence of hypnotic techniques. Meynert, who taught neuroanatomy to Freud and Schnitzler, “was convinced that hypnosis had a sexual basis and that when the cortex yielded control, all kinds of erotic impulses were released, potentially harming or humiliating the patient” (Otis 123). Stoker’s *nosferatu* uses a means of mental control of the victims whom he seduces, and something similar is alluded to in Machen’s work, not hypnosis but a mental change affected on the violated object by the violating subject.²⁰ Machen’s intended use of vitalistic dark matter as itself the horror becomes the means that deregulates the supposedly solid and assured positions, and sexuality, of a series of characters (types, really), the majority of whom are male. The threat to the gentlemen begins with the loss of standard gender distinction: “Mental barriers preserved human dignity and identity not just by screening out foreign suggestions but also by holding back internal impulses....To be entered, whether physically or mentally, was to be ‘unmanned’” (Otis 123). Stevenson cites the same fear, to be “unmanned,” when, in a letter from Jekyll to Utterson about the rift between Jekyll and Lanyon, he writes:

‘You must suffer me to go my own dark way. I have brought on myself a punishment and a danger that I cannot name. If I am the chief of sinners, I am the chief of sufferers also. I could not think that this earth contained a place for sufferings and terrors so unmanly.’ (*Strange of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* 30).

As the scapegoated and gendered figure of temptation, Helen Vaughan is cast as the typically-eroticized body of a woman who waits with patience for men, whom she receives in their suit for her. However, she is not to be mistaken with passivity, since she is the one who pursues and is pursued. Under the name of Mrs. Beaumont, characters describe this being’s townhome and its floral adornment as “‘one of the pleasantest houses of the season, so I have heard...it’s uncommonly jovial’” (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 28).²¹ And since Helen Vaughan is not the incarnation of the spirit of the language of flowers and their pleasance, then we return to *les fleurs du mal* and to the Viennese studies of the psyche. The narrative casts Helen Vaughan as a siren whose call echoes through the interior of each gentleman’s psyche post-liaison.

This unified being, who partakes of opposite and same-sex physical intimacy, must serve as either an eroticized mistress or as a demonized foe, which are identities fit for a dualistic worldview of high and low. Kirsten MacLeod has stated that the critics had the same difficulty with the text and how to categorize its content. Many reviewers took issue with *The Great God Pan*’s alleged prurience, such as the Westminster Gazette: “It is an incoherent nightmare of sex and the supposed horrible mysteries behind it...which would soon lead to insanity if unrestrained” (Machen, *The House of Souls* xvii). By different names and for different men, this being of “nightmare” is the foul wife who ruins Mr. Charles Herbert; the artist’s model whose composition causes the creative imagination to wither as the body wastes away; the cultured salon hostess and mistress of gentlemen to whom she supplies a last, dreadful delight; and the

prostitute in a Soho house of assignation and frequenter of flop houses. Dialectical disenchantment is present, and the effect is that Helen Vaughan cannot be admitted openly as having the complexity whose interlocking elements lay bare the gentlemen's consciences to their private, closeted behaviors.²² She must be the monster that corrupts them and not the cipher for their actions about which they cannot speak—what Stevenson's Jekyll calls "my nameless situation" (Stevenson, *Strange Case* 41). Those contemporary works that satirized Machen were unable to account for the text's silences and voids, which are the determinants of a state that the men enforce for self-preservation. To acknowledge in an unprotected, public manner that Helen serves as the exterior creation of their insular, closed reality would be a break from the discretionary realm that the men could not withstand. This disclosure of self would be a preemptive social suicide, a bitter irony of the socio-psychological danger of openness when taken into consideration that the private contact with Helen results in a rash of self-assassinations. In the novella's final chapter a modern trinity joins in a campaign to carry out a ritual of banishment: a man of science (a Dr. Matheson); one of the bachelors who is a member of the besieged group (Villiers of Wadham); and a witness to the first cause that is the source of the plague on this community (Mr. Clarke).

Among a variety of origins, including the moral crusade of Evangelical Christianity, the notion of Victorian prudery and the unspeakability of sex developed as an Edwardian and Georgian notion, extended by writers among the British modernists, as a means to demonstrate the present moment's more liberated views and less-restrictive mindset.²³ Michael Mason's study, *The Making of Victorian Sexuality* (1984), is one of the first to demonstrate the breadth of sources that produced a definition of "Victorian" that refers to sexual mores, and his work draws upon important surveys like Kenneth Clark's, whose study *The Nude: A Study of Ideal Art*

(1956) speaks of “the great frost of Victorian prudery” (150). “Victorian” as a reference to hypocritical prudery has had a long life since Edward VII’s reign, and in the early 1990s the English magazine *Viz* featured a regular character named “Victorian Dad,” who, as Martin Myrone, curator at the Tate Gallery, has indicated, “embodies the stereotype of a culture where sexuality could only be approached in circuitous, anxious and above all hypocritical ways” (24).²⁴ As with problematic visual art, like the art created by the character Meyrick that *The Great God Pan* refers to in Chapter IV: “The Discovery in Paul Street,” those artist works that were accused of literary Decadence presented a moral danger. The popular, contemporary moral argument was that exposure to these works would lead unblemished humanity to confront elements of “legitimate” culture that unscrupulous individuals had remade as pornography (like a rural goat god that goes from a pleasant piper to a panic inducer and indiscriminating fornicator). The awful next step would be to “lewdness, first in mind, then in action,” as stated in a column from *The Magazine of Art* in 1894, and, in Machen’s work, to mortal doom, which, for these gentlemen, is by suicide (cf. Chapter VI: “The Suicides”).²⁵

However, “Victorian” as a catchphrase for prudery, and as a marker for a prevaricating mismatch between word and deed, also received support from earlier twentieth century literary works and later-twentieth century historical studies, as if the extremes of the Jekyll and Hyde interior condition or the Helen Vaughan and Count Dracula exterior situations were common.²⁶ Commentary on sexual attitudes contemporary to Machen’s *Keynotes* publications through the later studies about the period attempt to cover a long and diverse stretch of history, with Steven Marcus’s *The Other Victorians* (1966) emerging as one of the most influential of these works, which appeared to challenge such a reputation of prudery and hypocrisy but still supported a view of artificial divisions for a non-heterogeneous Victorian society. Myrone has noted that

“‘Victorian’ attitudes can be traced much earlier than 1837, are hardly consistent through the period of Victoria’s reign or across different social groupings, and that prudery, far from being simply typical, is only one element in the richly textual private lives of nineteenth century men and women” (27). These studies and fictional representations have reinforced the stereotype of there being a set Victorian attitude about sexuality, where exploitation (e.g., Stead’s “The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon” and the Horos case and trial) and pornographic production continued en masse throughout the era as a vice concealed but rarely suppressed.²⁷ Machen’s novella offers up a virginal sacrifice, named Mary, who is “dressed all in white” and who “crossed her arms upon her breast as a little child about to say her prayers” (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 6-7), in order to facilitate the admittance of an over-sexed being, named Helen—“she has seen the Great God Pan” (7).²⁸ So, this part of the narrative ends with Mary’s psychological demise, soon followed by her bodily death, and the next chapter opens with Mr. Clarke poring over evidence, which will initiate a new search for answers. Thus, a basic cycle of life emerging from death occurs, of a beginning following an end, before another series of ends.

Thus, the crude, experimental surgery performed on Mary, that virginal test subject of her guardian, Dr. Raymond, along with the later dissolution of her child, provide elements of conception and decay that underlie the story’s structure. The vigilante hunt deems the adult Helen Vaughan’s removal necessary after she has wreaked social havoc on their long-established positions and threatened to expose their behaviors. Those who deal in the attempt to gather a mastery over assorted areas of uncertainty, particularly human behavior, into a controlled and regulated system without contagion often further the fragmentation of pre-existing systems.

II. The Transmutable Sex

Glennis Byron has noted similarities between Stevenson's writing and Machen's in regard to how social factors induce the stresses that manifest in externally- and internally-destructive ways (137).²⁹ Most notable is the idea that both *The Great God Pan* and *Strange Case* deal with the individual struck by the force of the unconscious, and who suffers under society's repressive structure. Helen enters a mortal, prescribed world; the girl in Machen's "The White People" (1902) leaves behind such a world and enters into a described environment, one in which her natural talents and nascent abilities may be developed and wielded, but also she appears to activate the landscape as if her presence has a magical effect of unknown quantum mechanics as an occult world unfolds its secrets for her. Helen Vaughan enters a world where the urban locale of London is meant to be contemporary within a few years with the reader's own version—Machen finished the novella in 1891, and the events after Chapter I are set in 1888.³⁰ In "The White People," *The Green Book* girl enters a version of the other world unanchored and loosened from common bounds and correspondences, one that departs from verisimilitude as the girl arrives at each point on her way to the faerie hill (a destination she is not conscious that she heads for), which transmutes into an other world. Surroundings do not transmute in *The Great God Pan*, but various psyches undergo alteration from tremendous pressure. In this novella, place does matter in relation to proximity as it does in *Strange Case*. For example, Utterson's residence is beside Soho with the nearness of a fashionable district to an area marked by deprivation and crime (cf. Charles Booth's London Poverty Map).³¹ The story geographies for characters' residences and dalliances, from fashionable to suspect, reflect the socioeconomic division of London. At the turn of a corner, or with the crossing of the street, persons of better social standing and economic means could enter a world different from their norm, and therefore exciting (temporary travels in slummy among the dangerous classes).

Their privileged status—for the men—also meant that they could leave just as easily. However, knowledge that Helen Vaughan does the same with high frequency, without any marker of shame or evidence of guilt, triggers an ethical dilemma for these men who track her. The Pan child's fastness to a pagan experience of nature may be the stuff of revulsion for the evangelical set (sect), and that detail alone would not turn off these men, but would probably excite them. The unfixed status of Helen Vaughan's gender imperils Machen's gentlemen.

Previously, I have demonstrated the alchemical significance from Chapter VIII: "The Fragments" of the complex, nigredo-like dissolution of Helen Vaughan's outward form, which subverts the viewpoint of the men that the death is one of devolution only. As D. P. M. Michael demonstrates with the connection between Machen's good friend A. E. Waite and Waite's commentaries of Thomas Vaughn (Eugenius Philalethes) and other alchemists, Machen "knew of the alchemical picture of the body's emergence by a gradual progression from bisexuality, or rather a-sexuality, in primal slime towards a spiritual existence" (Michael 13). Machen's biographers, Reynolds and Charlton, defer from granting an androgynous, asexual existence to Helen Vaughan, and they do so by explaining away that "the regular androgyne is an ordinary, frigid hermaphrodite, not a being that changes from sex to sex during the process of dissolution; the ordinary vampire sucks physical blood, whilst Helen Vaughan's operations are primarily on a spiritual plane" (46). They do not go so far as to claim any sexuality that is not heteronormative, and, from their position, the plane includes Helen Vaughan's active but negative daemonic type. However, the positive contemporary reviews of *The Great God Pan* avoid any mention of sex, in any context, and underline the chemical link from Machen to Stevenson.³² Even the final chapter of Stevenson's *Strange Case*, when Jekyll makes what he calls his "full statement," he

names a drive that is unholy and unnatural, which is at odds with Machen's chthonic and numinous one:

He thought of Hyde, for all his energy of life, as of something not only hellish but inorganic. This was the shocking thing; that the slime of the pit seemed to utter cries and voices; that the amorphous dust gesticulated and sinned; that what was dead, and had no shape, should usurp the offices of life. (60)

Though Stevenson demonstrated an interest in psychical research, he did not indicate that he gave any part of his attention to Neo-Platonic Hermeticism or philosophical alchemy.³³ In those fields, Machen acquired a knowledge of the sexual metaphors in the alchemical treatises and the bi-sexual body.

The final image of Helen Vaughan, as the men witness it, is of that being's sexual indeterminacy. As will be shown in a review of Havelock Ellis in the burgeoning field of Sexological studies during the fin de siècle, this image, already influenced in Machen by alchemy, derives another aspect from the then-popular belief in sexual indeterminacy, as cited from men of science such as von Krafft-Ebing and, later, Otto Weininger. Sexual indeterminacy is the state of an earlier stage of evolution, in which the biological degeneration witnessed is the image of what Machen's gentlemen interpret as the evidence of reversion. Helen Vaughan's life as a sophisticated, sexually-active salon hostess, by the rating of eighteen-nineties late-Victorian judgment, is a sign of inferiority. In the estimation of Otto Weininger's work, *Sex and Character* (1903): "Women really interested in intellectual matters are sexually intermediate forms" (70). Such popular writing as Weininger's, since discredited in a multitude of ways, resonates with the dualistic extremism that was present at the fin de siècle. Weininger's statement that "women are matter, which can assume any shape" (293-94) is not that far off from

the popular, contemporary view of women as an undifferentiated part of nature, and men as having the capacity for transcendent achievement, both for individual material success and for spiritual attainment.³⁴ Merivale concedes that Machen provides a new version of the Great God Pan who lives within the darker aspects of mental panic, but she also says that Machen “has no head for detail” and therefore fails “to realize the possibilities of the sinister Pan” (193). Not to gloss over the technical flaws in his writing, but Merivale’s assessment of *The Great God Pan* considers a limited version of its events. Her assessment does not account for the narrative’s themes of identities and concealment within the medico-legal context of the fin de siècle that can be lost behind the workings of popular fiction that Machen relies upon in the plot’s foreground, and for which he was parodied. Merivale makes a persuasive point that “being trampled to death by the spirit of evil in the universe is implausible and hard to visualize” (193), but that criticism does not consider how *The Great God Pan* exists within a context of sexual politics and legal matters that derive from Sect. 11 of the Labouchère Amendment. As MacLeod and my chapter on “The White People” and female adolescence show, the 1885 act had as its main function to be “an Act to make further provision for the Protection of Women and Girls, the suppression of brothels, and other purposes.” However, the Labouchère Amendment made easier the prosecution of consensual homosexual activity, and, unlike in the centuries-old anti-sodomy law, a specific gender was named in the legal language.³⁵

The Great God Pan opens at a Welsh March manor house that is surrounded by hills and woods, and in that place Pan as *tenebrae activae* is summoned, which results in the conception of a destabilizing force. The scientist who enables this event, states in that first chapter, “This world of ours is pretty well girded now” (*The Great God Pan* 3). Read as the civilizing projects that attempt to withdraw and differentiate rational societies from the irrational and chthonic, Dr.

Raymond's words find an echo with Puck in William Shakespeare's play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, who says, "I'll put a girdle round about the earth / In forty minutes" (II.2.350-51).

Machen's story opens with the unveiling of an otherwise hidden, vitalistic reality, whose girdle is outside of unenhanced, common human perception. The doctor's actions put this force into contact with mortal, material reality: "...the form of all things, but devoid of all form" from Mr. Clarke's drug-induced, mystical reverie (*The Great God Pan* 6). Shakespeare's play presents the ordered world marked by Athens, and the topsy-turvy realm of the woods with its supernatural forces come alive. Puck's prankish merriment is played with a note of terror repressed in the text and held over from the older oral folktales (woodcuts of Robin Goodfellow from the sixteenth century depict him as a horned woodland elemental), and the same is true of the inert pan inherited from the previous century before the English Romantics added their revolutionary mask. In *The Great God Pan*, Helen Vaughan is the site upon which the men realize their secret desires; thus, she is the return of that identity and its aspects that the men have repressed. The drama of her life, and the manner in which she expresses her desires, is counter to the reproductive heterosexuality within marriage that is the social norm through the nineteenth century.

III. A Debauched and Degenerate Science of Inversion

The divided self is what the psychological researchers who organized at the fin de siècle had called the multiplex personality. Frederic W. H. Myers called this state of humanity "the multiplex and mutable character of that which we know as the Personality of man" (134). Victorian Sexology had its interest in a fractured conception of the self. Among his other work on the history of sexuality, John Addington Symonds co-authored with Havelock Ellis one of the late-nineteenth century's most influential studies of sexual inversion (i.e., the third sex or

homosexuality). However, Symonds reveals in his memoir his own conflicted being, which he refers to as “this aberrant inclination in myself” (183). This aberration manifested as a “perpetual discord between spontaneous appetite and acquired respect for social law” (182). The social law at that time of his work with Ellis included the threat of the Labouchère Amendment to the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act. Symonds forced his public life into accord with the norm to stay out of violation of that law for the purpose of the maintenance of his reputation and the status of his professional life. The cost for him to abide by these strictures was a terrible internal pressure: “The agony of this struggle between self-yielding to desire and love, and self-scourging by a trained discipline of analytic reflection breaks the nerve. The only exit for a soul thus plagued is suicide” (Symonds 283). Symonds’s description is an approximation of the experience of the suicide victims in *The Great God Pan*. The narrative alleges that the men die as a result of their victimization by the unbridled sexual charge released upon them by Helen Vaughan. Their bodies’ destruction is shown in the aftermath of what they suffer post-Helen, in scenes when the men are defeated. Before their final loss in self-immolation, their suffering of the lead up to that moment happens without any specific detail or other description, unlike that pain experienced by females, like Mary in “The Experiment” and Helen in “The Fragments.” The blame for the men’s suffering is placed entirely upon Helen Vaughan, who lives multiple lifestyles across sexual, gender, and socioeconomic boundaries without fragmentation of her being. However, these Englishmen of the professional upper classes have no corresponding freedom of movement, either physical or psychological, due to the threat of scandal and blackmail.

Criminality and sexuality in the late Victorian period refract through *The Great God Pan* with its narrative of tragic deaths. These fatalities result from a vital, natural force that enters

into a modern contact zone that is constructed on the measurements of a firmly-defined understanding of human sexual behavior and biological imperatives. The fear of invasion of the human body's integrity and of the mind's sane functioning led to social regulations, detailed medical designations based on limited understanding and entrenched bias, and resulted in personal turmoil (cf. the lives of John Addington Symonds and Oscar Wilde). In *The Mismeasure of Man*, Stephen Jay Gould argues that Darwin's theory of evolution led to the reformulation of the questions asked by the life sciences, questions that had a significant influence on the field of criminal anthropology that Cesare Lombroso expanded quantitatively and refined in its application. Lombroso's criminal science derived from the anthropometric data that he amassed and forced by flawed deductions into a theory of evolution. His results are an example of the mismeasurement of human life, which is one outcome from the so-called Social Darwinism schools of thought. Gould has referred to this work as "the past comes to life again" (152). Criminal anthropology and degeneration theory hold that human identity is unstable, and dangerously so; both the field and the theory are linked closely in the history of Lombroso and his admiring student, Max Nordau, and his cultural degeneration theory of *Entartung*.

Chapter VII of *The Great God Pan*, "The Encounter in Soho," is centered upon the excited report of the character Villiers who, undercover, slumped his way among the underclass to gather evidence against Helen Vaughan as the source of the men's panic. He made this exertion to prove his theory, implanted by the suggestion of Mr. Clarke, that Helen is an atavistic horror who threatens to rend their exclusive society. The past that Villiers returns to report is inclusive of both the event that initiated the text ("The Experiment" of the first chapter) and a deeper history (preliterate and unmediated nature in which sign and meaning have less distance). As Villiers explains to Austin, "It is horrible enough; but after all, it is an old story, an old

mystery played in our day, and in dim London streets instead of amidst the vineyards and the olive gardens” (43). Villiers assumes that the knowledge that he has recovered will remove the danger of the monster to his associates and liberate the men from further risk who share his class rank and sexual proclivities. However, to slay the aberration that he and his comrades identify is an act that reinforces the status quo. This point is supported by Kelly Hurley’s assessment of the contemporary view of the human body: “Within the terms laid out by materialist science, the human subject is entrapped within the realm of matter—incapable of transcendence, doomed endlessly to demonstrate its gross and changeable physicality” (196). The standardized treatment of the human subject and sexuality in *The Great God Pan* is the mortal strike for the men to throw off any further intrusion into their private affairs that may reveal non-standard practices. Helen, the child of Pan, is the object of the narrative’s final pursuit, which differs from the intentions of earlier scenes. For the men in the middle chapters, their pursuit of Helen was for the purpose of their receiving pleasure. However, for the men in the later chapters, their purpose is to inflict pain on Helen to ensure destruction. The object that they allowed to seduce them is now the object that they seek to destroy. Eros and Thanatos have filled roles in a perverted mystery play of vengeance where no one who remains after Helen’s departure is made whole.

Helen Vaughan, the abhuman being, dies to the men’s world and through a transmutation of vital being she becomes a higher form that is outside of the men’s materialist understanding. The characters who survive stay within their tightly-defined selves that social regulations confine them to, and they must safeguard their mental and physical energies if they are to maintain themselves by the boundaries that have been marked as proper conduct (that their real-life counterparts knew, such as Symonds). The maintenance of their other lives of sexual inversion

will require another object of blame for the next time when the façade that conceals their queer identity is threatened with exposure. Then a new Helen must be found or fabricated to displace suspicion, or else a powerful patron must intervene. The latter is what occurred in the scandal of The Cleveland Street Affair of 1889, the year after the novella's timeframe, and one year prior to Machen's writing the first chapter. 19 Cleveland Street, Fitzrovia, London, post-scandal, officially no longer exists due to the fact that the address was quietly removed from the Land Register. The police inquiry found that the management of the townhouse procured rent boys from the General Post Office (GPO) whom members of the aristocracy and military officers solicited. Hugh Rawson in his book *Wicked Words* notes that a male prostitute used the term "gay" in reference to male homosexuals and female prostitutes in testimony gathered in the aftermath of the Cleveland Street Affair. In the documented testimony of an individual named J. Saul, filed as *Statement: Cleveland Street Case* (P.R.O. DPP 1/95/4), he states for the record: "I am still a professional 'Maryanne.' I have lost my character and cannot get on otherwise. I occasionally do odd jobs for different gay people."³⁶ The location of the historical scandal was called a "den of infamy" by a contemporary edition of the *Illustrated Police* report. In *The Great God Pan* the stand-in address of iniquity is 20 Paul Street, and Austen describes to Villiers that "it appeared that Number 20 was in very bad odour in Paul Street" (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 19). That house was the residence of the married couple Mr. Charles and Helen Herbert, the latter of whom is referred to only as Mrs. Herbert by her disgraced husband in Chapter III: "The City of Resurrections," because, as Mr. Herbert explains to Villiers, "only human beings have names" (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 17). In the narrative's recent past, a man was found dead in the pre-dawn hours after a sexual liaison at 20 Paul Street, and his identity is protected by the investigators' use of the pseudonym "Mr. Blank." The power of scandal is to make the matter of

private lives into content for shaming and into a news product that is consumable as public fodder for the widest possible audience.

Proximity is important in consideration of Machen's fiction and contemporary socio-cultural conditions of the eighteen nineties, where the nearness of bodies could induce disgust and generate discomfort. The geographic location of the Cleveland Street Affair is near the West End setting of Machen's fiction, a few blocks directly above the Soho district that is Helen's haunt (the economic disparities from block to block can be seen in Booth's London Poverty Map that he issued in the early eighteen nineties).³⁷ The concern for the segregation of high from low social statuses, and the Victorian multiplex personality that fears discovery in crossing those lines, abounds in *The Great God Pan*. Foucault's assessment applies to the world that Machen knew, in which the discourse on sex had been marked by the allegedly neutral viewpoint of science. However, the use of science was as an evasion that did not speak about sex itself that did not come with judgment or reliance upon clear categories. The descriptions of sexual inversion and the discourses on aberrations and perversions construct a particular sexual morality as the medical norm: heteronormative married life, and sex for the engendering of children but not for the pleasuring of self. These divisions and their discourse are a part of the reality that *The Great God Pan* presents, but in fragments that mirror in coruscations the false images of the self. The falsifications received their power from the codification of the law and the legitimization from various fields of medical science that gathered additional support from popular sensation and scandal narratives.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: EVERYTHING ENDS IN MYSTERY

What I had been doing was this: I had been inventing tales in which and by which I tried to realise my boyish impression of Gwent....This, then, was my process: to invent a story which would recreate those vague impressions of wonder and awe and mystery that I myself received from the form and shape of the land of my boyhood and youth....I always saw it as a kind of fairyland.¹

All ages are ages of transition, but this is an awful moment of transition. It seems to me as if there were much less of the old reverence and chivalrous feeling in the world than there used to be. I am old and I may be wrong, for this generation has assuredly some spirit of chivalry.²

Dear Pan, and ye other gods who dwell in this place, grant that I may become beautiful within, and that such outward things as I have may be in agreement with the things within. May I count him rich who is wise; as for gold, may I have so much of it as no one but the reasonable man should be able to bear and carry.³

One day I told him that I was a good deal afraid of dying, but he said, in that kind voice, "I expect you will find it a very happy change."⁴

There they stood, ranged along the hillsides, met
To view the last of me, a living frame
For one more picture! in a sheet of flame
I saw them and I knew them all.⁵

I. Into the Crowned Knot of Unknowing

Machen spent the first half-decade of his time in London with bland misadventures of penury and loss in what was a period of continual privation that raised the image of the Welsh Marches to nearly beatific status. Those poor conditions would return in the final two decades of his life, spent with his beloved wife Purefoy in Old Amersham, Buckinghamshire in a home found for them by their niece, Sylvia Townsend Warner. As a young man in London, Machen

kept the company of books more than people, and continued on this lonely pace through 1885, when George Redway provided steadier work for Machen as a cataloger and indexer of the manuscripts and the bookseller's second-hand inventory that provided for Machen a second, and now esoteric education: "A somewhat extensive course of miscellaneous and obsolete reading had done a great deal to prepare the way" (Machen, *The Three Impostors* 164).⁶ Machen could not know at the time that this lean period of his London adventure would end within the next two years with both of his parents' deaths and the inheritance of a series of matrilineal legacies from his Scotch relations. The receipt of this financial aid coincided with what would be his departure from older forms of expression and the start of his pastiche experiments of Stevensonian narratives of occult matter. Here ended the period in Machen's life when he survived on loaves of bread and canisters of green tea, smoked black shag tobacco, and, when he was able to splurge, ate currant biscuits and treated himself to a pint of ale at a Clarendon Road tavern (*Far Off Things* 118). His explorations into the metropolis cost him nothing, and provided him with the urban setting for his fin-de-siècle fiction that synthesized his life's circumstances of want of money and of human company (e.g., the dark Gothic romance of *The Three Impostors* and the sexual menace of *The Great God Pan*).

Machen's status as a minor author, in the sense defined by Deleuze and Guattari, allows for the writer to be grouped with various contemporary and modern authors, and this allowance extends to the Trans-Atlantic. Coeval and a world away, at the end of his stay in New Orleans on Cleveland Avenue (not Cleveland Street), Lafcadio Hearn published *Gombo Zhèbes: Little Dictionary of Creole Proverbs* (1885). He had gathered the proverbs from six Creole dialects in Louisiana and in neighboring areas, and then translated them into French and English, languages that Machen knew well and cultures that he traveled between. From the globe trekker, Hearn, to

the man of the March and the Metropolis, Machen, there is a special resonance in the proverb, “*Ça ou pédi nen fê ou va trouvé nen sann,*” which Hearn translates from the Creole as: “What you lose in the fire, you will find in the ashes” (11). In his reflections upon how he could never match his imaginative concepts to their literary execution, Machen stated tersely, “He dreamed in fire; he has worked in clay” (Machen, *Far Off Things* 101).⁷ As I have shown, from among those ashes are works that hold distinction in the history of the British literary supernatural, and those works connect Machen in multiple ways to diverse cultural and historical concerns of the late Victorian period: non-normative sexuality and heterodox spirituality, from a man who was heterosexual and High Church Anglican.

For Machen, whom his American publisher, Alfred A. Knopf, called the flower-tunicked priest of nightmare, the mysteries of life can be discovered in the enjoyment of the pour of a pint of ale and a pipe of good tobacco, at least those mysteries that are worth knowing.⁸ His delight in domestic comforts and his devotion to family and socializing with friends, over bowls of strong punch and games of skittles, belie the harsher image that the reviews portray of the artist of the Keynotes series at the fin de siècle: sex-obsessed and of ghastly humor. T. E. D. Klein partly tags Machen’s outlook when he writes that Machen repeats a few themes about modern loss and nostalgia for the cultural wealth and folklore of England’s past now fallen off: “*The old ways were better, and the world today lacks mystery and color. London has lost its magic, and the nation has forgotten its traditions. Old farmhouses, old taverns, old country churches—all are relics of a more natural way of life*” (276, emphasis Klein’s). While Machen’s essay collection *Dog and Duck* (1924) contains many examples of the above themes of decline, and in his essay “Happiness and Horror” (1908) he regrets “the misery and horror and hideousness of our time” (561), he is neither a stubborn degeneration theorist nor a resentnik lost in spite to all

of the wrongs done to him.⁹ Throughout his works of fiction, prose poems, and non-fiction, Machen states that a fuller appreciation of the present is a matter of perception, which, as he knew, could be a lesson of uncertain ends and even less sure means, like those occurrences that he had lived through in 1899-1900.¹⁰ What he did know was that “he who cannot find wonder, mystery, awe, the sense of a new world and an undiscovered realm in the places by the Gray’s Inn Road will never find those secrets elsewhere” (*Things Near and Far* 206).¹¹ Machen kept a belief in present moments of worth, and he was able to state his belief in that volume of autobiography written at a time of renewed financial hardships that beset him and his family in the early nineteen twenties, when he reflected upon his past in Gwent, the early term of his poverty in London, and the pain of his loss of Amy and the troubles of psychical perception that followed.

Machen held on to the traditions that he could in his way, complained about those that already were gone, and bemoaned the continual loss of mysteries and manners, but he was careful to distance himself from any dour Protestantism or strict orthodoxy.¹² While he was ignored by the reading public and berated by critics during the earlier parts of his writing career, Machen’s later recognition for his use of the alternative Pan daemon, his version of the fair folk, and literary interest in the occult has not faded. The passage from Machen’s idiosyncratic writing career to his continued influence on modes of the literary supernatural and the horror genre in the present is indebted to H. P. Lovecraft and the monograph *Supernatural Horror in Literature* (1927), which is a strange path when the mechanistic materialism of Lovecraft in the nineteen twenties is considered in its contrast to the mystic tendencies of the Christianity of Machen.¹³ Machen resides in a faith of things unseen, at the sign and symbol of the veil that Joshi criticizes as a fixation that shut down a consideration of, and an ability to understand and to

acknowledge, the benefits of scientific enquiry and its methods. Machen never converted to Catholicism as did Wilde, Beardsley, Dowson, and other artists who have been grouped among the British Aesthetes, but, like them, Machen admired the medieval world and its Roman Catholic ritualism (the obituary in *The London Times* wrongly states that he had converted to Catholicism). After the death of Amy, for the remainder of his life Machen was a High Church Anglican with an intense interest in the Celtic Church (e.g., the Graal legends of *The Secret Glory* and *The Great Return*). In his essay “On Paganism” (1924), Machen makes no boasts about the suprasensual or transcendental, and he asserts the general epistemological limits of knowledge and of metaphysics:

As to all else, what do we know? ‘Is there a God?’ asks St. Thomas Aquinas, opening his great treatise; and his answer is, ‘Apparently not.’ Mark the emphasis on ‘apparently’; but do not most of us live only in appearances, in phenomena, in the world wherein ginger is hot, and meat satisfies hunger, and drink quenches thirst, and women appease desire? All this we know certainly; beyond this we are in a world of conjecture, theory, dream, mystery, vague possibility. There may be a God, our bodies may be the mere veils of the spirit, the mind may be one of this spirit’s instruments. All this may be so, but we do not know that it is so. (25)

Machen’s faith, as does any spiritually-directed belief, comes within the realm of something other than proof in the scientific manner. There is a resonance here between Machen and Flannery O’Connor, another writer whose faith informs her writing and who says in “A Reasonable Use of the Unreasonable” (1969) that “belief, in my own case anyway, is the engine that makes perception operate” (59).¹⁴ Machen’s habit of being, held from within his position of

faith and his love for his family and his small but close circle of friends, provided him with the sustenance to endure at the bleaker periods of his life and on to his *unio mystica*.¹⁵

Whatever degree of surety with which Machen believed in immaterial and non-physical realities did not come for him as free from doubt, and he did not refrain from this admission. He lived something equivalent to Tennyson's "honest doubt" (XCVI of *In Memoriam*, 1850). We can consider Machen's interest in esotericism and the occult as evidence of his willingness to entertain the possibility of the means to alternative types of knowledge that Annie Besant referred to as a type that "exists in states other than those at present known to science" (357).¹⁶ The essay "The Literature of Occultism" (1899) is a fine example of Machen's combined interest in multi-part occult wisdom, particularly Thomas Vaughan's alchemy, and his own Christian grounding. As this section indicates, Machen was willing to entertain the possibilities cited by those suggestive works that he read in his Redway and British Museum Reading Room years, and he does so within the context of an allusion to 1 John 3:2 (KJV):

But this literature of occultism was not always vulgar. Futile, perhaps, it was always, or perhaps, like the ritual of Freemasonry, it did once point the way to veritable enigmas; if it could never tell the secret, it may have whispered that there was a secret, that we are the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be. (42-43)

As *Hieroglyphics: A Note Upon Ecstasy in Literature* and most of Machen's fiction presents, his personal interests and literary content is apt to disavow realism and favor the numinous, both in its negative and positive charges, and elements of supernatural fear and trembling in the occult interiority of the creative imagination as applied to the modern conditions that Machen found intolerable. This path could not, and did not, produce many direct commentaries on

contemporary social issues—including Machen’s list of intolerables—but there is a persistent suggestiveness of other wonders that exists in his writing.

The pull that was exacted on Machen’s conscience at the crossroads between sorcery and sanctity, typified by Crowley’s *Goetia* and Waite’s theurgy, is the foundation of the exemplary story “The White People,” which counts among the finest contributions made by any writer to the field of the literary supernatural in English. E. F. Bleiler cites the story’s unique position among the genre in this manner: “This document is probably the finest single supernatural story of the century, perhaps in the literature” (Qtd. in Klein 277).¹⁷ The scholarly silence and the absence of an extended analytic treatment of the story raises the question of whether this lack of critical attention has something to do with what Marina Warner has stated about how “the supernatural is difficult terrain; of its very nature, it resists discourse; or, to put it more accurately, it is always in the process of being described, conjured, made, and made up, without ascertainable outside referents” (159). Machen had lost a handle on his own life’s referents within a year after the completion of “The White People,” as he bore witness to his wife’s final stage of cancer. As a mark of his character in the aftermath of his wife’s death, Machen did not immerse himself in the puerility and instability of the goetic arts, but neither did he take the way of sanctity. He would scoff at any intimation of their being any sign of holiness in his ability to resist temptation in a turn to darker pursuits and unsavory company. In the wake of his most-productive creative period, when his inheritance gave him the chance to write what he wanted without fear of want as he would never be able to do again, Machen’s gallery of dangerous beings include a motley crew of amoral scientists, fair folk and forgotten peoples, secret societies, lamiae, and pagan gods—the core of an industry of print and filmic monster tales,

science fiction, horror and the supernatural, and speculative and weird fiction whose authors and volumes have followed Machen's mortal life.

II. We Do the End in Different Voices, or, Henosis for the Rest of Us

Interest continues in the non-quantifiable aspects of reality, from ironic to un-ironic manifestations in secular and non-secular quarters. The 2013 World Fantasy Convention, a professional conference to be held in Brighton, England, in addition to the many panels and keynote addresses, will feature a celebration of the life and works of one author: Arthur Machen, the sesquicentennial of whose birth is next year. Enchantment, and a desire for it, has survived beside the acultural rise of modernity and the conditions that have followed. The generic methods of globalizing are factors that have molded an interrelated world where pressure points and breakages located in one place exert their distributed force in the barbed ripples of a sick butterfly effect. Unrestrained spending, excessive borrowing, market manipulating, and the widening gaps between classes and populations are the ripples from the nightmarish Fuselian horse latitudes that, once manufactured, form a tidal wave at the shorelines of decent, hardworking people. A commercial disaster, like a financial crisis in one country, may deepen a recession over the border in a neighboring state and upset the markets in sovereign nations on separate continents, driving a larger wedge between those who need and access to the necessities that they need. Wealth, opportunity, and education gaps widen as pale austerity spreads, and the threats to one's material well-being increase. The combination of travel technology, new migration patterns, human displacement from wars and climate change, and the mutation of viruses—including ones previously not readily-transmittable from animal host to human host—means that a strain of influenza or other type of pathogen may be the pandemic that destroys

humanity in a Captain Trips horror event.¹⁸ Mortality is the constant with an inevitability that requires no use of hokey prognostication, consultation of a psychic medium, or shuffle of a tarot deck. Death is the ultimate personal catastrophe for each of us: No one here gets out alive. A world without people is not an “if” but an inevitable, Pascalian question of “when” is it to be our turn for individual extinction.¹⁹ These clear and present scenarios are examples of natural horror, while the works that I have examined from Machen are types of art horror, and, to be more exact, are the genre of literary horror and that indefinite boundary at which the literary supernatural works best. Machen deals in the type of horror that Noël Carroll identifies as separate from natural horror in that these works “serve to name a cross-art, cross-media genre whose existence is already recognized in ordinary language” (10). Not to deny natural horror all that it does reap from life, art horror provides an outlet for, and an expression of, the daily historical traumas.

What follows for each of us is unknown. One may choose, if one gets a choice, to live this here and now with a dose of hopeful if battered optimism, stoicism, hedonism, or some other -ism of one’s own. One may strive forth with indifference, stay paralyzed with ignorance, or go in a full-on embrace of the selfish gene. What is more likely is that one lives by someone else’s fabrications and impositions. The literary highs and lows that are the miscegenation and dark matter of Machen’s *The Great God Pan* end in a final chapter called “The Fragments,” where the preceding chapters’ detritus of confusion, fear, and pain gathers. The anxious uncertainty and experimentation that had a tentative place in the eighteen nineties find expert development in the range of master works of the post-Edwardian modernists. T. S. Eliot searched in poetics for a way beyond the waste land of Western humanity’s fractures and chose two of the *Fragments* of Herakleitos as epigraphs for *Four Quartets*, the first of which, Fragment 2, is relevant to these concluding thoughts: “Though wisdom is common, yet the many live as if they had a wisdom of

their own” (trans. Burnet).²⁰ His personal essays and letters suggest that Machen would agree that most people give little heed to any all- and ever-pervading natural law of wisdom—the Logos—and instead follow their own narrow understanding, willfully ignorant, often to their own hurt and to that of other persons. By World War II, Machen was in poor health that restricted his ability to meet with friends and maintain contact with other writers, and he had lost relevance in the literary world many years prior (the early nineteen twenties was the last revival of interest in his work in his lifetime). Yet Eliot donated to the literary appeal launched in 1943 for Machen’s eightieth birthday and helped to secure for him a Civil List pension (Valentine 131).²¹ The generous tally eased the financial difficulties in Machen’s and his wife’s last years before he went to the threshold of the veil and on to what may or may not be at the other side, somewhere in or out of the mesocosm that one may glimpse at the thin places of mental barriers.

What dreams may come, what waits beyond the little lives rounded with a wall of sleep, and what may in the end be an unimaginable beginning are unknown, unverified. For any report that tries to say differently, and for any person who asserts to know a truth that affirms or denies an ultimate Is or Is Not as an (or the) answer, the deserved response is immediate suspicion with acute care to be taken to challenge any lies and to find whether a hoax or fraud is at play.

Machen’s version of the Christian faith acknowledged doubt, as uncertainty is a fundamental condition of faith, whatever the believer’s denomination is. In John 20:29 (KJV), there is a pithy expression for this idea of faith that is held amidst the unknown, and which is similar to *The Book of Common Prayer* that names faith as evidence of things unseen: “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” In a criticism of S. T. Joshi’s reading of Machen, Kai Roberts comments that “uncertainty and an apprehension of the unknown are fundamental conditions of faith and the areas it designates as ‘sacred’ or ‘holy’ are symbols of this acceptance

of all that is beyond our comprehension and provide us with an ongoing connection to this awareness” (*Omnia Exeunt In Mysterium*). Machen kept that awareness and its humbling awe close to him, from his youth in Gwent to the last days in Old Amersham.

While on the stage, Machen often performed bit parts as Dr. Samuel Johnson, a writer for whom Machen had great admiration, and where an unlikely connection can be found between each writer in their reflections about the unknown and mortal certitude. In Samuel Johnson’s novella *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia* (1759), the character Imlac states that anecdotal evidence points to a persistence of some part of life that continues outside the memory of those who continue to live in the world after the deaths of those who once lived:

That the dead are seen no more...I will not undertake to maintain, against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages and all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which perhaps prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth; those that never heard of one another would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience can make credible. That it is doubted by single cavillers can very little weaken the general evidence; and some who deny it with their tongues confess it by their fears.²²

That the once-living are seen does not tell what kind of existence that the now dead have. From their founding, the Spiritualists have tried to get that information and claim to do so in their alleged contact with deceased persons. Death has undone many, and Machen, with his creative imagination and a speculative temperament sobered by skepticism, was no wide-eyed and credulous mark. He was no Spiritualist, either.²³ Machen wrote about ghosts only a handful of times in five decades of prose fiction in works such as “The Bowmen” (1914), “The Happy

Children” (1920), “The Exalted Omega” (1935), and “The Children of the Pool” (1936). In his personal life, one documented source exists in which he admits to his having a personal experience as a witness to an apparition of the human form. In a reply to the composer John Ireland, Machen admits that on the same hill as Ireland visited he also once saw ghosts of time, the Stone Tape category of ghosts, a term from *The Stone Tape* (1972), written by Nigel Kneale.²⁴ At separate times, each artist had seen an apparition of children on the same spot: Harrow Hill, West Sussex, with Harrow derived from the Old English *hearg* (a hilltop heathen temple or holy grove). The natural world and a metaphysical occurrence that meet at the same point and at an abandoned once-sacred place, now turned to the use of a modern picnicking spot, could be an old plotline from Machen’s fiction, but instead goes into that Fortean X-file tabbed “Can Such Things Be” (in consideration of a title that Ambrose Bierce used for his supernatural tales).

The spiritual quests of the fin-de-siècle and the belief in the actuality of mental processes have not disappeared, and the varieties of people who have taken up such interests signify not a revival but a continuation, though less organized than a century earlier. Machen’s contemporary Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of the master detective who relied upon deductive reasoning, wanted to know what comes next, dedicated himself to Spiritualism, was duped by the Cottingley Fairies, and failed to confirm anything beyond the ashes and the dirt that is the common fate.²⁵ Harry Houdini, a master of modern enchantment, wanted to know if there is a next act after this life and had nothing to report (e.g., the “Margery” affair in Boston). Edison, whom Albert Harrison has called “perhaps the ultimate utilitarian” (5), wanted as fervently to know, too. He built a Congregational church, nurtured a fascination with mysticism, and sought communication with the dead. He could verify nothing. Cesare Lombroso and W. T. Stead

came to the end of their lives on the same search, with the same paucity of scientific proof. Lombroso's final publication is *After Death—What? Spiritistic Phenomenon and Their Interpretation* (1909), and in the days following his death reports stated the kind of story headlined like this special cable to *The New York Times* (23 Oct. 1909): "Expect Lombroso's Ghost: Dead Criminologist Promised to Report Himself—Italian Spiritualists on Alert." Less than two months later, W. T. Stead invited Guglielmo Emmanuel, a journalist from the *Corriere della Sera*, to his home at Cambridge House, Wimbledon Park Road South to witness spiritualistic séances. Stead's promise was that contact would be made with the criminal anthropologist who staked a reputation on his amassing measurements of human parts but with an inability to present the results as a convincing theory that could withstand critical scrutiny. No *risorgimento* of Lombroso's vital essence arrived for the journalists.

This Lombroso and Stead confluence at a hazy notion of a mediumistic spiritland is unexpected if the only predictors used are their earlier, pre-Edwardian work, which, as prior chapters show, touched upon concerns from Machen's life and in his writing career. However, Stead's entanglement in the Horos case and trial showed him by 1901 as a man embarked upon a different tact from his shock journalism that helped to lead to the passage of significant legislation for the protection of minors. This new dedication to spiritism and his proselytizing for mediumship remained until his death on the Titanic. In a commitment no less credulous than Conan Doyle and the fairies, Stead welcomed the Horos couple to take advantage of his hospitality, which led to his having to perform damage control on the stand at the Old Bailey to distance himself from an association that he had encouraged by his own lax approach to claims of occult phenomena and special abilities.²⁶ The title of Gualtiero Campino's *The New York Times* article of 12 Dec. 1909 is suggestive of a narrative that Stead's critics could now

formulate from his career milestones and infamies: “W.T. Stead's ‘Talk’ with Lombroso at Cambridge House: Amusing Details of a Séance that Marks another Exposure in Journalist’s Career.” The implicit reference to earlier exposures includes Stead’s sensationalist scheme that became *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon*, whose methods resulted in his brief imprisonment: “It should not be forgotten that Stead actually performed a criminal act in order that he might become the notorious writer of a series of articles” (Campino SM2).²⁷ Then, a few years later, Stead harried the publisher Henry Vizetelly over the release of cheap editions of Zola in English translation, which Stead considered to be an act worthy of moral outrage due, and censorship, to the literature’s sexual content.²⁸ Here is a Foucauldian example of the preoccupation with sex in Victorian society, which, in Stead’s case, agreed with the activity of the purity movement and their vice squads to keep the railway station bookstalls and shop windows stocked with what Stead would deem to be healthy and clean merchandise.²⁹ These attempts to enact silence on sexuality added to the discourse and further production.³⁰

A few factors appear to be at work behind this final and notable, if not typical, instance of the indefinite boundary in the career of Stead, another contemporary of Machen’s who sought in vain for a proof that Machen believed to be non-quantifiable and beyond the language of the living. Campino sets forth in his *The New York Times* article the biographical relevance of the goings on at Cambridge House and the earlier incidents from the fin de siècle:

Mr. Stead is the son of a Congregational minister and inherited from his father a love for the superstitious and an egotistical idea of virtue. The former is now being sensationally manifested by his spiritualistic bureau at Cambridge House, while the latter has found expression through the whole course of the man's career, from his journalistic apprenticeship as editor...forty years ago to his latest

interviews with the crowned heads of Europe and his brochures on anti-militarism or masterpieces of art. (SM2)

By 1909, Stead had a resident medium by the name of King who claimed to have control over the spirit of a lady named Julia, who was somehow tied to a piece of furniture in Cambridge House (“the bureau” referenced above, which may have been meant to serve as a spirit locus, a kind of hitching post for phantasmagoria). An Italian journalist from the above-named Italian newspaper, a colleague of Campino’s, visited Stead’s residence to observe whether or not the spirit of Cesare Lombroso could be summoned to parley with him. To the direct queries asked by Guglielmo Emmanuel, the Italian journalist, the only answers spoken through King the medium were nonsensical and irrelevant—patent fraud with no entertainment value. There was a lesson in the human capacity for the production of spectacle, but otherwise the evidence was that a crusading journalist had fallen to collusion in the perpetration of irrelevant parlor charades.

In search of the old straight track and the ancient British cursuses, of the faded turf mazes, of the broken stones of the henges and cairns, and of the stolen pieces of the looted barrows where the memories have departed of their builders and their purpose, the scant evidence remains inconclusive.³¹ The circuits of the labyrinth of choices, our own and mostly those made by others that direct us, and the indecisions of individual will that bring us to the central crypt that will be the final dark cave or the place of betwixt and between, hold facts that also will fade. In a letter written to his son Giorgio in 1935, James Joyce writes: “My eyes are tired. For over half a century, they have gazed into nullity where they have found a lovely nothing” (Menard 71). The high aesthetic purpose of Joyce’s character Stephen Dedalus does not attribute any spiritual powers to art, or view art as having a spiritual source. However, the “nullity” to which Joyce refers finds a common response in the aesthetic response to death. In

his movie *F for Fake* (1972), Orson Welles stands at evening outside of the Chartres Cathedral (Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres) and meditates that the primary fact of life is that we die, but that the effort to respond creatively must continue: “‘Be of good heart,’ cry the dead artists out of the living past. Our songs will all be silenced—but what of it? Go on singing.”³² Another fact that is verifiable is that Arthur Machen died on 15 December 1947 in a retirement home, preceded by the death of Purefoy, his wife, by less than a year.

Machen, the consummate skeptic who wanted to and did believe in an afterlife, repeats a final statement that still speaks on a weather-worn headstone in St. Mary’s Parish Church graveyard in Old Amersham, Buckinghamshire, England: *Omnia Exeunt in Mysterium*.³³ A fitting counterpart to those carven words that state how everything ends in mystery is to be found in Machen’s prose poem “The Rose Garden.” In that work, a young woman reflects upon her lover’s words: “He had always told her that there was only one existence, one science, one religion, that the external world was but a variegated shadow which might either conceal or reveal the truth; and now she believed...veiling her soul with the half-light and the half-shadow” (Machen *Ornaments in Jade* 3). The rich, Plutonic night into which we go, and whatever Platonic shadows may show their real forms, find their counterparts in Machen’s writing. His grand narrative is that there is sorcery and sanctity in the world that is experienced by the human form in its narrow capacities and limited abilities. His unfulfilled hope was that politicians would perform their job functions well and leave him an ordered society where he could be himself and prosper. Machen celebrated the common life and the common vision that can be transmuted by a division of the apparently inseparable by a dissolution that then could re-animate into something rich and strange, but perhaps terrible. While his outlook grew ever more conservative later in life, his notion of resurrection remained unorthodox. Among the horrors

that he lived from the losses that he had suffered, and added to by the advent of modern warfare, Machen held out that there could be transcendence into a sanctity that is holy, not in spite of the gross parts of mortal life, but because of them.

ENDNOTES

Chapter 1

1. For a detailed treatment of Machen's attitudes on Celtic topics at the fin de siècle, see Gwilym Games's article "The Feigned Celt? Machen in the Celtic Twilight" (2006). Machen's essay "The All Pervading Celt" is the starting point for understanding these attitudes and appeared in 1898 as the lead article in *Literature*, the periodical founded by *The Times* (London) and a forerunner of *The Times Literary Supplement*. Machen's journalistic career began with that essay when his position at *Literature* was equivalent to that of an assistant editor.

2. On the subject of Machen's name, American writer T. E. D. Klein adds, "Machen—rhymes with 'Blacken'—his mother's maiden name; father, John Edward Jones, rector of nearby Llandewi, assumed the name upon marriage to benefit from a family will" (276). Tennyson was in the area seven years prior to Machen's birth.

3. Machen thought highly of much of Blackwood's fiction and his writing skill, but disagreed in no uncertain terms with his counterpart's pantheistic beliefs. This opinion is best captured in a letter written by Machen to Vincent Starrett:

I have met him [Blackwood] a number of times in certain esoteric circles. He is a most interesting and amiable man. There is some difference perhaps in our approach to our subject matter, although I realize we are lumped together by the reviewers. Tennyson, you remember, says 'the cedars sigh for Lebanon,' and that is exquisite poetry; but Blackwood believes the cedars really do sigh for Lebanon and that, Starrett, is damned nonsense!

4. In 1893, two years prior to the publication of *TTI*, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle introduced the supercriminal Professor Moriarity in "The Last Adventure," a story written with the purpose to kill off Sherlock Holmes. Both Moriarity and Doctor Lipsius use London for their central command center and employ a network of agents to carry out their illicit deeds and plans.

5. As far as a Victorian tension that continued to develop between science and religious belief since the published research and theories of Malthus and Darwin, there are countless individuals who have written about the contact zones of the conflict. In the opening line of Frank M. Turner's book *Between Science and Religion*, the author asks the question, "Was there a conflict between science and religion in late Victorian England? T.H. Huxley, Bishop Wilberforce, John Tyndall, Francis Galton, W.K. Clifford and William Gladstone certainly thought so" (Turner). Turner cites many examples of books that talk about the relationship between science and religion during that time like John Draper's book *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (1874), and Andrew White's two-volume *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (1896), both written in the late-nineteenth century. Without a fault of anachronism, there is abundant evidence to support the statement that there was a general fear and mistrust of science during the late Victorian era.

6. Cf. the content of my chapter on alchemy. Oswald Crollius (or Croll) was an alchemist and professor of medicine at the University of Marburg. As a successor to Paracelsus, Crollius continued to study and teach the concept that nature is epiphany.

7. In the Alfred A. Knopf introduction to *The Three Impostors* (1923), Machen voices his displeasure with how admirers, friends, and acquaintances have posed questions about the sources for his creative work: “We have our funny little ways, our amusing little points of pride and dignity, all of us, authors as well as the rest, and I was strongly inclined to resent the implication that I had embroidered rather than invented” (viii).

8. See Ziolkowski’s *The Sin of Knowledge: Ancient Themes and Modern Variations* (2000).

9. Late-twentieth-century and twenty-first authors and producers of multimedia have added the role of business and political interests in esoteric and occult experimentation and medical science. Steven Moffat’s script for the BBC miniseries *Jekyll* (2006), the most-recent Television adaptation of Stevenson’s *Strange Case*, adds a biotechnology corporate conspiracy plotline to the drama of a descendent of Dr. Jekyll’s experimentations. This descendent is not an atavistic reversion but a human being with newly-evolved sensual powers that the corporation genetically farms and develops into pharmaceutical products.

10. There is an echo of the *Book of Enoch* and the fallen, angelic Watchers who mate with the daughters of humanity (1 Enoch, the Book of Watchers).

11. The fourth of William Blake’s Proverbs of Hell from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793) nicely fits this scenario: “Prudence is a rich ugly old maid courted by Incapacity” (Plate 7).

12. A few years to decades separate most of Machen’s finished works and their publication, a fact that renders unreliable the dating of the works themselves from when they appeared in print.

13. The Bodley Head Press released all thirty-three volumes of the Keynotes Series between 1894 and 1897, and nearly every title appeared in the U.S., as issued by Roberts Brothers, Boston. J. S. Fletcher’s *God’s Failures* (the series’ final volume, number XXXIII) is the exception. Each edition of the series features dark blue-black covers with a silver filigree emboss of Aubrey Beardsley’s key motif in the form of the author’s initials.

14. Originally published in the single-issue magazine *The Recluse* (1927), H. P. Lovecraft’s essay *Supernatural Horror in Literature* contains the earliest critical discussion of Arthur Machen’s fiction in the 1890s. In the final section of the essay, “The Modern Masters,” the author presents his encomium for the trio of stories central to the current project, as listed by their publication dates: *The Great God Pan* (1894); *The Three Impostors* (1895); and “The White People” (1904). Since Lovecraft’s initial work, over six decades passed before S. T. Joshi’s *The Weird Tale* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1990). That study owes a debt to Lovecraft’s effort while providing a more developed analysis and critique of Machen’s writing. As Lovecraft did, minus the author’s exclusion of any discussion of his own writing, Joshi places Machen within a critical

context of the Trans-Atlantic literary horror and supernatural that includes H. P. Lovecraft, Ambrose Bierce, Lord Dunsany, M. R. James, and Algernon Blackwood.

15. *Athenaeum* (23 Mar. 1895).

16. Upon reading a copy of *The Great God Pan*, Wilde exclaimed that his new literary acquaintance had achieved “Un succès fou! Un succès fou!”—“a raving success” (Michael 11). As Michael quips, Machen “had an early *succès de scandale* with his horror stories” in the mid-eighteen nineties (Michael 12). Machen first caught Wilde’s attention with the short story “A Double Return,” which was published in the *St. James’s Gazette* in the autumn of 1890. The story features a doppelgänger and an accidental act of adultery. That same year, to help to make connections with established literary types and to develop professional relationships, Machen sent to Wilde a copy of the translation of Béroalde de Verville’s *Parvenu de Moyens* (*Fantastic Tales or The Way to Attain* in the English edition).

Some years later, perhaps in a move calculated to provide a buffer between himself and Wilde’s downfall, Machen wrote about his final dinner meeting:

He dined with me once again...And on this occasion, I do remember being struck with the fact that there was a certain sameness in Wilde’s talk. It was not that he repeated himself or said over again the things that he had said before: rather, the mould of his conversation remained the same, the manner was the same, the turns and tricks and quips were all in one vein. No new mood was indicated, no different angle of vision was manifested. But this, very likely and for all I know, may have been due to the fact that Wilde saw that there was no real sympathy between us, no vital common ground, as it were; and so he set himself to be politely—and delightfully—entertaining in his usual manner.

(Machen, *A Few Letters* 29-30)

17. Among its debunking of the myths and clichés of Decadent and Aesthetic subjects, Kirsten MacLeod’s study *Fictions of British Decadence* turns its attention to how Machen’s claims of a marginal relation to Decadence are disingenuous: “Like real-life Decadents, his characters distinguish their dilettantism from middle-class professionalism and all have interests in alternative cultures and forms of knowledge” (MacLeod 122). There is at least one such character matching this description in *The Great God Pan*, *The Three Impostors*, “The White People,” and *Hieroglyphics*.

Decadence as a term applied to English letters has developed from Richard Gilman’s use in *Decadence: The Strange Life of an Epithet*: “A purely negative...existence. It emerges as the underside or logical component of something else, coerced into taking its place in our vocabularies by the pressure of something that needs an opposite. Decadence is a scarecrow, a bogey, a red herring” (159). David Weir adds that Decadence is “predicated on an opposition to ‘arbitrarily defined norms’” (10). Gilman’s claim that “Decadence in Britain had no substantive meaning...at this time [of the eighteen nineties], only a thin topical suggestiveness” (140) receives the positive response from MacLeod in that “it was precisely this suggestiveness that left the term open to deployment for a variety of polemical uses by writers engaged in the battle for cultural authority in a diverse literary field” (*Fictions of British Decadence* 19).

18. See Brangham's "John Lane and Arthur Machen: A Correspondence" (2007), published in Vol. 16 of *Faunus: The Journal of the Friends of Arthur Machen*. The word omitted is "entrails," originally used for part of the description of a young man's tortured corpse in the final chapter of *The Three Impostors*, "Adventure of the Deserted Residence."

19. The printers refused to go beyond page seventy-nine of the de Verville translation due to the allegedly lewd content. Fines and imprisonment were a real concern.

20. Machen's move to a more modern style out of an antiquated one did not rely entirely on Stevenson's pointing the way. The introduction to the 1922 edition of *The House of Souls* provides details on the difference between Machen's recognition of the old-fashioned tedium of the antique voice that he mimicked through the eighteen eighties and the more current one that he worked to find:

It was somewhere, I think, towards the autumn of the year 1889 that the thought occurred to me that I might perhaps try to write a little in the modern way. For, hitherto, I had been, as it were, wearing costume in literature. The rich, figured English of the earlier part of the seventeenth century had always had a peculiar attraction for me. I accustomed myself to write in it, to think in it; I kept a diary in that manner, and half-unconsciously dressed up my every day thoughts and common experiences in the habit of the Cavalier or of the Caroline Divine. Thus, when in 1884 I got a commission to translate the *Heptameron*, I wrote quite naturally in the language of my favourite period, and, as some critics declare, made my English version somewhat more antique and stiff than the original. And so "The Anatomy of Tobacco" was an exercise in the antique of a different kind; and "The Chronicle of Clemency" was a volume of tales that tried their hardest to be mediæval; and the translation of the *Moyen de Parvenir* was still a thing in the ancient mode.

It seemed, in fine, to be settled that in literature I was to be a hanger on of the past ages; and I don't quite know how I managed to get away from them. I had finished translating *Casanova*—more modern, but not thoroughly up to date—and I had nothing particular on hand, and, somehow or other, it struck me that I might try a little writing for the papers. . . . From the essay or literary paper, I somehow got into the habit of the short story, and did a good many of these, still for the *St. James's Gazette*, till in the autumn of 1890, I wrote a tale called "The Double Return." Well, Oscar Wilde asked: "Are you the author of that story that fluttered the dovescotes? I thought it was very good." But: it did flutter the dovescotes, and the *St. James's Gazette* and I parted.

(Machen, *The House of Souls* vii-viii)

Pater makes limited use of euphuistic form in *Marius the Epicurean* (1885) in Chapter VI: "Euphuism." His contemporary, mature example of a controlled and elaborate style holds a surface resemblance to the fledgling Machen's efforts. Pater's experimentation had a different origin and served a dissimilar purpose from what Machen attempted, but there is a suggestion here of the experimentation that would inspire the Decadent and Aesthetic literature of the eighteen nineties.

21. Plutarch remains silent about what the Thamus and Pan event means. Merivale judges the tale “one of the best mystery stories ever written,” with its “matter-of-fact narrative method, unimpeachable witnesses [Plutarch’s grammar teacher Epitherses was on the ship], historical setting, and corroborative details all seem to certify to its truth, and yet, as the scholars at the court of Tiberius were the first to discover, it is very difficult to explain” (12-13). Eusebius, over two centuries later, situated the death of Pan with the spread of Christianity. See Eusebius of Caesarea in 208a of his work *Praeparatio Evangelica* (*Preparation for the Gospel*).

22. The printer Joseph Jones of Hereford set the poem in book form in a private arrangement made with Machen’s family but a bill dispute lead to the destruction of most copies. Machen inscribed these words on the title page: “By a Former Member of H. C. S. [Hereford Cathedral School].”

As for Swinburne’s Pan as a woodland terror, see the poems “Pan and Thalassius,” “A Nympholept,” and “The Palace of Pan.”

23. Published in 1893 in the collection *Can Such Things Be?*, Ambrose Bierce’s story “The Damned Thing” is contemporary with the start of Machen’s publication history with John Lane. “The Damned Thing” riffs upon such fears of humanity suffering from encounters with unknown and unseen hostile forces in the fields and woods of the countryside. The story’s unnamed, surviving main character resides in the city, and will carry into the urban environment what he witnessed of the “damned” horror as it executed a fatal attack on his friend. While there remains a high probability that the weird phenomenon will persist for this man by way of troubled dreams and flashbacks, there also will remain a lingering inability for him to answer the inquest’s central question about what happened on the day of his friend’s death. Lovecraft uses in his fiction this device of dream visions and horrid memories with the greatest narrative effect in “Beyond the Wall of Sleep” (1919), “The Call of Cthulhu” (1928), and “The Dreams in the Witch House” (1933). Terrifying memories also haunt characters in Machen’s fiction, most often scientists called upon for their expert opinions: see Dr. Robert Matheson in *The Great God Pan*, and Dr. Joseph Haberdan and Dr. Chambers in “Novel of the White Powder” from *The Three Impostors*.

24. Longus’ lone surviving work, *Daphnis and Chloe*, provides the prime, late-classical example of Pan’s protection. The god holds sufficient power in his shadow to drive off pirates caught in the act of raping Chloe.

25. In *Decadence and the Making of Modernism*, David Weir’s description of fin de siècle is a good starting point for an understanding of the term’s pertinence to Machen’s context and that of his contemporaries:

Fin de siècle requires more extended consideration because the term is not purely a temporal designation; the ‘end’ of the century is not strictly chronological, but cultural and social as well. For some reason, ‘the end of the century’ in English does not convey so strong a sense of cultural collapse or secular millennialism as ‘fin de siècle’...the nuance of decline that the French phrase conveys makes it, paradoxically, more appropriate as a descriptive term for the end of the nineteenth century in England rather than France. (xvi)

26. See Moore's and Campbell's *Snakes and Ladders*. This graphic arts adaptation from 2001 depicts Moore's performance on the 10th of April 1999, the centennial of Machen writing "The White People" and *Hieroglyphics*. Moore gave a spoken-word piece accompanied by music, dance, and stage effects for the Golden Dawn Society in Conway Hall at Red Lion Square, on the boundary of Bloomsbury and Holborn in London's West End (Holborn is the setting for Machen's prose poem "The Holy Things"). *Snakes and Ladders* begins with the disinterments of Oliver Cromwell and Elizabeth "Lizzie" Siddal. These instances of the resurrection of the dead into the world of the living lead to a reflection upon Arthur Machen's visionary experiences. Moore celebrates the influence of Arthur Machen's depiction of imaginative and altered states of being that focuses on the period of 1899-1900, when in London's urban labyrinth Machen experienced odd encounters that he never had before and never would again: his own literary creations entered the world of the living. The memory of such strangeness led Machen to give the sardonic aside that certain characters in that period "showed signs of coming to life, a feat which, perhaps they had failed to perform before" (*Things Near and Far* 209). In *Snakes and Ladders*, Alan Moore asks the question that is the subtitle of this chapter, "Where do you get your ideas, Mr. Machen?" (24), and Eddie Campbell, the illustrator, includes in one panel a person peeking around the corner and asking of Machen the same question (27).

27. Machen describes the unsettling effects of his grief in the ninth and tenth chapters of *Things Near and Far* (1923), the second volume of his autobiography. In the tenth chapter he tells of his time with the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, which he renames the Order of the Twilight Star, and gives his own opinions about its origins. Machen once more uses humor in his attempt to explain and describe that troubling time:

The atmosphere in which I lived was becoming remarkably like the atmosphere of "The Three Impostors," which...is derived from the "New Arabian" manner of R. L. Stevenson. Not only did strange and unknown and unexplained people start up from every corner, from every cafe table, and engage me in obscure mazes of talk, quite in the Arabian manner, but I presently became aware that something very odd indeed was happening. (*Things Near and Far* 208-09)

In a different sort of weird conspiring, this time in the business world and not in public on London's streets, Waite sat as a director on the board of Horlicks, the British malted milk company with current manufacturing and distribution outlets around the world. He convinced his fellow directors to fund a literary magazine of the occult for which he would serve as editor-in-chief. *The Horlicks Magazine and Home Journal for Australia, India and the Colonies* published "The White People," *A Fragment of Life*, and an early version of *The Hill of Dreams* in 1904.

28. See Henry James in "The Jolly Corner" (1908) for the effect that the contact with Alice Staverton has on Spencer Brydon.

On the ephemeral nature of the ecstatic, see T. S. Eliot's depiction of the bird's announcement in *Burnt Norton* (1936): "Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind / Cannot bear very much reality" (42-43).

29. See Ioan P. Couliano for his comparative studies of otherworldly journeys.

See Michael Saler for a modern historical treatment of enchantment and his “as if” proposition of irony and imagination, illustrated by his studies of the fictive creations of Conan Doyle, Lovecraft, and Tolkien.

30. Machen goes on to explain: “If ecstasy be present, then I say there is fine literature, if it be absent, then, in spite of all the cleverness, all the talents, all the workmanship and observation and dexterity you may show me, then, I think, we have a product (possibly a very interesting one) which is not fine literature” (*Hieroglyphics* 17).

31. The moment in and out of time is the when and where of the mystic’s ecstasy—the same state reflected upon by T. S. Eliot in *Four Quartets* (1943). In the second movement of *Burnt Norton* (1936), the speaker states:

At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.
I can only say, there we have been: but I cannot say where.
And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time. (62-69)

32. In the essay “The Nature of Knowledge in Short Fiction” (1994), Charles E. May cites Lionel Trilling to draw a useful distinction between the novel and the short story that applies nicely to Machen:

Whereas the novel is primarily a social and public form, the short story is mythic and spiritual. While the novel is primarily structured on a conceptual and philosophic framework, the short story is intuitive and lyrical. The novel exists to reaffirm the world of ‘everyday’ reality; the short story exists to ‘defamiliarize’ the everyday. Storytelling does not spring from one’s confrontation with the everyday world, but rather from one’s encounter with the sacred (in which true reality is revealed in all its plenitude) or with the absurd (in which true reality is revealed in all its vacuity). (138)

33. See Dinah Birch’s review essay “Gripped by Beasts” (2004). Also, the Horos case and trial of 1901 in London exposed the exploitation that could and did occur from poor oversight and corrupted stewardship of the ritual magic groups. I state the details and implications of the case and its trial in the chapter on Western esotericism.

34. See Blake and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. He refers to Newton’s sleep in a letter to Thomas Butt, 22 Nov. 1802: “Now I a fourfold vision see And a fourfold vision is given to me Tis fourfold in my supreme delight And three fold in soft Beulahs night And twofold Always. May God us keep From Single vision & Newtons sleep.”

35. In “The White People,” Ambrose offers the following comparison in his making a distinction between spiritually-capital offenses and more venial ones:

‘It is as if one supposed that Juggernaut and the Argonauts had something to do etymologically with one another. And no doubt the same weak likeness, or analogy, runs between all the “social” sins and the real spiritual sins, and in some cases, perhaps, the lesser may be “schoolmasters” to lead one on to the greater—from the shadow to the reality.’ (Machen 66-67)

36. Wilde used the term pagan when he took the stand in the first of the three trials in 1895 that ended with his sentence of two years of hard labor in Reading Gaol. The first trial resulted from his seeking the prosecution of John Douglas, the Marquess of Queensbury, on the charge of libel. The legal saga that Wilde initiated ended in his ruin, and it began when on 18 Feb. 1895 Queensbury left his visiting card at the Albemarle Club with the following personal message: “For Oscar Wilde, posing sodomite.”

Kirsten MacLeod has done excellent work in suggesting how to shift away from Wilde in studies of the eighteen nineties, since Wilde remains a dominant presence in the scholarship of Decadence at the expense of other artists. Her decentralizing efforts have led to a re-emphasis on former literary outliers like Machen and M. P. Shiel, men who were acquaintances and one-time neighbors at 4 Verulam Buildings on the Gray’s Inn Road in Holborn, London.

37. Using Machen’s contemporary Benson as the focus in that essay, Freeman goes on to clarify important points between “pagan” and “hedonist” that were not interchangeable for those persons who used the terms among themselves or as applied to others outside the group and its sympathies:

“Pagan” was also applied to those who venerated Nature, differentiating, though, as [E. F.] Benson’s story shows, not always clearly, between pantheists, who saw God in Nature, and those who saw Nature as divine in itself or the embodiment or manifestation of non-Christian deity. Although hedonism and Nature worship were by no means mutually exclusive, it is the latter meaning of the term that has more significance when reading ‘The Man Who Went Too Far,’ not least because the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989) cites Benson when defining ‘pagan’ as ‘Nature-worshipping, pantheistic.’ (23)

The citation used by the *OED* comes from Benson’s novel *The Climber* (London: Heinemann, 1908): “She had read the account of the projected fair to them all two days before; it was a sort of pagan harvest festival, full of folklore, and was tremendously picturesque” (207).

38. In the view that Machen wrote late-Victorian, post-Romantic Gothic literature with esoteric elements, there is another resemblance with a line from “The Proverbs of Hell” in Blake’s *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: “What is now proved was once, only imagin’d” (Plate 8).

39. A passage in the novel *Garthowen: A Story of a Welsh Homestead* (1900), by Allen Raine (Anne Adalisa Beynon Puddicombe), provides a useful explanation of the term:

Will was certainly an eloquent preacher, if not a born orator, and possessed that peculiar gift known in Wales as “hwyl!”—a sudden ecstatic inspiration, which carries the speaker away on its wings, supplying him with burning words of eloquence, which in his calmer and normal state he could never have chosen for himself. (229)

The ability to deliver passionate, inspired oratory is the best known and common meaning in English. In Welsh, the word indicates an intangible quality of passion and sense of belonging. The *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, a dictionary of the Welsh language published by the University of Wales at the start of the twenty-first century, lays out the ramifications of this quality and this sense in this manner:

A healthy physical or mental condition, good form, one's right senses, wits; tune (of a musical instrument); temper, mood, frame of mind; nature, disposition; degree of success achieved in the execution of a particular task & fervour (esp religious), ecstasy, unction, gusto, zest; characteristic musical intonation or sing-song cadence formerly much in vogue in the perorations of the Welsh pulpit.

For more information, see the dictionary online at www.aber.ac.uk/~gpcwww.

D. P. M. Michael observes that Machen's "The White People" is a story that "carries in English prose echoes of the Welsh preacher's *hwyl*" (Michael 15).

40. A. E. Waite, one of Machen's closest friends, collaborated with the artist Patricia Coleman-Smith to illustrate all cards in the Tarot deck, which was published in December of 1909. Before the Edwardian period, only the Major Arcana featured illustrations. In addition, as decisions were made for the designs on each card, Waite wrote the Rider-Waite deck's companion volume, *The Pictorial Key to the Tarot* (1911). Waite argued against the claims that the cards derived from ancient Egypt, since no evidence exists for the cards before the fifteenth century. The titles of the first two parts of Waite's key could be essay titles written by Machen: Part I is "The Veil and Its Symbols," and Part II is "The Doctrine of the Veil."

41. As Amy's health declined and the financial legacies dwindled, Machen wrote less fiction and worked more often in freelance journalism. He joined the staff of *The Academy*, a literary journal of High Anglican orientation that Lord Alfred "Bosie" Douglas owned and edited. In 1908 and 1909, Machen worked on a trial basis for Lord Northcliffe's tabloid *Daily Mail*, and in 1910 he became a staff-member of its sister journal, *The Evening News*. As his bylines show, Machen was less of a hard news reporter and more a correspondent for arts and religion.

Chapter 2

1. Muir 313.

2. Philpotts 57.

3. Exodus (KJV) 22:18.

4. The elusiveness of a control group for the purpose of defining normal human behavior is one of the biggest flaws of Cesare Lombroso's work as founder of the Italian School of Positivist Criminology. His work was criticized by contemporaries because of his lack of a control group for his sensational study *L'Uomo Delinquente (Criminal Man, 1876)*.

See the critical work of Nicole Hahn Rafter and Mary Gibson for more on Lombroso and his role in this period, including his defining of gendered deviance and female criminality. Lombroso's book-length study, *Criminal Woman, the Prostitute, and the Normal Woman (La Donna Delinquente, la Prostituta, e la Donna Normale, 1893)*, contains a deeply flawed attempt at

constructing a control group. That work reached England's booksellers in an excised edition with the innocuous title *The Female Offender* (1893), which was the year before John Lane's Bodley Head Press published *The Great God Pan* as Vol. V in the Keynotes Series. The English translation elided all references to the control group for the "Normal Woman" and most references to prostitution and photographs and information on practices such as tattooing and lesbianism.

5. The original statement reads: "Si Dieu n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer" (Voltaire 402). In Voltaire's first note to the verse epistle, he writes, "This book of the *Three Imposters* is a very dangerous work, full of coarse atheism, without wit and devoid of philosophy" (Voltaire 405, trans. Iverson).

6. *The Three Impostors, or, The Transmutations* (1895) is the second volume of Machen's fiction that John Lane published in the influential Keynotes Series from the Bodley Head Press, and appears as Vol. XIX.

7. For contemporary fictional accounts of invasion fears, see Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897) and the novel *The Beetle* (1897), by Richard Marsh (Richard Bernard Heldmann). For an excellent critical account that surveys the influence of the work of Victorian-era scientists and artists from Great Britain to continental Europe, see Laura Otis's study *Membranes: Metaphors of Invasion in Nineteenth-Century Literature, Science, and Politics* (1999).

8. See the work of Kirsten MacLeod in *Fictions of British Decadence: High Art, Popular Writing, and the Fin de Siècle* (2006) on the topic of Machen's opportunism in the selection of content and thematic choices that appear in his writing from the eighteen nineties.

9. A popular Virginia Woolf quote holds relevance to *The Green Book* girl's life and her writing: "Indeed, I would venture to guess that Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman" (*A Room of One's Own* 49).

10. The Witchcraft Acts, laws that were on the books in the United Kingdom since the 1730s, were replaced in 1951, four years after Machen's death, with the Fraudulent Mediums Act. Parliament updated that law in 2008 with the passage of legislation that added stricter consumer protection as a reaction to a proliferation of mediums and the perpetration of fraud by purveyors of allegedly occult services. Even the eighteenth-century bills marked the transition from a belief in the actuality of *maleficia*, the magical practice of inflicting harm by the use of magic (a category often referred to as the dark arts or black magic), to an interest in preventing consumer fraud. The legal fight went from an opposition to the evil of witchcraft to against the evil influence that "ignorant" and "superstitious delusions" had on the minds of the credulous masses.

11. Ambrose finds problems with the saintly caste, too. As a contrast to the infamously vile status of Gilles de Raiz, whom Ambrose names as one of the truly evil persons of history, the recluse offers the following comment to Cotgrave about those persons on the other end of the ecstatic spectrum:

'We hate a murderer, because we know that we should hate to be murdered, or to have any one that we like murdered. So, on the "other side," we venerate the

saints, but we don't "like" them as well as our friends. Can you persuade yourself that you would have "enjoyed" St. Paul's company? Do you think that you and I would have "got on" with Sir Galahad?" (Machen, "The White People" 68)

This view of humanly-distant sanctity depends on the type, and identity, of the saintly individual chosen: Ambrose avoids any mention of St. Francis of Assisi or St. Theresa of Liseux (the Little Flower), both of whom represent prominent figures of Christian belief. Ambrose, as a High Church Anglican, would know who they are. Each of those recognized saints welcomed the simple and the trivial and the ordinary into their worship and good works. Their withdrawals were into the quiet glory to be found in the common. St. Francis of Assisi's "Sermon to the Birds" expresses his great love for animal life. He and his followers had a lifelong passion of caring for society's castoffs, the sick and the poor, including lepers.

12. Cotgrave is a compound name that refers to an item on which a body may lie when sleeping, as well as a space for interring a body after death. In the broad, indistinct characterization that Machen is prone to use in his fiction, Cotgrave, by name, unites Thanatos and Morpheus. A cot is an item often used to provide the space for rest, and the temporary death of sleep. A grave is a space meant as a repository for physical remains, once there is a permanent end to vital bodily functions that follows the critical failure of the human neurological, cardiac, and other organ systems. Through Ambrose and the girl's journal, this character awakens to experiences, by secondary contact, that he never has known to exist, in either speculative or actual states, knowledge that by necessity terminates certain notions and assumptions that he may have held prior to the accounts of *The Green Book* that he has read and heard.

13. In "The Tale of a Detective," the fourth chapter of the Edwardian novel *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare* (1908), along the embankment of the Thames, G. K. Chesterton creates a singular conversation on the topic of social sin. The exchange between the protagonist Gabriel Syme and a so-called philosophical policeman recalls Ambrose's conversation with Cotgrave:

'We deny the snobbish English assumption that the uneducated are the dangerous criminals. We remember the Roman Emperors. We remember the great poisoning princes of the Renaissance. We say that the dangerous criminal is the educated criminal. We say that the most dangerous criminal now is the entirely lawless modern philosopher. Compared to him, burglars and bigamists are essentially moral men; my heart goes out to them. They accept the essential idea of man; they merely seek it wrongly....But philosophers hate life itself, their own as much as other people's.'

The response from Gabriel Syme to these propositions is echoed in the metaphysical moralizing on heresy found in "The White People":

'How true that is....I have felt it from my boyhood, but never could state the verbal antithesis. The common criminal is a bad man, but at least he is, as it were, a conditional good man. He says that if only a certain obstacle be removed—say a wealthy uncle—he is then prepared to accept the universe and to praise God. He is a reformer, but not an anarchist. He wishes to cleanse the edifice, but not to destroy it. But the evil philosopher is not trying to alter things, but to annihilate them....It [police work] has given up its more dignified work, the punishment of powerful traitors in the State and powerful heresiarchs in the Church. The

moderns say we must not punish heretics. My only doubt is whether we have a right to punish anybody else.’ (43-4)

14. The mystic traditions from Kabbalah to Tantra often provide warnings against efforts made along the darker paths, which apply here to Ambrose’s words and his claims about *The Green Book*. See the work of Ioan P. Couliano in *Out of This World* (1991) for other versions of mystic exploits that bring personal disaster. There are certain tales of Cabalists blinded and broken, physically and mentally, by their attempts to penetrate other and higher branches and spheres of the Sefirot. Also, consider Bellerophon’s tragic final ride on Pegasus to storm the other dimension of Olympos, an effort that has found poignant modern re-tellings in versions written by Edith Hamilton and Charles Eliot. The eponymous character in *Manfred* (1817) is typical of the Byronic antihero whose superhuman abilities, such as astral projection, bring him no relief from angst and other torments. Ambrose’s point fits with other representations of over-reachers who in their often grand, ambitious failures receive severe and crippling punishments.

15. To cite two popular twentieth-century theories that developed out of the second of the world wars through which Machen lived, evil in the realm of “The White People” is neither banality (e.g., Hannah Arendt) nor obedience to authority (e.g., Stanley Milgram). The description from Ambrose about sorcery and sanctity functions as a kind of Möbius band. In Euclidean space there are two types of Möbius strips with a direction that depends on the half-twist: clockwise or counterclockwise. The band becomes a chiral object with “handedness” (right-handed or left-handed). The application to “The White People” is that sanctity as ecstasy is the right-handed, blessed path, and the way of sorcery as ecstasy is the left-handed, sinister path, in the old prejudice of the literally sinister side of handedness (e.g., the dark arts of Goetia, which is a form of magic).

16. In *Hieroglyphics* (1899), that hybrid work of fiction and non-fiction written in the same year as “The White People,” Machen adds a Platonic reflection to the idea of the unconscious:

I expect we had better take refuge in the subconscious, that convenient name for the transcendental element in human nature. For myself, I like best my old figure of the Shadowy Companion, the invisible attendant who walks all the way beside us, though his feet are in the Other World; and I think that it is he who whispers to us his ineffable secrets, which we clumsily endeavour to set down in mortal language. (*Hieroglyphics* 118-19)

Though the allusion is multi-layered, T. S. Eliot suggests the same “Shadowy Companion” in the last part of *The Waste Land*, “What the Thunder Said”: “There is always another one walking beside you” (363), and, “But who is that on the other side of you?” (366).

17. The “white people” in this story refers to a race of fairies. Machen uses “people” in the same way that Tolkien in his literary works refers to the peoples of Middle Earth, a designation that includes elves, dwarves, humans, Ents, and Hobbits, all of whom are races of people. Machen is one of the artists behind the revival of interest in the fair folk in the British Isles. Besides Carole G. Silver’s quality scholarship in *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness* (1999), see Cassandra Eason’s general overview in *A Complete Guide to Faeries and Magical Beings* (2002) on the prevalence of beliefs in various types of little people across many cultures and times:

Belief in fairies declined in many parts of the Western world from the late seventeenth century onwards, as a result of the Age of Reason, of Darwinism, and of increased industrialisation and urbanisation in the nineteenth century. In an environment removed from nature fairies became fictionalised, sanitized, the province of children or saccharine sentimentality....But in rural places where Celtic influence remained strong, the little people have never ceased to hold sway. (Eason viii)

18. There are correlations between Machen's preference for what literature should be, as I have described in the introductory chapter, and the work of the theologian Rudolf Otto with his theory of the numinous from *The Idea of the Holy* (1917). I say more about the Otto and Machen connections in the chapters on alchemy and Western esotericism.

19. The *Necronomicon*, H. P. Lovecraft's favorite false document that many of his works of fiction cite, is inspired in part by the content of Machen's *The Green Book*. Lovecraft combines the contemporary witchery of Machen's short story with the gross exaggerations of medieval and Renaissance grimoires and goetic texts. Rather than held in the crypt-like space of an English recluse, Lovecraft's *Necronomicon* is safeguarded by chain and lock at Miskatonic University.

20. Sexual magic in theory and practice reached England by way of the American occultist Paschal Beverly Randolph's influence, the Philadelphia-born freethinker Ida Craddock, the German O.T.O. (*Ordo Templi Orientis*), and then Crowley's esoteric religion of *Thelema*, a system that developed out of his involvement with O.T.O. and his eventual leadership of that group.

A free-man of mixed-race ancestry who trained as a medical doctor (outside of the established medical profession and in holistic practice) and was an active abolitionist and trance medium, Randolph's book *The Mysteries of Eulis* (1874), revised and expanded as *Eulis! The History of Love* (1906), is recognized as the earliest sex magic teachings in the Western world. Randolph drew inspiration from his global travel and the writings of Hargrave Jennings, the scholar of ancient phallism (the proper term for phallicism) and an English member of the Rosicrucian occult movement. A letter to Jennings in the mid-1880s led Machen to a job with George Redway, and Machen's friend A. E. Waite wrote an extensive critique of Jennings and his unsubstantiated claims of the Rosicrucian movement in *The Real History of the Rosicrucians: Founded on Their Own Manifestoes, and on Facts and Documents Collected from the Writings of Initiated Brethren* (1887).

In *Blue Equinox* (1919), which opens with the poem "Hymn to Pan," Aleister Crowley favorably reviews Craddock's work *Heavenly Bridegrooms* (1895): "This book is of incalculable value to every student of occult matters. No Magick library is complete without it" (133). *Blue Equinox* is one of Crowley's early attempts to explain how esoteric ideas may provide the framework for a new ethics that he found current, popular moral configurations to thwart and impede. His hope was that an infusion of the esoteric into ethics, and then diffusion in practice, would result in a liberated morality of the future. Crowley's troubled life testifies to his failure to inform that freedom of action from a new ethics.

In his book *Tantra* (2003), Hugh B. Urban cites Heinrich Zimmer's praise of Tantra's world-affirming attitude, prompted by what Zimmer referred to as the Tantric methods of "sensate inclusion": "In the Tantra, the manner of approach is not that of Nay but of Yea...the world

attitude is affirmative...Man must approach through and by means of nature, not by rejection of nature” (168). The girl of *The Green Book* takes this approach of affirmation to nature. “The Rose Garden,” a prose poem from Machen’s collection *Ornaments in Jade* (1897), contains a female character who has met a male adept in ecstatic practice, who distills for her ritual, mystery, sex, and the supra-sensual into a moment of life-changing reflection: “He had shewn her that bodily rapture might be the ritual and expression of the ineffable mysteries, of the world beyond sense, that must be entered by the way of sense; and now she believed” (4). In *The Green Book*, the girl’s meeting with the God of the Woods reveals her to the rapture that leads to those mysteries beyond mundane sense. Prior, the girl remembers a story of the Male and Female principle that she alludes to in her roundabout way: “I had remembered the story I had quite forgotten before, and in the story the two figures are called Adam and Eve, and only those who know the story understand what they mean” (Machen, “The White People” 94).

21. In the contents of *The Green Book*, many of the girl’s references to a place visited, a thing seen, or an action taken have literal, symbolic, and esoteric meanings. For example, time corresponds for the girl as the standard Greenwich Mean Time of clock and calendar, but due to her response to her inner calling and to the efforts of her nurse this girl has uncovered an occult significance: “I must not write down the real names of the days and months which I found out a year ago” (Machen, “The White People” 70). The Wheel of the Year turns on new, additional cycles for this girl.

While no definitive date can be set for how far into this story’s past the girl practiced her sorcery and then died, her entries suggest a progression along the steps of initiation. Her descriptions of landscape and folk lore and magic practices carry a timeless quality or, at least, a quality from much earlier than the newer, commerce-centric customs of the industrial urban centers and exurban sprawl. See *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (1954) for Mircea Eliade’s use of the phrase *in illo tempore*—literally, “in that time” of an indeterminate past. In all religions, the ritual movements, recitations of single words, phrases, and sacred narratives, both oral and written, can and do (for the believer and initiate) recall, revive, and make present a first cause, a foundational moment that is revelatory of one’s respective faith.

22. In 1842, Edwin Chadwick published his “Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain,” around the time when the girl who authors *The Green Book* may have been born. The average age of death in the nineteenth century was dreadful for many people of the English laboring classes, who already were plagued by a high infant mortality rate and rampant disease. The preciousness of human life is the rule, and Chadwick’s numbers provide a reminder of how short life was prior to widespread good hygiene practices, the discovery of pathogens, and the availability and distribution of modern medicine, including vaccinations. Chadwick compared the average life expectancy of laborers, tradesmen, and workers in the professional trades from Rutland, an English rural county with no large towns, to the new industrial cities of the North: Bolton, Leeds, Liverpool, and Manchester. Many laborers in those cities died by the age of nineteen, while fellow residents in the professional trades often lived a full two decades longer, on average. The work done by Chadwick and published in his report helped to set up a Royal Commission that eventually led to the Public Health Act of 1848. As the daughter of a member of a professional trade, and who would be expected to marry a peer, *The Green Book* author’s natural lifespan could have been well into her late forties or early fifties.

23. In addition to the work of Kirsten MacLeod, many scholars have shown that the fin de siècle marks an important stage in the development of modern views of childhood and adolescence. See Ginger Suzanne Frost, *Victorian Childhoods* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2009); Anthony Fletcher, *Growing Up in England: The Experience of Childhood, 1600-1914* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2008); Louise A. Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England* (London: Routledge, 2000); Carolyn Steedman, *Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority 1780–1930* (London: Virago, 1995); John Neubauer, *The Fin-de-Siècle Culture of Adolescence* (New Haven: Yale U, 1992); and James Kincaid, *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

24. One of the Act's most radical provisions was to raise the age of consent from thirteen to sixteen and that made "carnal knowledge" of a girl between those ages a misdemeanor, and of a girl under thirteen a felony. Starting from the eighteen fifties, social purity groups and women's rights groups protested in support of raising the age of consent. After a successful vote in 1883 by the House of Lords in favor of passage of The Criminal Law Amendment Act, the Act failed to find adequate support in the House of Commons. The Act stalled in Parliament until the outrage from the Eliza Armstrong case managed to raise the amount of necessary votes. That case developed out of the investigative journalism of W. T. Stead and "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon." This series of sensationalist stories written and published by Stead in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in July 1885 focused on the reality of "white slavery" claims in England, with business practices that included teenage virgins as young as thirteen available for purchase for as low as five pounds. Judith R. Walkowitz, in her study, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (1992), assesses Stead's series as "one of the most successful pieces of scandal journalism of the late nineteenth century" (Walkowitz 81). A writer, Oscar Wilde, was the most-prominent person prosecuted successfully under the Labouchère Amendment of the 1885 Act, and another writer, M. P. Shiel, was prosecuted under the main provision of the Act. In her article "M. P. Shiel and the Love of Pubescent Girls: The Other 'Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name'" (2008), Kirsten MacLeod presents her discovery of new information about the life of M. P. Shiel and why he was imprisoned between 1914 and 1916. As MacLeod's excellent research in that article demonstrates, Shiel, Oscar Wilde's contemporary, was convicted in 1914 of indecently assaulting and "carnally knowing" Dorothy Sircar, his multiracial stepdaughter (i.e., Indian father and English mother), who was twelve years and five months old (MacLeod, "M. P. Shiel and the Love of Pubescent Girls" 355). MacLeod provides a helpful assessment of Wilde's downfall and Shiel's survival in relation to each man's respective conviction under the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885:

Shiel himself was fortunate, unlike Wilde, whose reputation was destroyed by the 'love that dare not speak its name.' For Shiel, the consequences of what I have called 'the other love that dare not speak its name' were sixteen months in prison with hard labour, followed, after release, by a reunion with, and eventual marriage to, his longtime love Lydia, who was, by all accounts, an engaging and intellectually curious woman who was devoted to Shiel. ("M. P. Shiel and the Love of Pubescent Girls: The Other 'Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name'" 375)

Shiel and Arthur Machen were friends and neighbors in London when Machen lived at 4 Verulam Buildings and Shiel was nearby at 3 Gray's Inn Place (in the address numbering of the time, their residences were in buildings that were next door to one another). Machen attended

the wedding of Shiel and his first wife, Carolina Garcia-Gomez, and Shiel knew Machen and his first wife Amy, when she was in the last stages of cancer—Shiel provided for John Gawsworth an account of those final, grim days (Gawsworth wrote a biography of Machen, which was published posthumously in 2006 with funding from Javier Marías, Reino de Redondo, and the Friends of Arthur Machen). The men lost touch by Shiel’s release date from prison, and by that time Machen had moved to St. John’s Wood with his family, since he had remarried and now had children.

For more on the relationship between Machen’s wife Amy and Shiel’s wife, see the essay by Harold Billings “Mrs. Machen and Mrs. Shiel” from no. 19 of *Faunus: The Journal of the Friends Arthur Machen* (Spring 2009).

M.P. Shiel wrote “On Scholar Artistry (The Writings of Arthur Machen)” for *The Borzoi* (1925, reprinted in *Science, Life and Literature*, Williams and Norgate: London, 1950):

Of living people known to me none I think more, *so*, essentially the artist as Machen—meaning by this a singer somehow of the truth that the universe is bacchic and deserves an emotion, a truth which the universe itself is in a conspiracy to conceal from us, and keep us dull. For we see nothing as it is.

25. *Ornaments in Jade* (1924, but with all contents drafted in 1897), Machen’s cycle of prose poems written between the Keynotes Series publications and “The White People.” The cycle contains multiple pieces that, like *The Green Book*, center their narrative on the theme of an adolescent female straying from home and toward the craft of paganism: “The Turanians”; “The Ceremony”; and “Midsummer.” Mark Valentine, one of Machen’s biographers, comments on this repeated theme: “A ‘respectable’ woman turning to witchcraft to throw off the oppression of the roles expected of her [is] an echo of several of his stories. We are reminded of the young women...for whom a more vital, pagan way of life is an irresistible call and a great liberation” (122). Fiction from Machen’s extended family contains this theme, too. See the novel *Lolly Willowes, or, The Loving Huntsman* (1926), by Sylvia Townsend Warner, Machen’s niece-by-marriage to his second wife, (Dorothie) Purefoy Huddleston. The modern Wicca movement, popularized by Gerald Gardner, who found inspiration from the work of Margaret Alice Murray, counts in its ranks many young females who get involved for the reasons named by Valentine. For a useful critique of this Neo-Pagan religion, see the work of Ronald Hutton (*The Triumph of the Moon*, 1999) and Charlotte Allen (“The Scholars and the Goddess,” 2001).

26. The fourth century bishop of Milan was Aurelius Ambrosius, who opposed the Arian heretics and is known in English as Saint Ambrose.

27. The literary tapestry of Arthurian legend includes a wonder child. The magician Merlin, guide to Arthur, is a fusion of two characters, one of whom is the wonder child Ambrosius and the other is the bard Merddyn Wilt. The wonder child legend grew out of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s inclusion of details in *Historia Regum Britanniae* (vI, 19; cf. vII, 3), where he writes that there was a character named Merlinus Ambrosius, the origin of the name Merlin. Merlin appears in the *Black Book of Carmarthen*, which is one of the earliest surviving manuscripts written entirely or substantially in Welsh and dates from around 1250 C.E.

28. T. S. Eliot’s interests in the occult and mysticism resound in *The Waste Land* (1922) and from various parts of *Four Quartets* (1943), and some of these lines call back to content relevant

to my analysis of Machen. In Eliot's second poem in *Four Quartets, East Coker* (1940), the danger of enchantment and wariness about the value of age connect to Ambrose and a reverse reading of the Hermit card of the Major Arcana:

We are only undeceived
Of that which, deceiving, could no longer harm.
In the middle, not only in the middle of the way
but all the way, in a dark wood, in a bramble,
On the edge of a grimpen, where is no secure foothold,
And menaced by monsters, fancy lights,
Risking enchantment. Do not let me hear
Of the wisdom of old men, but rather of their folly,
Their fear of fear and frenzy, their fear of possession,
Of belonging to another, or to others, or to God.
The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless. (88-99)

The association of wisdom with advanced age is a fallacy in the same manner as the hermit is depicted as male. History, particularly European actual and literary, has had many women who have been hermits after whom pilgrims have sought for their guidance and have acknowledged for their piety.

29. No part of "The White People" qualifies the whole as an example of the literary pastoral; however, a recognition of those pastoral elements that do occur assists one in seeing further into the dilemma of *The Green Book* girl. That author is of the pastoral world in that she has found in the forces of nature an outlet from the industrial, technological world whose grip her father's generation expanded. Owen Schur provides a helpful account that demonstrates how the girl's experiences depart from the pastoral:

The norms and expectations of the social group—household, community, state—are never far away from the pastoral world. Yet the pastoral world is itself a device if not to escape at least to humanize these expectations. And if the expectations of the larger community bear upon the behavior of the inhabitants of the pastoral world, those same inhabitants through imaginative play create other expectations, other values, and other communities. (7)

The girl's singular aptitudes and her nurse's direction into the woods spark the creation of new expectations apart from the father's social group. In "The White People," the father's country house is a domestic sphere that, in the girl's creative imagination, she perceives as deathly in its visual effect upon the cultivated nature of the garden: "And though it was all dark and indistinct in my room, a pale glimmering kind of light shone in through the white blind, and once I got up and looked out, and there was a great black shadow of the house covering the garden, looking like a prison where men are hanged" (Machen 79).

30. A father's neglect also occurs with the foster father of Helen Vaughn in *The Great God Pan*. See that novella's second chapter, "Mr. Clarke's Memoirs," with the account provided by Dr. Phillips.

31. Machen's prose poem "The Turanians" (1897) presents another child who suffers a dismissive parent's insult. This time, a mother attempts to curtail what she judges to be her

daughter's loose emotions: "In your case it isn't affectation. You really *feel* what you say, don't you? Yes; but is it nice to feel like that? Do you think that it's quite *right*, even?" (Machen, *Ornaments in Jade* 7). This correction of the daughter is a criticism of that young woman's sense of wonder, and she is made to feel shame that she is in the wrong for her responding with enthusiasm to what she perceives guilelessly as natural beauty beyond the family home.

32. The girl does not seek to placate anyone with her self-censoring. Her act of writing, and her understanding of the power of language, contrasts with a twenty-first century critique of young, female post-secondary writers. The girl's Victorian contemporaries, with exceptions, of course, often complied with this assessment of female voice from the 15 Oct. 2007 *New York Times* article "Politeness and Authority at a Hilltop College in Minnesota," written by Verlyn

Klinkenborg:

Even though this way of talking is conventional, and perhaps socially placating, it has a way of defining a young writer—a young woman—in negative terms, as if she were basically incapable and always giving offense. You simply cannot pretend that the words you use about yourself have no meaning. Why not, I asked, be as smart and perceptive as you really are? Why not accept what you're capable of? Why not believe that what you notice matters?

And,

These are poignant questions, and they always give me pause, because they allow me to see, as nothing else does, the cultural frame these young women have grown up in. I can hear them questioning the very nature of their perceptions, doubting the evidence of their senses, distrusting the clarity of their thoughts.

The Green Book girl has her moment of questioning, and doubting, and distrusting in the dark of her room after what she has seen on the day that she refers to as the White Day. Because of the consequences for her life onward from that point, the girl reviews all available memories that she can access, and begins a process of doubt with the following thoughts as a starting point:

But when I shut my eyes the sight would not come, and I began to think about my adventures all over again, and I remembered how dusky and queer it was at the end, and I was afraid it must be all a mistake, because it seemed impossible it could happen. It seemed like one of nurse's tales, which I didn't really believe in, though I was frightened at the bottom of the hollow; and the stories she told me when I was little came back into my head, and I wondered whether it was really there what I thought I had seen, or whether any of her tales could have happened a long time ago. (Machen, "The White People" 79)

However, the girl does not discontinue her writing: She ends up filling multiple volumes on her path to henosis (a Greek term whose religious use refers to the union with the Godhead (or Monad), the God beyond God for the Neoplatonists). And, the girl does not turn back from her search, but goes to the craft with vigor.

In the series of odd allusions that the girl makes at the start of *The Green Book*, something called "the Alala comes" (Machen, "The White People" 70). Whatever this thing may be, the word has a derivation that involves communication, a paradox of sound, and gender. In Greek mythology, Alala is the female personification of the war cry, but her name means "dumb, mute, speechless." Her father is the daemon of war, Polemos, and she attends Ares, whose war cry, along with that of Greek soldiers, was her name: "*Alale alala.*"

33. For a useful overview of the history of the magic texts across many periods of time and in many cultures, see the work of Owen Davies in *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books* (2010).

34. See Arthur Machen's *Hieroglyphics* in which a letter written by the Hermit to that work's narrator (a Machen stand-in) gives the narrator permission to publish the record of their conversations. The Hermit says: "But I really had no notion that you were taking notes all the time. Remember: keep the secret, *and the secrets*" (8).

For more from Lovecraft on "The White People," see *Supernatural Horror in Literature* (1927): "Machen's narrative, a triumph of skilful selectiveness and restraint, accumulates enormous power as it flows on in a stream of innocent childish prattle" (Lovecraft 91).

Earlier in that essay, Lovecraft praises Machen:

Of living creators of cosmic fear raised to its most artistic pitch, few if any can hope to equal the versatile Arthur Machen, author of some dozen tales long and short, in which the elements of hidden horror and brooding fright attain an almost incomparable substance and realistic acuteness. Mr. Machen, a general man of letters and master of an exquisitely lyrical and expressive prose style.

(*Supernatural Horror in Literature* 91)

35. The girl's reticence in speech and deed recalls what the thirteenth-century alchemist Roger Bacon, cited in the first volume of Dickens's *Household Words*, refers to as "the tricks of obscurity" (136).

36. The importance of language and the diversity of beings that appear in *The Green Book* resemble what Alan Moore has spoken about in relation to magic and modern spiritual belief. In the documentary *The Mindscape of Alan Moore* (2005), Moore explains:

'Monotheism is, to me, a great simplification. I mean the Qabalah has a great multiplicity of gods, but at the very top of the Qabalic Tree of Life, you have this one sphere that is absolute God, the Monad, something which is indivisible. All of the other gods, and indeed everything else in the universe, is a kind of emanation of that God. Now, that's fine, but it's when you suggest that there is only that one God, at this kind of unreachable height above humanity, and there is nothing in between, you're limiting and simplifying the thing. I tend to think of paganism as a kind of alphabet, as a language, it's like all of the gods are letters in that language. They express nuances, shades of meaning or certain subtleties of ideas, whereas monotheism tends to just be one vowel.'

A pleroma of spiritual forces exists in *The Green Book*. Pleroma is a term from Greek that refers to the totality of divine powers and is an idea common to Gnosticism. St. Paul uses the term in Colossians 2:9 (KJV), and the word is used a total of seventeen times in the New Testament.

37. The Nymphs are well-known in classical literature as consorts of Dionysos / Bacchus, and are the female spirits of the natural world who keep company with Pan. Satyrs often pursue nymphs, often to the frustrations of the former who fail in their pursuit. In "The White People," the nymphs are benevolent for the girl, who at the end of *The Green Book* explains what she learned from her nurse and found for herself in her travels:

And I understood about the nymphs; how I might meet them in all kinds of places, and they would always help me, and I must always look for them, and find them

in all sorts of strange shapes and appearances. And without the nymphs I could never have found the secret, and without them none of the other things could happen. Nurse had told me all about them long ago, but she called them by another name, and I did not know what she meant, or what her tales of them were about, only that they were very queer. And there were two kinds, the bright and the dark, and both were very lovely and very wonderful, and some people saw only one kind, and some only the other, but some saw them both. (Machen 95)

Though the identification remains obscure, the girl's explanation complements one of the earliest parts of *The Green Book*, when she writes, "And I must not say who the Nymphs are, or the Dôls, or Jeelo, or what voolas mean" (Machen 70). These mythic beings appear to be another version of the fairies, or fair folk, that Machen often wrote about in his fiction. For example, in "The Statement of William Gregg," a section of "Novel of the Black Seal" in *The Three Impostors* (1895), a lost ethnographer writes the following description of the long past of the fairies in human lore and literature that could very well have been spoken by Ambrose:

Just as our remote ancestors called the dreadful beings 'fair' and 'good' precisely because they dreaded them, so they had dressed them up in charming forms, knowing the truth to be the very reverse. Literature, too, had gone early to work, and had lent a powerful hand in the transformation, so that the playful elves of Shakespeare are already far removed from the true original, and the real horror is disguised in a form of prankish mischief. But in the older tales, the stories that used to make men cross themselves as they sat around the burning logs, we tread a different stage; I saw a widely opposed spirit in certain histories of children and of men and women who vanished strangely from the earth. (165)

Such a history of violence with these wild ones and other inhuman folk of the wooded and open spaces is not the experience of the girl. Besides the white people designation from Machen, a few of the other names given to the fairies by the people of the British Isles are: *Aes Sídh*; "The Other Crowd"; "The Good People;" "The Wee Folk;" and "Them."

The Green Book girl displays an ability to attract and, when older, to call up these creatures. A suggestion is made later with NT II and NT IIIa and IIIb that the girl is an incarnation of a powerful witch with ties to the parallel dimension of Faerie, which would provide her with far more agency than her emotionally neglectful home life provides.

38. Machen's choices of the color and the book have links to British literary history. After an unknown number of years since the document's creation, the passage of time has caused the binding of this girl's green book to be "faded" and the color of its eponymous cover to have "grown faint" (Machen, *The White People* 69). Because of the connection with the fair folk and spirits in British folklore, green has signified witchcraft and evil. When combined with gold, as with Lady Bertilak's girdle in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, green can indicate the passing of youth. The girl's book is "oddly decorated with coloured patterns and faded gold" (Machen, *The White People* 70), and the reader knows that she does not survive her youth.

Other books known by their covers' colors abound in the history of Wales. *The Red Book of Hergest* has a tie to Machen's birthplace: Welsh poet Lewys Glyn Cothi at Tretower dedicates two odes (*awdlau*) written into the manuscript to Sir Thomas Vaughan and his sons, which suggests the Vaughans' ownership of the book. These Vaughans are the same family whose descendant is Thomas Vaughan, whose alchemical texts, especially the grimoire *Lumen de Lumine* (1651), influenced Arthur Machen (see my chapters on alchemy and Western

esotericism). J. R. R. Tolkien likely borrowed from the Hergest text for the title *The Red Book of Westmarch*, the imagined legendary source for the tales of Arda and Middle Earth. Tolkien wanted to write, or, to maintain the false document premise, to translate, a mythology for England. Lady Charlotte Guest's popular translation of the *Mabynogion* (1849), which *The Red Book of Hergest* contains, provided a mythology for Wales.

The White Book of Rhydderch was written in the middle of the fourteenth century, contemporary to *The Red Book of Hergest*, and is among the earliest collections of Welsh prose texts and early Welsh poetry. It is now part of the collection of the National Library of Wales, having been preserved in the library of one of the Vaughans, the seventeenth-century antiquary Robert Vaughan, and then inherited by his descendants.

In the Library of Wales edition of Machen's "The White People," Tomos Owen suggests that descriptive imagery in that story may draw on the *Mabynogion*, which provides Machen with a possible source for some of the mythic feel.

As I explore in the chapter on alchemy and Western esotericism, Machen received experience with esoteric and occult literature from his work in London at George Redway's book business in the eighteen eighties and from his friendship with A. E. Waite. The idea to name the girl's journal *The Green Book* may derive from *The Emerald Tablet*, also known as *The Secret of Hermes*, *Tabula Smaragdina*, or the *Smaragdine Table*. Many European alchemists claimed this work of unknown provenance as a foundational text for Hermeticism, and whose content could reveal the secret of the *prima materia* and its transmutations (e.g., the Paracelsians' primordial substance, related to Thomas Vaughan's *tenebrae activae*). Content from various editions of the *Emerald Tablet* can be traced to seventh century Arabic texts, and one recurring claim is that the core of the book derives from the first-century mage Apollonius of Tyana. By the early-eighteenth century, the *Emerald Tablet* had appeared in multiple Arabic and Latin editions, and Sir Isaac Newton produced an English translation.

39. The bureau holds objects that conform to the human body and mind, and that are markers of the past. In that piece of furniture, the girl finds her deceased mother's clothing (dresses and a shawl), and an item that is to be filled with the creative impulses of the human mind and heart (the aged, empty journal that becomes *The Green Book*). The fantastic quest experience of the woods has an immediate effect on the girl, and in the final stage of her apprenticeship—fraught since no mature woman is there to give guidance—she recollects in the tranquility of her bedroom what she now knows is real and not imagined, and soon after she goes to the hillside with her mother's shawl. This object provides the girl with what comfort may be gotten from the felt presence of a loved one who is absent, a token that cannot replace the actual presence that the mother could have provided to her daughter who has grown into abilities that set her apart. At one point, the girl sits on that shawl and thinks about what to write of the revelations of the old ways made fresh for her in the present, and decides that her sympathies align with that unveiled reality and seals her fate.

40. In a contemporary *Times Literary Supplement* review of *Hieroglyphics*, Frederick Thomas Dalton criticizes Machen's narrow aesthetic theory of ecstasy in a manner that suggests *The Green Book*: "The priestess on the oracular tripod, the magus in his divine madness, the trance-like visions and rhapsodies of Christian saints—all these are outside the sphere of art" (Dalton 108). Machen's first biographers, Reynolds and Charlton, went directly at Machen's story with suspicion about its origins: "The main part of the story is the child's journal of her second life,

and the style, child-like but not childish, is not more adapted to the character of the small girl than expressive of the state of mind of her author” (71). The co-biographers take an interpretive position that may rely too intently on Machen’s personal life when they argue that the writer’s psychic upset from his wife Amy’s decline and death are what *The Green Book* represent. When Machen drafted “The White People,” Amy was in the last stage of cancer, which took a toll on him as he focused his emotional and mental energies on his wife’s palliative care. After Amy’s death, the residual drain led to unique experiences for Machen that I state in my introductory chapter and in the chapter on alchemy and Western esotericism. Yet the words of *The Green Book* do express the teen girl’s character whose voice those words are meant to express. As I argue in the chapter above, her language—the emotional, mental, and physical that are stored by the literary—manages to elude the bigoted moral confinement set out for her by Machen’s male social milieu. Credit that the girl is due is not given with Reynolds and Charlton’s denigrating title of her as the “small girl.” She is sixteen-years-old and cognizant of what she is and what she has found.

41. Prior to Margaret Alice Murray’s witchcraft studies, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe: A Study in Anthropology* (1921) and *God of the Witches* (1933), a century of Romantic speculation and untenable theories of amateur Anthropology appeared of which Machen would have been aware (and possibly read when he worked at George Redway Publishing in London). In 1828, the German scholar Karl Ernst Jarcke was the first to claim that the European witch hunts persecuted a religion that was not Satanic and that the beliefs had a pagan origin. In the eighteen forties, Jacob Grimm claimed that the witch was an early modern image of medieval stereotypes about heresy that mixed with pagan traditions; however, Grimm never claimed that a witch cult existed as a separate religion. In 1862, French historian Jules Michelet published *La Sorcière* (*The Sorceress*), in which he adapted his theory that medieval peasants worshipped in a witch cult to oppose Roman Catholicism, a religion of the upper classes. Michelet claimed that the witches had been mostly women, whom he argued to be the superior gender, and among their ranks were great healers with knowledge that became the basis for modern medicine. He believed that the witches worshipped the Great God Pan who, ever since Plutarch’s dying god account (see my introductory chapter), had become equated with the Christian figure of the Devil. In 1893, Matilda Joslyn Gage published *Woman, Church and State*, a work that is a starting point for the modern Wicca and Neo-Pagan movements that in the twentieth century Gerald Gardner, an admirer of Margaret Alice Murray, centered upon Goddess worship. Gage claims that humanity in the prehistoric world had been matriarchal—a “matriarchate”—and worshipped a great Goddess; the witches were pagan priestesses who preserved this religion. In 1897, Karl Pearson, a professor of Applied Mathematics at University College London and an amateur historian and anthropologist, resurrected Michelet’s theory. Thus, Michelet, Gage, and Pearson are the basis for the theory of a prehistoric matriarchal society of which the European witch cult was a survival, and out of which Murray’s work emerges and then feeds Gardner’s new religious movement. Like Michelet, Pearson theorized that in the Christian era this underground religion focused around a male deity that equated with the Christian Devil. In the twentieth century, feminist concerns appropriated the myth of pre-historic matriarchy and Goddess worship. In Merlin Stone’s *When God Was a Woman* (1978), the author alleges that the Hebrews suppressed goddess-based beliefs from Canaan that had matriarchal and matrilineal societal structures. That reaction shaped Judaism and set the model for Christianity. Marija Gimbutas follows Stone but searches for evidence of the Goddess and matriarchy in Europe, first

with *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe: Myths and Cult Images* (1982) and then expanded upon in *The Language of the Goddess* (2001). The work of Cynthia Eller is representative of the critiques of the invented history of Gerald Gardner, Wiccans, and the theory of the Great Mother in prehistory: *The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory: Why an Invented Past Will Not Give Women a Future* (2000). Eller argues that a myth is a weak foundation for an ongoing social movement that seeks to end gender discrimination. Also, see the work of Philip G. Davis in *Goddess Unmasked: The Rise of Neopagan Feminist Spirituality* (1999), and the varied scholarship on patriarchy from Gerda Lerner.

Machen's first work in print, the self-published juvenile poem "Eleusinia," is about the Eleusinian Mysteries with their focus on Demeter. As a goddess of fertility, Diana presided over the harvest and seasonal changes in the landscape: She is a classical version of Mother Earth. Among the esoteric references in "The White People," NT IIIb states that Lady Avelin is proficient with the "shib-show": "And she could do what they called shib-show, which was a very wonderful enchantment" (Machen 86). In his short essay, "The Shock of the Numinous: Arthur Machen's 'The White People,'" J. S. Pennethorne (Johnny Eaton) elucidates that reference: "It is the *shibboleth*, the mystical object displayed as the Ultimate Revelation in the Eleusinian Mysteries. Current life and life to come, symbolised as food and seed, was embodied in 'an ear of corn reaped in silence,' again with its counterpart in alchemy and the quality of potential in all matter for transformation" (48).

42. In some of the early entries in the book, the girl exhibits a juvenile difficulty to delineate consistently between memory and imagination, a condition of her blending realities that is common to Ofelia's experience in the film *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006), written and directed by Guillermo del Toro. In Machen's prose poem "The Ceremony" (1897), a pubescent girl recalls with doubt a pagan remnant found in the woods when she was on a walk with her nurse:

It was all uncertain, the shadow of a shadow, so vague that it might well have been a dream that had mingled with the confused waking thoughts of a little child. She did not know that she remembered, she rather remembered the memory. (*Ornaments in Jade* 20)

An international film director, del Toro repeatedly has cited Machen's influence on his work, even writing Machen's name into his script that he produced for the movie *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* (2011). Del Toro provides the foreword to the 2011 Penguin Classics Edition of Arthur Machen: *The White People and Other Weird Stories*.

As the character Mercedes stood in as the nurse figure for Ofelia in *Pan's Labyrinth*, and then the two females part ways before that girl's death, in *The Green Book* the girl gains clarity about her dream life and reality after what happens to her on the day that she refers to as The White Day, attended by her own effort:

Nurse must have been a prophet like those we read of in the Bible. Everything that she said began to come true, and since then other things that she told me of have happened. That was how I came to know that her stories were true and that I had not made up the secret myself out of my own head.

(Machen, "The White People" 95)

43. Ambrose Bierce's short story "The Damn Thing" (1898) speculates about a being whose appearance is outside the range of the human eye to discern. The commentary in that story could be from a conversation with Ambrose in "The White People": "We so rely upon the orderly

operation of familiar natural laws that any seeming suspension of them is noted as a menace to our safety, as a warning of unthinkable calamity” (Bierce, “The Damned Thing” 101). From this angle, *The Green Book* girl’s knowledge of, and abilities to manipulate, unfamiliar natural laws and processes make her a menace.

The other prominent use of the color white in *The Green Book* is the stag into which the Faerie Queen metamorphoses herself. Rather than a color of innocence and purity, the color is part of the seduction of the young man to enrapture him with desire for the woman. This rupture of passion also is a kind of sorcery.

44. *The Green Book* refers to the girl’s hired guardian only by her occupation: the nurse. This job title, other than the typical Victorian functions of the job, plays on the woman’s position as a female figure who is a model and mentor to the girl, and also holds an association with a person who cares for the girl’s health. In the context of the story, health refers to a holistic approach, since that grown woman nurses the girl to a level of experience and education in subjects unavailable to the girl in formal school lessons and denied to her by the society of men who surround her.

45. Ramsey Campbell has made this observation about Machen’s structural achievement in “The White People”: “Where some of Machen’s earlier stories peer behind the veils of fairy tales and folk traditions, the central text of “The White People” often takes the form of one” (xii). Contemporary American horror writer T. E. D. Klein once observed that most supernatural stories “merely describe encounters with the dark primeval forces that reign beyond the edge of civilization,” but ““The Green Book’ seems an authentic pagan artefact, the actual *product* of an encounter with primeval forces, not merely a description of them” (277). Klein uses “The White People” as the primary source for his novel *The Ceremonies* (1984).

46. See *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* (*Valerie a týden divů*, 1970), the Czech New Wave film directed by Jaromil Jireš, which combines visual and plot elements from F. W. Murnau’s film *Nosferatu* (1922) with Lewis Carroll’s novel *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). Valerie, the film’s thirteen-year-old heroine, experiences a series of dream adventures during the week of her first menstruation. Her nascent sexual maturing combines with elements of folk and fairy tale, and relies upon non-linear and expressionistic narrative scenes that favor imagination and irrationality in contrast to the rigid authority of religious and secular repression. The same structure underlies Machen’s “The White People.”

At the end of communist-ruled Czechoslovakia, with its restrictive social conditions, another Carroll-influenced film was released: *Alice* (*Něco z Alenky*, 1988), written and directed by Jan Švankmajer. In an interview from 24 Jun. 2011 in *Electric Sheep Magazine*, Švankmajer explains:

While a fairy tale has got an educational aspect—it works with the moral of the lifted forefinger (good overcomes evil), dream, as an expression of our unconscious, uncompromisingly pursues the realisation of our most secret wishes without considering rational and moral inhibitions, because it is driven by the principle of pleasure. My *Alice* is a realised dream.

For other late-twentieth-century stories of young females amid sexual danger and liberation, and that end in symbolic or actual death (of childhood, of a worldview), see Angela Carter’s collection *The Bloody Chamber* (1979), both its title story, a version of the Bluebeard tale type,

and the short story “The Lady of the House of Love,” a vampire tale. The two central characters of the latter story, the Countess Nosferatu and an unnamed, young WWI English officer, each express an aspect of *The Green Book* girl. For instance, see this description about the Countess: “But the Countess herself is indifferent to her own weird authority, as if she were dreaming it” (95). And, for the male, refer to this description: “He has the special quality of virginity, most and least ambiguous of states: ignorance, yet at the same time, power in potential, and, furthermore, unknowingness, which is not the same as ignorance” (108). These character traits, particularly the potential power, the unknowingness, and the weird authority present from birth, combine in *The Green Book* girl.

47. In the Triple Goddess formula of the witch myth (maiden, mother, crone), the nurse’s great-grandmother operates as the crone who has a store of knowledge that is hidden from common ken, the nurse is the de facto mother, and the girl is the maiden. After the girl’s prefatory remarks, *The Green Book* moves into a kind of interlude section, whereby the nurse tells the girl about the old days, still touching, if barely, into the modern days of the contemporary era. The point is that the transmission of this wisdom continues via matrilineal descent. As distinguished from the general folk, these tales of the local cunning folk occur in each of the Nurse Tales, and all the tales feature at least one highborn female character or one who ascends the social scale (e.g., NT I). Citations to the nurse’s great-grandmother are like background radiation in the story: The influence of that living past is there even when not explicit, since this closed society works as a secret one. See the work of Simmel and Hazelrigg on the operations of secret societies. The Nurse Tales directly name the “great-grandmother” for a total of eight times.

48. This figure has a correspondence with the black king of the nigredo stage of alchemy. In the alchemical *Opus Magnum*, this symbolic king dies as a prerequisite to reach the *prima materia* that then will initiate a rebirth in a new form. In his threatening stance outside the bedchamber, this figure challenges the astonished royal wedding guests and undermines their efforts for enforcement of the marriage contract: “Venture not upon your life, / This is mine own wedded wife” (Machen, “The White People” 77). The mortal prince-who-would-be-king loses the bride to the black king for her life of transformation with the latter that the former cannot offer to her. Further, the clamor from the bedchamber resembles the activity of alchemy that is the chemical marriage of the imbalanced “arguing couple” of the principles of masculine sulfur (the thick smoke left behind in the room) and feminine quicksilver (the girl with her changeable materials and status).

49. Elsewhere, I state the significance of female characters who engage in a type of play that expresses their non-orthodox worship and the use of occult abilities and esoteric knowledge. The Hindu concept of *Lîla* is the parallel that I find with this type of play.

50. A modern treatment of the human, non-human animal, and suprahuman contact can be found in the work of Japanese animator Hayao Miyazaki. In Miyazaki’s epic film *Princess Mononoke* (*Mononoke-hime*, 1997), the mortal hero Ashitaka rides his mount, a red elk named Yakul, into an old growth forest. Upon each encounter with the forest spirit, which appears as either a giant, multi-pointed *kirin* (a chimerical creature common to East Asian cultures), or as *yōkai* in the form of a *Daidara-bocchi* (a supernatural giant), the reliable mount Yakul quivers and shows sudden hesitation.

51. The hill of NT II has a triple existence as a setting. Besides serving as a thin place between worlds in NT II, that spot is the same hill that *The Green Book* girl ascends on The White Day and is the same hill where the worshippers of NT IIIa gather to celebrate pagan rites and induce euphoric states. I state other details from *The Green Book* in the chapter on psychogeography. In a comparative reading of Aubrey Beardsley's *The Story of Venus and Tannhauser, or Under the Hill* (1895) and Machen's *The Hill of Dreams* (1907), Gail-Nina Anderson notes a treatment of landscape that can be found in NT II of *The Green Book*: "This realm of Venus, and perhaps Lucian's hill of dreams too, functions not just as the metaphor for a state of mind but comes close to being directly presented, anatomically and sexually, as dangerous unknowable female territory, the physicality where men enter at their peril" (Anderson 7). Venus knows how to navigate her territory, and the Faerie Queen knows the way through her dominion.

52. The Faerie Queen in NT II resembles a creature known as a Korrigan, as described in Porteous: "By her fatal wiles she has the power to enthrall the hearts of the noblest of men, who are doomed to perish for the love of her" (24). This queen is sylvan, similar to Helen Vaughan in that respect, but *The Green Book* goes in a different tack for the man that the Faerie Queen waylays. For the hunter, the story ends for him with her leaving him inconsolable; for women, she is an epitome of authority and representative of the glorious power to choose (and one's having the privilege to do so).

53. The probable origin of the name Avelin in NT IIIa and IIIb comes from Latin and the Celtic past of the British Isles: "And her real name was the Lady Avelin, but the dancing people called her Cassap, which meant somebody very wise, in the old language" (Machen, "The White People" 86). While the sound of the lady's name calls to mind the enchanted realm of Avalon, the spelling resembles the word avellan, which is a hazelnut (filbert). Avellan is from the Latin word *abellana* (*avellana*) and is found in the place name Abella, an ancient Italian town in Campania famous for its fruit trees and nuts. The hazelnut originally was a Celtic icon, and not a Christian one, but the association existed by the European Middle Ages when Dame Julian of Norwich describes her hazelnut vision. Druid priests believed that they could visit and receive inspiration from the *awen*, or otherworld, when they chewed roasted hazelnuts. The visionary effect likely came from low doses of arsenic poisoning, since the nuts contain arsenic like a number of nut-bearing trees do. The hazelnut was viewed as a kind of seed of knowledge with the ability to open the hidden eye and to allow passage to the unreachable realms. Machen may intend to call to mind the lady's royalty, too, since the heraldic sign known as the Avellan Cross has four arms whose shape derives from stylized hazelnuts and branches.

54. See the recent work of Jack Zipes (*The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre*, 2012); Susan Honeyman (*Consuming Agency in Fairy Tales, Childlore, and Folk literature*, 2009); and Ruth Bottigheimer (*Fairy Tales: A New History*, 2009).

55. See Alexander Pope in *An Essay on Man* (1732), Epistle I, sect. X:
All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see
All discord, harmony not understood,
All partial evil, universal good

56. See the collection *Keynotes and Discords* (1893) by Egerton (Mary Chavelita Dunne Bright), published as the first volume in John Lane's Keynotes Series. The first-half of Egerton's book title lends its name to the successful Bodley Head Press series. Lane hoped to profit from the "discord" reflected and distorted by the literature that he chose for the series, to benefit from the uncertainty and outré aspects of the fin de siècle.

57. The story leaves open the possibility that the nurse has departed from the mortal, material sphere by the means of some form of occult rapture for "she had gone away more than two years before" (Machen, "The White People" 92). Her absence recalls the people of the hill in NT IIIa: "Sometimes people would suddenly disappear and never be heard of afterwards, and nobody knew what had happened to them" (Machen, "The White People" 84).

58. In a letter to Montague Summers on 20 Nov. 1941, Machen expresses a milder view of what he entertains as the possible historical reality of witches: "So, perhaps, with witchcraft. It is probably a compound deriving from several sources; but so far as it was an organised affair, with its minutes and readings, it may have been the survival of a stone-age culture; & not wholly malefic" (3).

59. In her study of the Pan myth in British literature, Patricia Merivale makes this point about E. M. Forster's short story, "The Story of a Panic" (1904): "Forster's characters die, it is true, not from the vision [of Pan], but from the consequences of a civilization that denies the vision....The often abstract conflict of the Arcadian and the civilized is made concrete in these characters" (181). That denial is the same that *The Green Book* girl confronts.

60. In reply to the accusations of pederasty, Leadbeater wrote to Annie Besant: "So when boys came under my care, I mentioned this matter to them [masturbation], among other things, always trying to avoid all sorts of false shame, and to make the whole appear as natural and simple as possible" (Lutyens 17).

There are certain, additional considerations in Leadbeater's case that exist due to his professional membership, and these factors have a relation to the repression that John Addington Symonds expresses in his memoir. However, rather than spiritual in origin, Symonds felt bound to follow a sexually repressed lifestyle as demanded by a prominent member of the medical profession (cf. the conclusion of the chapter on *The Great God Pan* and non-normative Victorian sexuality). As an initiate in the Theosophical Society, Leadbeater was expected to remain chaste and not engage in sexual relationships with others. Thus, Leadbeater's teachings about masturbation were a means to enable initiates to remain within these bounds and to avoid the temptation of illicit sexual encounters (either with female prostitutes or with homosexual encounters).

61. In the chapter on the classical and modern sexual content of Machen's *The Great God Pan*, I state some of the imagery from the excavation of Pompeii kept in the Secret Museum, or Secret Cabinet (*Gabinetto Segreto*), of the Naples National Archeology Museum in Italy. The English counterpart of separate galleries for ancient erotic art is the old Secretum of the British Museum. This now disused section inspires the "secret annexe" of the British Museum that the members of Alan Moore's *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* use as their base of operations.

Chapter 3

1. Rexroth 245.

2. *Household Words* 135.

3. Machen, *Far Off Things* 142.

4. The film *The Usual Suspects* (1995) uses a similar convention, when in the next-to-last act Agent Cujon realizes that he has been hoodwinked by an expert taleweaver. This film features a supercriminal, the enigmatic Keyser Soze, just as Machen's *The Three Impostors* features the nefarious Dr. Lipsius (cf. "History of the Young Man with Spectacles"). Machen's character probably would not exist without Conan Doyle's Professor Moriarity, who appeared in print in "The Final Problem," a story published in 1893, two years prior to Machen's work.

With the expectation from the French term *nouvelle* of a kind of romantic and adventurous tale, Machen's use of "novel" in the title of the four longest parts of *The Three Impostors* is an apt choice for narrative content that plays with the intended audience, and which is delivered by manipulative impostors.

5. Cf. n. 42 in the chapter on Western esotericism.

6. The Great Work of alchemy, or *opus alchymicum*, usually is described as a series of four stages that are known by colors. The following list of these stages gives the Latin, English, and now less-common Greek equivalents. When Cosimo de' Medici tasked Marsilio Ficino with translating the *Corpus Hermeticum* and other Greek texts in the fifteenth century, Greek was a language that many of the educated elite did not know (a problem, since the Hermetic texts were in Greek). Besides the influence on the continued development of alchemical thought, Ficino's work, and that of Pico della Mirandola, helped to re-introduce Platonic and Neo-Platonic texts to the Western world. The alchemical stages are:

Nigredo, the blackening or melanosis

Albedo, the whitening or leucosis

Citrinitas, the yellowing or xanthosis

Rubedo, the reddening (or purpling) or iosis

A good, basic guide to alchemical terminology is Lyndy Abraham's *A Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery* (Cambridge UP, 1998), and an excellent starting point for imagery is Alexander Roob's book *The Hermetic Cabinet: Alchemy and Mysticism* (Taschen, 2005).

The stages have a literal, or physical, meaning, which consists of the techniques used by the alchemist in the laboratory. The stages also have their figurative, or spiritual, meaning, which I go into detail within the sections presented above. Many of the European alchemists, before post-Newtonian science, practiced practical as well as philosophical alchemy (e.g., Paracelsus, Vaughan, Boyle, and Newton).

7. See the work of William R. Newman and Anthony Grafton in *Secrets of Nature: Astrology and Alchemy in Modern Europe* (MIT, 2006).

8. For additional material on the modern historical analysis of alchemy, see the work co-authored by William R. Newman and Lawrence M. Principe: *Alchemy Tried in the Fire: Starkey, Boyle, and the Fate of Helmontian Chymistry* (U of Chicago P, 2005).

In his *New York Times* article, “Transforming the Alchemists” (1 Aug. 2006), John Noble Wilford quotes from an interview that he conducted with Principe, the latter of whom states: “Experimentalism was one of alchemy’s hallmarks. You have to get your hands dirty, and in this way alchemists forged some early ideas about matter.”

In *Things Near and Far*, Machen considers the bridging that alchemical work provided between the pre-scientific age and the Scientific Revolution:

‘Household Words,’ while not affirming this, that, or the other doctrine as to alchemy in so many distinct words, did suggest that a few of the old alchemists, at all events, were something more than blundering simpletons engaged on a quest which was a patent absurdity, which could only have been entertained by the besotted superstition of ‘the dark ages,’ which had this one claim to our attention inasmuch as the modern science of chemistry rose from the ashes of its foolish fires. (38)

Dame Frances Yates uses the work of the Hermeticists, marked from Giordano Bruno’s death, as the liminal space from which the Enlightenment departs to the rational methods and secular thinking required for modern science.

9. “Daughter of Plato” is a phrase of respect for Maria’s intelligence, invention, and relation to Platonic philosophy, plus that term is another name for the alchemist’s supply of white sulfur. The Arab World, including libraries in Iberia, preserved many of the classical Greek Hermetic texts before their transmission to Western Europe.

Among the English Romantics, William Blake makes some of the most dramatic and evocative uses of language inspired by alchemy. See the hybrid work *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790), especially on Plates 14 and 15. Though he was not an operative alchemist but a working printmaker and tradesman, he did invite and train his wife Catherine to assist him in his “infernal printing method.”

10. In the tenth chapter of *Things Near and Far*, Machen gives his critique of the history of the papers upon which the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was founded:

I like the story; but there was not one atom of truth in it. The Twilight Star was a stumer—or stumed—to use a very old English word. Its true date of origin was 1880-1885 at the earliest. The ‘Cipher Manuscript’ was written on paper that bore the watermark of 1809 in ink that had a faded appearance. But it contained information that could not possibly have been known to any living being in the year 1809, that was not known to any living being till twenty years later. It was, no doubt a forgery of the early ‘eighties. Its originators must have some knowledge of Freemasonry; but so ingeniously was this occult fraud ‘put upon the market’ that, to the best of my belief, the flotation remains a mystery to this day. But what an entertaining mystery: and, after all, it did nobody any harm.

11. Like the alchemical tradition with its many influences, the term “alchemy” has an etymological history that reflects assorted places and a long span of time. This history can be traced backwards from Old French, to Medieval Latin, to Arabic, and to ancient Greek (where

chemia combines with the Arabic definite article *al-* into what modern English refers to as the term alchemy). David Bain's article "Melanîtis gê, an Unnoticed Greek Name for Egypt: New Evidence for the Origins and Etymology of Alchemy?" argues that the ancient Greek word, like *The Emerald Tablet*, may have its origin in ancient Egypt. The ancient Egyptians referred to their land as *Kemet*, which is from the word *kēme* and is written in the hieroglyphic *Khmi*, which the classical Greeks transliterated as *chēmia*. The Egyptian term refers to the fertile soil left behind after the Nile's flooding season; thus, the "black earth" of *kēme*. Since the word is found only rarely, in texts like *Cyranides*, Bain's hypothesis is that the word "alchemy" may go back to an esoteric Greek tradition, which would then be no earlier than the Coptic. Thus, alchemy was known as "the art of the Black Land" (i.e., Egypt above the fourth cataract). As I describe in my chapter on Western esotericism (cf. the section "The Word Unheard"), Egyptian influence is present in Hermeticism with the figure of Hermes Trismegistos, who incorporates aspects of the Egyptian wisdom deity Thoth.

12. While also caring about the well-being of the individual, Machen is a traditionalist in that he was desirous of the weight of tradition, but one that went back to the roots and freed itself from the stifling, piddling inefficacy of the modern Anglican Church, as he saw the current state of that organized religion. Though Machen wrote next-to-nothing about psychoanalysis, let alone any commentary about Jungian theories, his definite conservative streak probably would have taken the position that one must be cautious of a cult of personality, which is how he may have viewed the thrust of Jungian psychoanalysis, and the distraction of egotism and other threats from self-centeredness.

Spiritual alchemists have not been divorced entirely from exoteric elements as the evidence cited suggests. However, Jacob Böhme is an example is an example of someone who used the terminology from operative alchemy in a body of writing that is strictly mystical.

13. Cf. n. 38 in "The White People" chapter.

14. The Newton Project can be found online at this address:
<http://www.newtonproject.sussex.ac.uk>

15. Though certain pieces of outsider art may fall within my broad categorization, I refer more to episodes of mental illness that manifest the potential or actual danger and threat that an individual may be to themselves, or to other persons. Weber's conception of disenchantment had some concern with the possibly that re-enchantment would flourish around power-crazed ideologues.

16. See Rexroth's introduction to *The Spiritual Alchemy of Thomas Vaughan* (University Books, 1967), who is one of the earlier writers to consider the Renaissance alchemists based upon interest in them from the Surrealists. Rather than an admiration for and apprehension of a system for spiritual progress, artists who were influenced by surrealism valued the suggestiveness of the older alchemical works.

In his essay, "The Literature of Occultism" (1899), Machen discusses Vaughan in the context of speculation about the actual work of the alchemists and what spiritual component may have existed in their work:

Thomas Vaughan, the brother of the Silurist, was certainly not hinting at any chemical or material transmutation when he wrote his *Lumen de Lumine* and the *Magia Adamica*. The theory has been advanced that the true alchemists were, in fact, the successors of the hierophants of Eleusis, that their transmutation was a transmutation of man, not of metal. . . that their fine gold, glistening and glorious as the sun, symbolized the soul, freed from the bonds of matter, in communion with the source of all things, initiated in the perfect mysterious. (42-43).

17. Rudolf Steiner meant for Anthroposophy to represent an alternative to Madame Helena Petovna Blavatsky's Theosophy. Steiner was not the first person to use the term, which can be found in writings of Agrippa von Nettesheim and, significantly for this chapter, the Welsh alchemist Thomas Vaughan (e.g., Eugenius Philalethes) uses the term in the title of his work *Anthroposophia Theomagica* (1650). As with other alchemical works, including those authored by Paracelsus (see the section "As if I Were Filled with Fire"), the secondary title of Vaughan's work is suggestive of the alchemist's interest in states of being and becoming: *A Discourse of the Nature of Man and His State after Death: Grounded on His Creator's Proto-Chimistry and Verifi'd by a Practicall Examination of Principles in the Great World*.

18. See Newton's interest in the *una res*.

The title of that false document in "N" receives notice in Machen's *Hieroglyphics: A Note Upon Ecstasy in Literature* (1899, publ. 1902). Also, the last volume of Machen's autobiography is titled *The London Adventure: An Essay in Wandering* (1924) has a title that resonates with Hampole's fictional text. In that autobiography, Machen refers to an idea for a book that he would have liked to have been able to write, but could not execute.

19. For a representative work by Zosimos about alchemy as symbolic of a religious regeneration of the human soul, see *Concerning the true Book of Sophe, the Egyptian, and of the Divine Master of the Hebrews and the Sabaoth Powers*.

20. In Bostocke's abstract for the first chapter, on the same page from which I quote, he makes clear that the sympathies of his thoughts in the arguments that will follow derive from Christian belief, since he states that "there is no trueth that is not derived from Christ the trueth it self" (16).

21. Tschudi's catechism originally appears in *L'Etoile Flamboyant ou la Société des Franc-Maçons considérée sous tous les aspects* (1766).

22. See n. 17 of the Western esotericism chapter about my designations for the Nurse Tales from *The Green Book*.

On the topic of a once-living flower transmuted to pure gold, there is this passage from the story: "So the king asked why she wore a gold crown, and how she got it, as she and her mother were so poor. And she laughed, and said it wasn't a gold crown at all, but only some yellow flowers she had put in her hair" (Machen, "The White People" 77).

23. In Eco's novel *Foucault's Pendulum* (1988), in a conversation between Agliè and Casaubon, we hear what may be an echo of Newman and Principe about esoteric alchemy: "But what was the secret? There was no secret" (416).

24. Not consulted is an essay by Ron Weighell, "Sorcery and Sanctity: The Spagyric Quest of Arthur Machen," found in *Arthur Machen: Artist and Mystic* (eds. Mark Valentine and Roger Dobson, Oxford: Caermaen, 1986).

25. Rather than the somewhat ominous suggestion made at the end of this section, the sacrifice and attendant death may be closer to a common reading of the Major Arcana trump card of "Death" from the Tarot deck: a death of the old state of things to clear the way for a renewed and better arrangement, usually an internal re-ordering of the individual person and that person's priorities. See the short story "Gryphon" (1985), by Charles Baxter, which uses the "Death" card and the concept in such a manner.

26. Machen drew literary inspiration from his native environment. His choice of the descriptive name "Silurist" comes from his homage to the Silures, the Celtic tribe of pre-Roman south Wales who strongly resisted the Romans. The Reynolds and Charlton biography of Machen refers to some pertinent details from the spring and summer of 1884 when Machen was back in Gwent to visit his ailing parents, after viable work had become scarce in London during his days on which he subsisted upon green tea and dry bread and currants: "The diversity and alternating bustle and desolation of London, the woods and streams of Monmouthshire, double appreciated after absence, the mysticism of the English Alchemists, the pagan beauty of Swinburne contrasting with the ideals of romance and traditional civilization imbibed from Cervantes and Scott, all these produced a fervid tumult in his imagination" (19).

27. As for the Vaughan family, cf. n. 38 in the chapter on "The White People" and adolescence. Through 1887, Machen signed many of his letters, "Arthur Machen, Silurist" (Machen, *Selected Letters* 213). Thomas Vaughan (Eugenius Philalethes) is sometimes referred to as the Silurian. His brother, Henry, is commonly known as the Silurian, and he is best regarded as the author of two volumes of religious poems titled *Silex Scintillans*, "The Fiery Flint" or "The Flashing Flint," which, as his writings describe, is a reference to the stony hardness of his heart from which divine steel strikes fire.

28. While Vaughan's *tenebrae activae* may be among the earliest of Machen's reading to influence his thoughts about dissolution, French Decadence has a role to play in the milieu of the eighteen nineties. Baudelaire's poem "Une Charogne" ("A Carrion," 1856), like those selected works by Machen, features the gross decay of the beloved:

— *Et pourtant vous serez semblable à cette ordure,
À cette horrible infection,
Etoile de mes yeux, soleil de ma nature,
Vous, mon ange et ma passion!*
(— And yet you will be like this corruption,
Like this horrible infection,
Star of my eyes, sunlight of my being,
You, my angel and my passion!) (trans. Aggeler)

29. In Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), the moralistic horror of interior corruption manifests as outward decay in the painting as objective correlative, and then in the sudden fright of Dorian's transfiguration.

30. A synonymous description of the cycling process is that from the loss of form to amorphous matter there follows the return of form from that amorphous matter. Certain commentaries on *The Emerald Tablet* refer to this loss and gain as the volitization and fixation of the matter. Exemplary on this point is the commentary from William Salmon in *Medicina Practica* (London, 1692), in which the fourteenth chapter and its section on Hermes and "The Golden Work" speaks in this manner of the *solve et coagula*. Salmon's commentary relies heavily on Hortulanus' work (the first published English version of the original Latin was included in Roger Bacon's *The Mirror of Alchemy*, London, 1597).

In Ben Jonson's play *The Alchemist*, the character Subtle explains to Mammon that the "medicine" (i.e., the stone) a product of the *solve et coagula*:

giving him solution; then congeal him;
And then dissolve him; then again congeal him;
For look, how oft I iterate the work,
So many times I add unto his virtue

(2.1.104-107).

31. Kenneth Grant, who served for a time as Aleister Crowley's personal secretary, drew a comparison between Machen's protoplasmic reversion and the early-twentieth-century occultist Austin Osman Spare's atavistic resurgence.

32. Besides the alchemical components of these works of fiction, *The Great God Pan*, "The Inmost Light," and "Novel of the White Powder" are part of Machen's generalized attack against science, an unfortunate aspect of his outlook that S. T. Joshi has discussed at length in *The Weird Tale* (1990) and in the introductions to the three-volume set of Machen's collected fiction that Chaosium Press released between 2001-2005.

Machen's antagonistic streak may have something to do with a point made by Thomas Laqueur in his article "Why the Margins Matter: Occultism and the Making of Modernity" (2006):

"Insofar as science makes the occult knowable it makes it ordinary, no longer a way of refracting the mysteries of the universe but rather ordinary knowledge arrived at in ordinary ways" (120).

33. Cf. n. 52 of the Western esotericism chapter.

"The City of Resurrections" chapter heading plays off of the opening lines of *More New Arabian Nights* (1885).

34. Cf. the chapter on *The Great God Pan* and the Labouchère Amendment, where the lack of social equanimity and legal status results in the tragic unconsciousness to one's own true nature and acts of concealment.

35. See Machen's correspondence with John Lane, in which Machen touches upon the delivery of the marvelous by way of the ordinary. The publisher requested that Machen cut a significant

section of *The Great God Pan*: All of Chapter One: “The Experiment,” was to leave the story. In a letter to John Lane, dated 8 Mar. 1894, Machen writes his defense, which succeeded:

The only case of ‘won’t’ is the suggestion to cut out the 1st chapter ‘The Experiment’ and with it the motive, from *The Great God Pan*. The ‘credibility,’ the whole effect of the story rest on this. If I were writing in the Middle Ages I should need no scientific basis for the reason that in those days the supernatural *per se* was entirely credible. In these days the supernatural *per se* is entirely incredible; to believe, we must link our wonders to some scientific or pseudo-scientific fact, or basis, or method. Thus we do not believe in ‘ghosts,’ but in *telepathy*, not in ‘witchcraft,’ but in *hypnotism*. If Mr. Stevenson had written his great masterpiece about 1590-1650, Dr. Jekyll would have made a compact with the devil; in 1886 Dr. Jekyll sends to the Bon Street chemists for some rare drugs. (*Selected Letters* 218)

36. In Mary Shelley’s novel, *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818), Victor Frankenstein lists several alchemists among his boyhood reading material: Agrippa von Nettesheim, Paracelsus, and Albertus Magnus.

37. The renewal of nature begins with death, which is why Machen cites the alchemist Oswald Crollius, a Paracelsian and a professor of medicine at the University of Marburg in Hesse in the late-fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Dr. Raymond quotes the Crollius line to Mr. Clarke: “You see that parchment Oswald Crollius? He was one of the first to show me the way, though I don’t think he ever found it himself. That is a strange saying of his: ‘In every grain of wheat there lies hidden the soul of a star’” (Machen *TGGP* 4). That statement is one that any contemporary of Crollius would have recognized immediately, since the idea of nature reborn from death found support, and the cover of acceptable Christian belief, with the citation of the biblical parable of the grain of wheat in John 12:24-26 (KJV): “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” Machen also includes the “grain of wheat” quotation from Oswald in his memoirs *Things Near and Far* when writing about cataloguing occult books for George Redway. In addition to the citation that appears in a work of his fiction and in non-fiction, Machen, in the preface to fellow Gwent writer W. J. Townsend Collins’s *The Romance of the Echoing Wood* (1937), cites once more from the alchemist Oswald Crollius in a line quoted by Dr. Raymond in *TGGP*: “In every grain...” and elaborates on the concept in this manner:

The grain of wheat...discloses undreamed of wonders: much more does the whole world and sum of things, the spiritual world of men and all their works, disclose incredible but most veracious marvels to those who gaze on it in the spirit of romance. (Machen iv)

In his second volume of autobiography, Machen interprets Crollius as “all matter is one, manifested under many forms” (*Things Near and Far* 21). Machen’s interpretation of that underlying matter in the eighteen nineties fiction is ambivalent, since the primal brew has no predilection for higher forms if his plots are any indication.

The greater thing that comes from the less finds a place in William Blake poem “Auguries of Innocence,” from *The Ballads (Pickering) Manuscript* (1801-03): “To see a World in a Grain of Sand / And a Heaven in a Wild Flower, / Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand / And Eternity in an hour” (1-4). Alexander Gilchrist’s biography *Blake* (1868) contains a variant of these lines.

38. The last part of that quote, and the question that ends the work, is indebted to Stevenson: “But who is the other that hides in me?” (Machen, *Ornaments in Jade* 27).

39. On Celetná Street in Prague, above a set of carved wood and metal double-doors, there is a black, multi-rayed sun set on a field of gold paint. The house at 34 Celetná Street known as “At the Black Mother of God,” the location of a statue of the Black Virgin that is displayed opposite the former headquarters of the Templar order. Black Virgins, which are scattered about Europe, may be references to ancient earth goddesses.

Number 8 Celetná Street is referred to as “At the Black Sun” to invoke the notion of Vaughan’s *lumen de lumine*, of light hidden in dense dark matter. Where Celetná Street opens up into the Old Town Square there are two houses named “At the White Unicorn,” a fictional animal with associations that are alchemical and Christian.

Emperor Rudolf II invited Dr. John Dee and Edward Kelly to his Prague court, where there already was established the lane of metallurgists along Gold Lane (*Zlatá Ulička*).

See the literary works of Gustav Meyrink, including *The Golem* (*Der Golem*, 1915) and *The Angel of the West Window* (*Der Engel vom westlichen Fenster*, 1927). The plots of these narratives imbue the city of Prague and the neighborhood and environs of Josefov with a Kabbalistic and alchemical aura.

40. Cf. William Blake and his language, including the title, of his hybrid literary work, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790).

41. Certain of these terms, many of them seemingly invented by Machen, have found a new life online. The word “Cassap” appears on multiple websites, designated as a word from witchcraft that means “somebody very wise, in the old language” (Machen, “The White People” 86). That definition is exactly how “The White People” explains the term, except that these sources do not cite Machen.

42. Cf. J. S. Pennethorne and “The Shock of the Numinous.”

43. The title page of Machen’s work reads:

Thesaurus Incantatus, Including: “*The Enchanted Treasure*; or, *The Spagyric Quest of Beroaldus Cosmopolita* in which is sophically and mystagorically declared the first matter of the stone ; with a list of choice books on alchemy, magic, talismans, gems, mystics, Neoplatonism, ancient worships, Rosicrucians, occult sciences, etc., etc. on sale by Thomas Marvell, 98 Great Russell Street, London.”

Thomas Marvell is a pseudonym used by Machen only for the above work.

Since the Victorian period, spagyric often appears in the literature and advertisements of holistic medicine and alternative medicine theorists. Their choice for the use of this term has to do with spagyric as a reference to quality herbal medicines, and the connotation is that the natural compounds and production of these remedies gives an efficacy not found in other pharmaceutical products—not the product of alchemical procedures. Most commonly, the original spagyric procedures, described by Paracelsus and Paracelsians like Oswald Crollius, involve fermentation, distillation, and the extraction of mineral components from the ash of the plant. Death in an

older state of being leads to the production of a higher form of material whose properties are more refined.

44. The trinity, or at least three-part series, plays out in multiples in *The Green Book*, which includes the following: The crone-maid-maiden of great grandmother, nurse, girl; NT I, II, and III; the girl's lessons with nurse that then lead to her solitary journey and that conclude in contact with the eikon. The girl's travels through the dark woods has three parts: Her entrance to the realm; her frightened run after her initial meeting with the divine presence on The White Day after the first ascent and descent; and her return for consummation after her second ascent and descent. When the girl does approach the eikon, she does so three times: "Then I went round the third time, feeling with my hands, and the story was all true, and I wished that the years were gone by, and that I had not so long a time to wait before I was happy for ever and ever" (95).

45. On the history of the use of harrow in England, see Keith Briggs's article, "Harrow" (2010), from the *Journal of the English Place-Name Society*

46. After the initial trip to the hill, *The Green Book* girl's consciousness opens to perceive wonders that she never before could imagine. She interprets her dreams as signs that her nurse's tales were true, and the evidence to support that woman's claims can be found in the natural setting to which the girl will return:

At night I used to dream of amazing things, and sometimes I woke up in the early morning and held out my arms with a cry. And I was frightened, too, because there were dangers, and some awful thing would happen to me, unless I took great care, if the story were true. (Machen, "The White People" 91)

The reach for a lover for whom the girl is not yet ready and the fright of a virgin both point to the sexual revelation that her preparation is taking her towards. Not long after the first descent and the helper animal that led the girl to the eikon, then the dreams begin, the girl goes back on the hill, and upon the next descent she returns to the eikon of the tutelary presence. After she recalled NT I and the pit, the girl took precautions with a protective charm and what seems to be a healthy dose of prudence in her wanders. Now that she has had some experience and shown the sense to proceed with greater caution, the girl judges for herself whether to go to the eikon. Helpful resources to consider in the context of this story are Steve F. Kruger's book *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (2005), and Gwenfair Walter Adams's book *Visions in Late Medieval England: Lay Spirituality and Sacred Glimpses of the Hidden Worlds of Faith* (2007).

In relation to the movement that the girl witnesses upon each hilltop visit, there is an interesting tie to the magical animism that permeates Giordano Bruno's philosophy of nature. As the work of Dame Frances Yates has emphasized, Bruno's vision is of the living earth that moves round the sun and of an infinite universe with innumerable worlds that are in motion in space. See Yates's book *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (U of Chicago, 1964).

47. A common alchemical motto was VITRIOL: *Visita Interiora Terrae Rectificando Invenies Occultum Lapidem* ("Visit the Interior Parts of the Earth; by Rectification Thou Shalt Find the Hidden Stone"). The importance placed on interiority is a primary feature of alchemy, and the word spelled out by the acronym, "vitriol," is another word for sulphuric acid, a substance studied since ancient times and known as oil of vitriol by the European alchemists.

48. See n. 18 from the Western esotericism chapter. In Lewis-Williams's lecture, "Reality and Non-reality in San Rock Art" (1988), he states that "from neuropsychological research we know that San shamans would have experienced geometric entoptic phenomena because the nervous system is a human universal, and it automatically produces these forms in certain altered states." Entoptic phenomena are visual effects whose source is within the eye itself.

Research conducted in controlled experimental settings on entoptic phenomena have replicated Shamanic experiences from around the world: Chains of small dots, seen as undulating, are interpreted as the Milky Way, which is the first goal of the ecstatic flight of narcotic trance (their release from earthbound existence). For more on these studies, see the research of Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff, including his book *Beyond the Milky Way: Hallucinatory Imagery of the Tukano Indians* (UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1978).

49. See the image, "Alchemy is Enclosed in Nigredo," by Heinrich Jamsthaler in his work *Viatorium Spagyricum* (1625). As shown in Jamsthaler's woodcut, images of the nigredo stage often depict the human form in the humor of melancholia in order to indicate the temporary depression of that stage before albedo occurs.

Known as The Washing, mundification is the act of purifying the putrefied material at this stage of nigredo. The male and female principles, the King and the Queen who have fused by *coniunctionis* into a hermaphrodite, commonly appear in alchemical illustrations to lie as if dead on a sepulcher as drops of rain descend on their bodies from cloudcover. A representative image of mundification can be found in *The Rosary of the Philosophers (Rosarium Philosophorum)*, which is the second volume of a larger work entitled *De Alchimia Opuscula Complura Veterum Philosophorum* (Frankfurt, 1550). A copy of *The Rosary of the Philosophers* can be viewed at the University of Glasgow's Special Collections Department, and has been a featured work on their website: <http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/exhibns/month/april2009.html>

50. An omphalos translates as a "navel" stone and is a religious object from the ancient Mediterranean. In Greek myth, Zeus sent out two eagles to fly around the world and where they met would mark the center, a point at which the god placed the original omphalos. More than one site in classical Greece claimed to be the place of the omphalos that Zeus had built, and at these sites, including at Delphi, a representation of the stone was set. During the time of the European crusades, an omphalos was placed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, since a popular version of medieval cosmology placed the city as the spiritual center of the Judeo-Christian worldview.

Among other stones that appear in Machen's work is the gift from a Turanian to the girl in "The Turanians": "The girl was lying in her white room, caressing a small green stone, a curious thing cut with strange devices, awful with age" (*Ornaments in Jade* 9). Here, rather than the sinister stone of Machen's "Novel of the Black Seal" in *The Three Impostors*—the Sixtystone called Ixaxar—or even the dangerous enchantment and the acts of glamour done by the enchanted(-ing) girl found in NT I of *The Green Book*, this young woman receives a gift that excites her in a way that her mother's choice of suitor for her does not. The suitor is a practitioner of the law of settled society, not a young man who delights in a life lived crafting with great skills objects from the earth, which include skills that rely on the exoteric alchemical techniques of metallurgy, in tune with natural law in a way that the "charming young barrister" is not, who is a maternally-approved suitor and socially-proper mate (Machen, *Ornaments in Jade* 33).

51. See Alan Moore and Kevin O’Neill’s *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen: Century #1 – 1910* (Vol. III, 2009). This part of their serial novelization is set in the months leading up to the coronation of George V.

52. The stories told about Apollonius of Tyana and contemporary mages and miracle workers present these persons as in the possession of talents equal to *The Green Book* girl’s. See *Philostratus: Lives of the Sophists. Eunapius: Lives of the Philosophers* (Loeb Classical Library No. 134, trans. Wilmer C. Wright, 1921).

53. A major influence on Victor Turner’s conception of liminal space is Arnold van Gennep’s seminal work *The Rites of Passage (Les Rites de Passage, 1909)*, in which he concludes with the three-phased scheme that initiatory rites mark a transition from a former state of being, or social position, and on to a new one: Separation is followed by transition that finds completion with incorporation (into some social group or order).

54. An intimation of what the girl has discovered finds a likeness in Kenneth Grahame’s novel *The Wind in the Willows* (1907), when Rat explains to Mole: “This is the place of my song-dream, the place the music played to me...Here, in this holy place, here if anywhere, surely we shall find Him!” (154).

55. In the Epilogue, Ambrose explains about the relic that “the thicket had grown up about it and concealed it” (Machen, “The White People” 98).

56. Dan Clore includes an entry for Nodens in his dictionary *Weird Words: A Lovecraftian Lexicon* (2009):

Nodens, Nodons, Nudens, pr.n. [see quotation from Puhvel] In Celtic mythology, a deity pertaining to healing, hunting, and the sea. Roman ruins found in Lydney Park, Gloucestershire, dating from the fourth century CE, include a number of votive tablets bearing well-known inscriptions to this deity. Based on his appearance in H.P. Lovecraft’s ‘The Strange High House in the Mist’ and ‘The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath.’ (303)

In Machen’s final chapter of *The Great God Pan*, “The Fragments,” Mr. Clarke writes about his investigatory trip to Caermaen in a letter to Dr. Raymond. Caermaen, Machen’s name for the Usk Valley region near his birthplace and the ruins of the Second Augustan Legion of Isca Silurum, is the place where Helen was raised on a farm by a foster family when in her pubescent years. During Mr. Clarke’s stay, he visits a museum of Roman remains and sees a recent discovery from the woods on display. About the small square pillar of white stone, he says the following:

The inscription is as follows:
DEVOMNODENTi
FLAVIVSSENILLISPOSSVit
Propternvptias
quaSVIDITSVBVMBra

‘To the great god Nodens (the god of the Great Deep or Abyss) Flavius Senilis has erected this pillar on account of the marriage which he saw beneath the shade.’ (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 49)

Earlier, in the story’s second chapter, “Mr. Clarke’s Memoirs,” the section’s title character hears from Dr. Phillips about strange and disturbing events that surrounded a teenage girl. In the same countryside where the girl lived, a bust of Pan is unearthed on the property of a wealthy gentleman, though the identity of the carved figure is not made that specific. Dr. Phillips, who saw the find determines that the features represent a satyr or faun and “he has never received such a vivid presentment of intense evil” (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 12).

In the prose poem “The Ceremony”: “...There was an old stone in the wood, on which she often found cottage-garden flowers scattered in summertime...” (Machen, *Ornaments in Jade* 43). By human design, in a reach for the numinous, there is movement from the homely and ordered (domesticity) to the wild and disordered (the woods, the tidal wave, and other systems and powers of nature).

The best-known evidence of Nodens in the United Kingdom is at the temple complex at Lydney Park, Gloucestershire, which is located on a steep bluff that overlooks the Severn Estuary. Some of the first published work about the site is from the late-eighteen seventies from William Hiley Bathurst and C. W. King. Their work and other work since then, such as R. P. Wright’s in the nineteen eighties, indicate how the imposing temple building may have been an *incubatio* or dormitory for sick pilgrims to sleep and experience a vision of divine presence in their dreams. Speculation is that the site was chosen because it provides a clear view of the Severn Bore, a tidal wave which, under certain conditions, rises near Gloucester. Additional significance may derive from the fact that the temple is built on the site of an earlier Iron Age hill fort.

In their “Report on the Excavation of the Prehistoric, Roman and Post-Roman Site in Lydney Park, Gloucestershire” (*Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, 1932), Mortimer Wheeler and T.V. Wheeler provide a translation for an inscription from the Temple of Nodens at Lydney Park: “To the God Nodens, Silvianus has lost a ring: he hereby gives half of it (i.e. half of its value) to Nodens. Among those who are called Senicianus, not allow health until he brings it to the temple of Nodens” (100). Speculation is that Nodens received veneration of some Asclepian aspects, for healing (if the temple complex was an *incubatio*) or sometimes in the invocation of curses meant to affect bodily health (as in the above quote), but also for the well-being of one’s psyche.

57. Pope Innocent X (1644-1655) started a campaign to chisel the exposed phalluses off Roman statues and fit each sculpture with a leaf (the so-called fig leaf campaign). The systematic defacing of art by religious authority continued through Pope Pius IX (1846-1878), though with a great many breaks between the pontiffs and the pulverizing.

A number of themes form the musical material for Messiaen’s *Turangalîla* symphony and that includes many smaller themes, one of which is the ominous “Statue” theme that evokes “some terrible and fatal statue” (Horsley 4).

58. Daisy Pollex Adams, a key witness in the Horos case and trial, spoke in confidence with Olga Rowson, another duped young female assaulted by the Horos couple, that “if anything comes of [the rape] I shall poison myself.” Though Machen finished a draft of “The White People” in 1899, the story did not appear in print until 1904, which would have allowed indirectly the 1901 Horos details to work their way in to any final revisions that Machen made to

his story. For more on the trial details and the Adams's quote, see *The London Observer* article, "The Horos Case" (17 Nov. 1901).

Ambrose comments that *The Green Book* girl "had poisoned herself—in time," with his assumption being that all sexual intercourse with gods is procreative (Machen, "The White People" 97).

59. Tom Wootton has noted a point worth considering about these processes, whether alchemical or from ritual magic (which, if alchemic Hermeticism, resemble one another): "The revelations produced by these processes are insights into nature, they are not, in any structured sense, religious." The non-religious condition makes sense when viewed against the orthodox conservatism of Ambrose, a position that Machen appears to have intended to be read in quite a different manner.

Content from several of the prose poems in *Ornaments in Jade* feature repeating details of young females who have contact with the numinous, who meet a statue in the woods that is a preternatural nexus, or who perform acts of magic or the practice of witchcraft: "The Turanians," "Witchcraft," "The Ceremony," and "Midsummer." These other sacred herms that exist in "The Ceremony" and "Midsummer" carry an ambivalent relationship with the community in which they are either ignored or worshipped by females in a manner that baffles and excludes the men from their villages. These sections from "The Ceremony" are representative of the thematic approach of the other narratives where the mortal female meets the numinous male:

She remembered how, when she was quite a little girl, she had strayed one day, on a hot afternoon, from her nurse's side, and only a little way in the wood the grey stone rose from the grass, and she cried out and ran back in panic terror. 'What a silly little girl,' the nurse had said. 'It's only the—stone.' She had quite forgotten the name the servant had given, and she was always ashamed to ask as she grew older. (Machen, *Ornaments in Jade* 20)

And,

But there were in her mind broken remnants of another and far earlier impression. It was all uncertain, the shadow of a shadow, so vague that it might well have been a dream that had mingled with the confused waking thoughts of a little child. She did not know that she remembered, she rather remembered the memory. But again it was a summer day, and a woman, perhaps the same nurse, held her in her arms, and went through the wood. The woman carried bright flowers in one hand; the dream had in it a glow of bright red, and the perfume of cottage roses. Then she saw herself put down for a moment on the grass, and the red colour stained the grim stone, and there was nothing else—except that one night she woke up and heard the nurse sobbing. (Machen, *Ornaments in Jade* 21)

In "The Rose Garden," this same detail is given of a stone that remains untouched by time and that shines as if at the luminous stage of albedo, or whitening: "In the centre of the lake was a carved white pedestal, and on it shone a white boy, holding the double flute to his lips" (Machen *Ornaments in Jade* 4).

In "The Turanians," derided as degenerative reverts, the clan of travelers that a young woman hears on a walk reveals to her how close the people are to lives experienced in conjunction with the earth. This harmony is kept by a group that has fallen from the rank of ancient, skilled artisans: "Turanian metal-workers, degenerated into wandering tinkers" (Machen, *Ornaments in Jade* 35). One of their members, who comes to see this girl, named Mary, appears as natural

man in a natural state, a kind of green man, whom she sees as “a strange smiling face” that “peered out from between the leaves, and the girl knew that her heart leapt as the young man walked towards her” (Machen *Ornaments in Jade* 9).

60. As a potential grimoire (cf. n. 33 in “The White People” and adolescence chapter), *The Green Book* is an object of language to be used with caution. The artefact also serves as a reminder of a particular classical concern that John Gager remarks upon in his book when describing archeological finds at an ancient site on circus grounds:

The inconspicuous lead tablet, inscribed, folded, and buried in the dust beneath the starting gates, symbolized the invisible world of Rome—a world of gods, spirits, and daimones on the one side, of aspirations, tensions, and implicit power on the other—in short, a world where emperors, senators, and bishops were not in command. (46)

For more on this topic, see Gager’s book, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (1992).

61. This Rosicrucian text is believed to have been authored by Abbé N. de Montfaucon de Villars, based on interior evidence.

In the dedication to *The Rape of the Lock* (1711), Alexander Pope writes: “The Rosicrucians are a people I must bring you acquainted with. The best account I know of them is in a French book call’d *Le Comte de Gabalis*.” In the novel *Zanoni* (1842), Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton cites the Comte de Gabalis as a master of the occult sciences.

Eco’s version of the Comte de Ste. Germain from *Foucault’s Pendulum* belongs to the same subrosa fraternity.

In an interview with Kirpal Gordon, contemporary author of New Weird fiction, Eric Basso, explains his work in a way that recalls the Comte de Gabalis reference to Tertullian: “So, that ‘unfolding mystery’ ultimately perishes before it can be solved or explained” (“Celestial Mechanics: An Interview with Eric Basso,” 2011).

62. See Machen’s short story “N,” and the uncertain fate of the character Glanville.

63. Persephone’s descent to the realm of death parallels the alchemist’s view of the nigredo state. Her re-emergence into the light in the fecund rites of spring is an ascent to the next stage of the natural cycle, whereby the moist dark earth and the feminine principle, which has departed from the court of the god of the Black Sun, resides at the stage of the Sun dry heat.

64. Cf. the final section of my chapter on “The White People” and *The Green Book*: “What the Dead Had No Speech for When Living: The Journal Inward and Outward.”

65. Machen’s earlier story, “Adventure of the Deserted Residence,” the conclusion of *The Three Impostors* (1895), sets the precedent for an individual whose life, after a torrid time of initiation into the London underworld attended by acts of sex magic and the entheogen Wine of the Fauns, ends in his murder. Dyson and Phillipps happen upon the ruined body of Mr. Joseph Walters and see “a shameful ruin of the human shape” and “upon the middle of the body a fire of coals was smouldering; the flesh had been burnt through” (234). Once again, the this consuming fire is a mark of death, and not the symbolic death of nigredo on the way to a higher stage of life and

gnosis. In a line that resonates with Machen's story of NT I from a few years later, find that "the man was dead, but the smoke of his torment mounted still, a black vapour" (234).

66. As Machen laments in the first volume of his autobiography: "He dreamed in fire; he has worked in clay" (Machen, *Far Off Things* 100-01).

Also, see the "Philosophical Fire" section of Thomas Vaughan's book *Lumen de Lumine*, 58-68.

67. The river of Fragment 12 is the other notable image used by Herakleitos to denote this concept of continuous transition: "You cannot step twice into the same rivers; for fresh waters are flowing in upon you" (trans. Burnet).

68. In his work on the topic of sex magic, *Eulis! The History of Love: Its Wondrous Magic, Chemistry, Rules, Laws, Modes, Moods and Rationale* (1906), Paschal Beverly Randolph makes a claim for the modern occultists that encourages one to direct one's intentional being to a definition of love that understands that power's reality as the highest magic, a type equated to the symbols of heat and fire and the Godhead from the classical world:

Fix this principle firmly in your memory, and roll it under the tongue of your clearest understanding; take it in the stomach of your spirit; digest it well, and assimilate its quintessence to, and with, your own soul. That principle is formulated thus: Love Lieth at Foundation (of all that is); and Love is convertibly passion; enthusiasm; affection; heat; fire; SOUL; God. Master that.

(Randolph 100)

69. As J. S. Pennethorne (Johnny Eaton) has noted in his essay, "The Shock of the Numinous" (2000), *The Green Book* contains a reference to Athanor, which is the classical Greek name for the alchemical furnace. After *The Green Book* girl's descent from the hilltop, a *lapis exillis cum omphalos*, she finds a small body of water whose bottom is covered with red sand:

And in the middle was the great well, deep and shining and beautiful, so clear that it looked as if I could touch the red sand at the bottom, but it was far below. I stood by it and looked in, as if I were looking in a glass. At the bottom of the well, in the middle of it, the red grains of sand were moving and stirring all the time, and I saw how the water bubbled up, but at the top it was quite smooth, and full and brimming. It was a great well, large like a bath. (75-76)

From the recent height and the thin air of the spiraling cosmos, and now down to the watery deeps of the earth, the girl appears to find the Athanor that Philostratus names in *Life of Apollonius*. In that work, Athanor is described as an occult hill whose location includes a well with its bottom covered with red arsenic, an ingredient vital to the alchemical work if the alchemist is to reach the *rubedo*, or reddening stage (Pennethorne 46). The change to this state must be mediated by a substance, which came to be called *al-iksir* in Arabic, the origin of the Western term elixir. This substance was thought to exist as a dry red powder, the red sulphur known as *al-Kibrit al-Ahmar* made from the philosopher's stone.

Cf. n. 42 in the chapter on Western esotericism.

See the section "In Awfully Wedded Bliss," where I state the hill in *The Green Book* as the inverted sacred bowl with an omphalos upon which the girls sits, enthroned.

Porteous makes a reference to a curious piece of lore from the northern regions of pagan Europe that Tacitus records in *The History* (trans. Oxford, 1880):

About various races of people in northern Europe who worshipped Hertha, Mother Earth, “who was supposed to interfere in the affairs of men and to visit the different nations...when the goddess became satiated with mortal intercourse, the priest conducted the chariot with her in it back to the grove. In a secret lake there, the chariot, the veil, and the goddess herself, underwent ablutions at the hands of the slaves, who were forthwith immediately swallowed up by the waters. Tacitus adds that thence proceeded a mysterious horror; and a holy ignorance of what that can be which is beheld only by those who are about to perish. (79)

In *The Chronicle of Clemendy* (1888), Machen’s early attempt at long fiction by way of collected short stories, he writes that “’tis assuredly a very moral story, but there’s a whiff of sulfur about it for all that” (Machen *The Chronicle of Clemendy* 109). Sulfur refers to the hellish notion, but also to the alchemy of the tales themselves and their after at combination and correspondence.

70. Cf. the third section of the chapter on Western esotericism, “Like One that Hath Been Stunned.”

71. Bruno’s reply is found in a citation by Gaspar Schopp (Scioppus) of Breslau in a letter to Conrad Rittershausen. As explained in Article II of *The Scottish Review* of Oct. 1888, “The Ultimate Fate of Giordano Bruno,” Schopp writes that Bruno’s conduct even to the end of the trial was “a monumental instance to obstinacy proceeding from mere ill-temper” (257). *The Scottish Review* article cautions that the 17 Feb. 1600 letter’s authenticity is in question, since Schopp was a known forger and his identity may be an impersonation or fiction. However, the article is based upon questions about the fate of Bruno, and whether he was burned at the stake or not. In 1888, such questioning would be valid since a number of lost documents about the trial were discovered only in 1942 by Cardinal Giovanni Mercati. All current scholarship accepts that Bruno was executed, and evidence shows that by 1603 all of Bruno’s works were placed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. The surviving documentation is unclear about whether Bruno said anything close to what Schopp claims. One of the trial transcript and other notations that survive is a detail that Bruno was fitted with a device to silence him, also worn when he was led to the pyre. The phrase recorded is *una morsa di legno*, or “a vise of wood.” An Italian summary of the trial, edited by Angelo Mercati, contains this reference (cf. “*Il Sommario del Processo di Giordano Bruno, con Appendice di Documenti sull’eresia e l’Inquisizione a Modena nel Secolo XVI*, Vol. 101, Vatican City, 1942).

72. Alchemy is a tradition whose roots extend both East and West. In an instance where the an aspect of East meets the current reference to the spiritual flame of the alchemists, see Coomaraswamy and the Hindu concept of Līlā, of divine play as worship:

We have been able to trace, accordingly, not only the continuity and universality of the notion of the divine activity thought of as a kind of game and dalliance, but also to recognize in the ‘play’ of a flickering flame or vibrant light the adequate symbol of this epiphany of the Spirit. (Coomaraswamy 101)

Olivier Messiaen’s *Turangalīla-Symphonie* (a “hymn to joy,” 1949 premiere) draws its inspiration from Līlā and another Sanskrit term, *turanga*, which refers to rhythm and movement, and which also signifies time. As noted by Peter Horsley, the symphony’s title contains an erotic and a spiritual connotation and, according to Messiaen, there is the sense of “divine action on the cosmos, the play of creation, of destruction and reconstruction, the play of life and death...the

superhuman joy that transcends everything, overflowing, blinding, boundless” (4). For more on Līlā beyond Messiaen, see the critical work by Patrick Laude in *Divine Play, Sacred Laughter, and Spiritual Understanding* (2005).

In T. S. Eliot’s *Four Quartets*, he writes in the poem *Little Gidding* (1942): “We only live, only suspire / Consumed by either fire or fire” (212-13). In that poem, more than the preceding quartets, the English Anglican tradition unites with the Eastern Buddhist tradition in the symbol of fire.

As discussed in “The White People” and *The Green Book* chapter on the topic of play and nature, there is some resonance in the story with English pastoral elements (cf. n. 29 from that chapter). See Owen Schur’s *Victorian Pastoral: Tennyson, Hardy, and the Subversion of Forms*, especially useful for that work’s consideration of the role of rules and imagination:

Pastoral holds out certain rules for playing games, but serious games whose consequences have bearing on the emotional life of the individual within the social community. Yet paradoxically one of the aspects of pastoral and one of the qualities of its play that remains decisive must be the genre’s willingness to entertain, indeed to encourage, respite from rules. Pastoral play opens up imaginative space....Games in the classical epic are physical: contestants compete in games of physical strength. Pastoral games, on the other hand, involve imaginative strength. (4)

Also, see the entry for “Inversion” in Abraham’s *A Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, since the important cycling process of *solve et coagula* is similiar to that of children at play and the topsy-turvy nature of their acts, of high to low, low to high, and the theme of reversal of expected norms.

73. See n. in the chapter on Western esotericism.

When compared to the content of Machen’s autobiographies, especially the ninth and tenth chapters of *Things Near and Far* (1923), the letter from Dr. Chambers is a stand-in for the author’s own position:

Yet, in spite of what I have said, I must confess to you that I am no materialist, taking the word of course in its usual signification. It is now many years since I have convinced myself—convinced myself, a sceptic, remember—that the old ironbound theory is utterly and entirely false. We have laughed together heartily, and I think justly, at the ‘occult’ follies of the day, disguised under various names—the mesmerisms, spiritualisms, materializations, theosophies, all the rabble rout of imposture, with their machinery of poor tricks and feeble conjuring, the true back-parlour of shabby London streets.

(Machen, *The Three Impostors* 208)

Members of the Positivist schools of thought attempted to define a natural supernaturalism, which is not far off from the interests of the Theosophists. Representative of the Theosophist position are these words from Annie Besant in *An Autobiography*:

‘Spirit’ is a misleading word, for, historically, it connotes immateriality and a spiritual kind of existence, and the theosophist believes in neither the one nor the other. With him all living things act in and through a material basis, and ‘matter’ and ‘spirit’ are not found dissociated. But he alleges that matter exists in states other than those at present known to science. (357)

The search for and the study of allegedly paranormal phenomena gained in Trans-Atlantic popularity in England, France, and the United States during the eighties as professional organizations formed, like the still-active Society for Psychical Research. In the UK, the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) is a non-profit organization that was founded in 1882 by a group of scientists that included William Fletcher Barrett and Henry Sidgwick. A still-functioning American branch of the Society was formed as the American Society for Psychical Research (ASPR) in 1885, with the astronomer Simon Newcomb serving as the first president. In that same year, A French society called the Société de Psychologie Physiologique (Society for Physiological Psychology) was formed by future Nobel Prize Winner Charles Richet, Théodule-Armand Ribot, and Léon Marillier, but folded in 1890 when the group was abandoned due to a lack of interest.

Robert Louis Stevenson was a member of the SPR from 1893 to his death a year later. In *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, A description of Utterson may suggest a rationale being an interest in such a mode of detection: “If he could but once set eyes on [Mr. Hyde], he thought the mystery would lighten and perhaps roll altogether away, as was the habit of mysterious things when well examined” (15).

For the best critical overview of psychical research at the height of Machen’s fiction writing (1888-1907), including the Society for Psychical Research, see Janet Oppenheim’s study, *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850 – 1914* (1988).

74. For the Chemical Heritage Foundation’s exhibits, go here:

<http://www.chemheritage.org/visit/museum/exhibits/index.aspx>

Images of alchemical texts from the Beinecke Library can be seen here:

<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/digitallibrary/alchemy.html>

Chapter 4

1. Underhill 53.

2. Birch 22.

3. Eco, *The Name of the Rose* 3.

4. Browning, “Parleying with Gerard de Lairesse” 121.

5. Earlier in that second chapter of the autobiography, Machen explains the influence of the room of books upon his younger self:

And, firstly, I must record with deep thankfulness the circumstance that as soon as I could read I had the run of a thoroughly ill-selected library; or, rather, of a library that had not been selected at all. My father's collection, if that serious word may be applied to a hugger-mugger of books, had grown up anyhow and nohow, and in it the most revered stocks had mingled with the most frivolous.

(Far Off Things 33)

6. An early association of literacy with magical operations is to be found in the etymologies of words such as “spell” and “grammar.”

7. Borges's hexagonal galleries in the infinite Library of Babel provide the design for Umberto Eco's version of the Melk Stiftsbibliothek in the novel *The Name of the Rose* (1980)—a more accurate model for Eco's architecture than the actual Stift Melk in Austria. Borges writes in the short story "The Library of Babel" about this design, with correspondences between the macrocosm and the microcosm: "The universe (which others call the Library) is composed of an indefinite, perhaps infinite, number of hexagonal galleries, with enormous ventilation shafts in the middle, encircled by very low railings" (79).

Borges's admiration extends from his writing some short essays on Machen in the nineteen thirties to his editing in the mid-nineteen eighties two collections of Machen's fiction in Spanish translation, one title each for inclusion in the two series of his versions of the great, and often outré, imaginative works of literature (the editor's death in 1986 interrupted the full release of the publication run from the Argentinean publisher Hyspamérica). For the first series, "The Library of Babel," Borges selected *The Shining Pyramid* (*La Pirámide de Fuego*) as the thirteenth volume, which contains the Machen's titular short story and a pair of the longest parts from *The Three Impostors*: "Novel of the Black Seal" and "Novel of the White Powder." For the series "A Personal Library," he chose as the twenty-third volume *The Three Impostors* in its entirety, less "The Decorative Imagination" and "Novel of the Iron Maid," which were still part of a copyright hangup.

8. In "The Mirrors of Enigma," Borges follows the citation to Machen with a reference to De Quincey, another example of corresponding ascent from the mundane:

It is also declared by De Quincey: 'Even the articulate or brutal sounds of the globe must be all so many languages and ciphers that all have their corresponding keys—have their own grammar and syntax; and thus the least things in the universe must be secret mirrors to the greatest.' (209)

In the essay "Arthur Machen" (1938), Borges makes this point about the fiction that most accurately applied to the fiction from the fin-de-siècle part of Machen's career: "El concepto del pecado es fundamental en los libros de Machen. El pecado (para él) es menos una transgresión voluntaria de las leyes divinas que un estado abominable del alma." ("The concept of sin is fundamental in Machen's books. Sin (for him) is less a voluntary transgression of divine laws than they are an abominable state of the soul.")

Imagination and dream, especially in counterpoint to rational expectations, are essential for Borges, and his admiration for and the influence of Machen is clear, with over a half of a century of references made to the writer. In an interview from 1985, Borges states:

Arthur Machen afirma en su libro *Los tres impostores* que la función del hombre de letras es inventar una historia maravillosa y contarla de una manera maravillosa...lo importante es soñar sinceramente, creo que si no hay un sueño anterior la escritura es imposible. Yo empiezo siempre por soñar, es decir, por recibir un sueño. ("Jorge Luis Borges: Coloquio" 22)

("In his book *The Three Impostors*, Arthur Machen affirms that the function of the man of letters is to invent a marvelous story and to tell it in a marvelous manner... it is important to dream sincerely, and I believe that if there isn't a dream that precedes composition then the writing is impossible. I always start by dreaming, that is to say, I begin with the reception of an unconscious vision.")

All translations of Borges are mine.

9. For some of the more overt examples of literature at play with themes and imagery of the occult in a postmodern manner, see the novels of Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson in *The Illuminatus! Trilogy* (1975), and Umberto Eco's novel *Foucault's Pendulum* (1988). Worldviews have changed dramatically since the European Middle Ages that C. S. Lewis writes about with elegance in *The Discard Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (1964) and the self-conscious incorporating and sampling of occult fragments by T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Shea, Wilson, Eco, and many others. The stark contrasts in mindset and belief can be found in the historiography of witchcraft whose initial turn to occurs with Margaret Alice Murray. (Simpson 90) on Margaret Alice Murray and the theories of witchcraft:

So what was the appeal of her work? Part of the answer lies in what was at the time perceived as her sensible, demystifying, liberating approach to a long-standing but sterile argument between the religious minded and the secularists as to what witches had been. At one extreme stood the eccentric and bigoted Catholic writer Montague Summers, maintaining that they really had worshipped Satan, and that by his help they really had been able to fly, change shape, do magic and so forth. His attitude can be judged by his passionate admiration for the *Malleus Maleficarum*. In the other camp, and far more numerous at least among academics, were skeptics who said that all so-called witches were totally innocent victims of hysterical panics whipped up by the Churches for devious political or financial reasons; their confessions must be disregarded because they were made under threat of torture.

When *The Witch Cult in Western Europe* appeared in 1921, it broke this deadlock. Yes, said Murray, witches had indeed been up to something of which society disapproved, but it was in no way supernatural; they were merely members of an underground movement secretly keeping pagan rites alive in Christian Europe.... There seems to have been a powerful sense of relief at shifting a contentious and elusive topic on to an apparently rational, and hence debatable, level.

In a letter about his short story "The Festival" (1925), H. P. Lovecraft writes, "In intimating an alien race I had in mind the survival of some clan of pre-Aryan sorcerers who persevered primitive rites like those of the witch-cult—I had just been reading Miss Murray's *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*" (*Selected Letters IV*, 297). While Lovecraft's implicit approval had some effect on the propagation of Murray's theory, the extent of the diffusion had more to do with the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*'s entry for "Witchcraft," which Murray wrote in 1929, and which remained unchanged until 1969, thus crowding out the other competing theories. The major breakthrough in scholarship that demonstrates the depth of what can be gleaned about the distinctions and clashes of earlier realities comes from the study of the witch panics and trials in Europe. However, the seminal work derives from a book on the American Colonies and the Salem Witch Trials: *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft* (1974), by Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum. Their work is complemented nicely by the exhaustive archival research of Marilynne K. Roach published in *The Salem Witch Trials: A Day-by-Day Chronicle of a Community Under Siege* (2004).

However, even with the radical changes in philosophical outlooks presaged by the Scientific Revolution, theories of evolution, and the many scientific discoveries made since the end of the Victorian period and the age of CERN and the Large Hadron Collider, humanity continues to ask

the same questions contained in Paul Gauguin's masterpiece of a title: *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* (*D'où venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous?*, 1897).

10. Among Thoth's major attributes in ancient Egyptian religion is the invention of writing and alphabets. In addition, see the assorted mythic and apocryphal tales of that deity who, as with Hermes, has the power to bestow on humanity the gift of knowledge as pursued via written language. After contact and Coptic admixture of cultures and traditions, Thoth and Hermes flicker into one another in composite. Hermes has additional ties to communication, sacred and profane, that indicate why the Western esoteric traditions have revered the figure: The ancient Greek word for an interpreter and a translator is *Hermêneus*. As a reminder of how the past can cycle through the technological present, Hermes was the name of an IBM programming language in use from 1986-1992.

In *Flowers of Evil* (*Les Fleurs du mal*, 1857), a book of poetry that is the forerunner of the aesthetic diabolism of the 1890s in England, Charles Baudelaire writes in the third stanza of the dedicatory poem "Au Lecteur" ("To the Reader"):

Sur l'oreiller du mal c'est Satan Trismégiste
Qui berce longuement notre esprit enchanté,
Et le riche métal de notre volonté
Est tout vaporisé par ce savant chimiste.

As translated by William Aggeler in *The Flowers of Evil* (Fresno, CA: Academy Library Guild, 1954), these lines read:

On the pillow of evil Satan Trismegistes
Incessantly lulls our enchanted minds,
And the refined metal of our will
Is wholly vaporized by this wise alchemist.

This obvious inversion of Hermes Trismegistos features him at the alchemist's Magnum Opus (i.e., the *opus alchymicum*), but the motive is not enlightenment but to delude humanity, to spread the Goetic sorcerer's use of the immanent *tenebrae activae* without any dispensation of the light of transcendence of the *lumen de lumine* (cf. the section on Thomas Vaughan in my chapter on alchemy).

When introducing the heliocentric hypothesis in *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres* (*De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*, 1543), and after the diagram that shows the heliocentric system, Copernicus refers to Hermes Trismegistos on the topic of the sun as a visible god. The quotation that follows that image is from a work in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the *Asclepius*:

For, the sun is not inappropriately called by some people the lantern of the universe, its mind by others, and its ruler by still other. [Hermes] the Thrice Greatest labels it a visible god, and Sopocles' Electra, the all-seeing. Thus indeed, as though seated on a royal throne, the sun governs the family of planets revolving around it. Moreover, the earth is not deprived of the moon's attendance. On the contrary, as Aristotle says in a work on animals, the moon has the closest kinship with the earth. Meanwhile the earth has intercourse with the sun, and is impregnated for its yearly parturition (trans. Parcell 67).

11. Words that begin with *herm* date from at least 600 BCE in Greece. In her exhaustive study *The Religion of Ancient Greece* (1908), Jane Ellen Harrison establishes that "hermetic" first

refers to a pillar or post from pre-classical Greece: “Of square shape, surmounted by a head with a beard, the square, limbless Hermes was a step in advance of the unwrought stone” (19). The name Hermes appears to derive from the word for a stone heap, since from prehistoric times there existed in Crete and in other Greek regions a custom of erecting a *herma* or *hermaion*, an upright stone surrounded at its base by a heap of smaller stones. Ancient Greeks used these stone pillars to communicate with the deities, since Hermes first served as a generic term used by the pre-classical Greeks for any deity. Also, these monuments served as boundaries or as markers for travelers (another attribute of Hermes is that he is the god of travelers). A mythological connection existed between these basic monuments and the deity Hermes. When the god slew the monster Argus, he was brought to trial. As the gods decided Hermes’ innocence, each divine judge cast a vote by throwing a small stone at his feet until a heap of stones grew up around him.

One of the earliest recorded uses of the word “Hermetic” in its esoteric sense is from 1640 in Ben Jonson’s poem “An Execration upon Vulcan.” Published in *Underwoods*, Jonson writes on the occasion of the fire that destroyed his house and his beloved books in 1623 and refers to the Rosicrucians: “With the Chimaera of the *Rosie-Crosse*, Their Seales, their Characters, Hermetique Rings” (72-73).

By the first-half of the eighteenth century, the use of the term Hermetic had spread throughout Europe, as documented by its common use in the writings of French scholar Nicolas Lenglet Dufresnoy and his work *Histoire de la Philosophie Hermetique* (1742), which is primarily a bibliography of chemistry. The so-called revolution for chemistry as a field of scientific inquiry was already underway at that point in the eighteenth century, divorced from the older and discredited occult pursuits of the alchemists.

12. See Owen Davies, *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books* (2010).

Also, the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Papyrus Museum in Vienna contains one of the largest collections of papyri in the world, with examples of magic of various sorts (“spelled out,” as the case may be), primarily from the cultures of Egypt. I visited this location in the Spring of 2009 as part of my research.

13. Some theories on the use of interior space in pre-history can be found in Werner Herzog’s documentary film *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* (2010), which is about the Chauvet Cave, France.

14. See Dame Frances Yates and *The Art of Memory* (1966). The American poet B. H. Fairchild alludes to these complex mnemonic practices in the title of his collection *Early Occult Memory Systems of the Lower Midwest: Poems* (2004).

The frequency of the word secret and the notion of secrecy appear many times in Machen’s short story “The White People,” with additional references contained in *Hieroglyphics: A Note Upon Ecstasy in Literature*. The *Green Book* girl’s references to levels of hidden knowledge suggest an occult memory system, such as what Casaubon refers to in Umberto Eco’s novel *Foucault’s Pendulum*, a system that finds physical form in the computer *Abulafia*.

Memory operates in the esoteric fluency of *The Green Book* girl, perhaps inherited from a mother we never see, as the woman died when our narrator was a young child; thus, female inheritance of abilities via the x chromosome appears to be the case presented to the reader. The involvement of the nurse, and her many references to her great-grandmother, suggests a rare power held exclusively by women, one which they pass on genetically and orally. However,

their roles are not passive, which is unlike the women who served as the mediums in Spiritualism (cf. Alex Owen). What may be half-conscious prudence in *The Green Book* protects any careless revelation that would endanger the girl's well being, which is the reason behind the nurse's many hesitations before her showing the girl certain occult practices and sharing particular stories handing down by that matrilineal descent.

15. The first documented uses of the terms exoteric and esoteric are in the work of Plato. In his dialogue *Theaetetus* (circa 360 BC), the phrase *ta exô* appears in reference to "the outside things." The phrase *ta esô* appears in the dialogue *Alcibiades* (circa 390 BC) to refer to "the inner things."

I do not mean to suggest that creative imagination has no role in scientific work and the interpretation of documented observations and tabulations that are an indispensable part of those professions. On its own, a data point is unclear and must be put in context. Effective contextualization involves a high degree of imaginative capacity.

16. A general definition of "noetic" refers to that which provides inner wisdom and subjective understanding. The term derives etymologically from the Greek word *noētikos* for "mental," and relates to the *nous* of Plotinus's doctrine of the Divine Intellect where *nous* refers to intellect and a divine illumination. In their ontological objectives, the Neoplatonist view aligns more with Hermeticism, rather than with Gnosticism. For the Neoplatonists, the first emanation of the Monad was the capital *Nous*, or Demiurge, the divinity that had entered into the world of expiring forms. In Hermeticism, a noetic quality is the belief that mystical experiences reveal an otherwise hidden or inaccessible knowledge and while the Demiurge is not perfection in and of itself nor is it malignity. The Gnostics condemned the Demiurge as a failed creator whose touch left its taint upon material creation for the worse.

Modern noetic work is multidisciplinary and attempts to use objective scientific techniques in conjunction with subjective inner knowing. The primary aim is to find ways to study principles of consciousness not found in ordinary matter (e.g. quantum computing). An older example of noetic technology can be found in the Nigel Kneale-scripted BBC Two television play *The Stone Tape* (1972), commissioned as a "ghost story for Christmas" in the same tradition of the classic English ghost stories of M. R. James and Charles Dickens, but now with research scientists who investigate unknown phenomena; however, corporate profit motives end up taking precedence in that instance and re-direct the scientific inquiry with tragic results.

17. I designate the Nurse Tales from *The Green Book* with these abbreviations: NT I (a rags-to-riches tale); NT II (the seduction tale of a hunter by the Fairy Queen); NT IIIa (a tale of pagan worship uncovered); and NT IIIb (a tale of the destruction of a powerful witch who leads the worship of NT IIIa).

For most of a century after the publication of "The White People" in *The Horlicks Magazine and Home Journal for Australia, India and the Colonies* in 1904, other than a section of Lovecraft's monograph *Supernatural Horror in Literature* (1927), a letter from 9 Dec. 1931 written by Lovecraft to J. Vernon Shea, and a reference in the Reynolds and Charlton biography of Machen, no critical work about the story existed until the essay written by Johnny Eaton (published under the pseudonym J. S. Pennethorne in *Faunus* and the handle *rbadac* on the *Violet Books* online review site).

18. See the work of Prof. Davis Lewis-Williams, Professor Emeritus of cognitive archaeology and Senior Mentor at the Rock Art Research Institute, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. He deals with this topic in many of his professional publications, especially in *A Cosmos in Stone: Interpreting Religion and Society through Rock Art* (2002) and *The Mind In The Cave: Consciousness And The Origins Of Art* (2002).

In addition, Machen's prose poem "Nature," where an unnamed character responds to his friend, Julian, with this claim: "I always told you that the earth too, and the hills, and even the old walls are a language, hard to translate" (Machen *Ornaments in Jade* 39).

19. See *Man and His Symbols* (1964), the multi-author work by Jung and his various colleagues, Joseph L. Henderson, Marie-Louise von Franz, Aniela Jaffé, and Jolande Jacobi. In addition, see Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949).

20. Thomas Laqueur provides a clear history of the term occultism in his essay, "Why the Margins Matter: Occultism and the Making of Modernity":

'Occultism' was coined in 1876, which suggests that there was something new, if not necessarily modern, to be named. But "occult" still seems irreducibly stuck in premodern darkness as Gabriel Harvey, the sixteenth-century scholar and literary polemicist, who was the first to use it, seems to have understood: 'Occult philosophers,' he wrote in 1593, wrap their profoundest mysteries 'in the...closest intrals of an asse.' It is, so to speak, donkey shit. (111)

21. The work of author Hargrave Jennings introduced Machen into the professional world of books, albeit into a minor part of that literary network (though George Redway was active in the business of books for decades). After his move to London, Machen sent a letter to Jennings about a point in the latter's book *The Rosicrucians: Their Rites and Mysteries* (1870). Jennings did not reply but sent the letter along to his publisher, George Redway, which served as an introduction for Machen and a job at the company's Covent Garden offices.

In addition to his signed works, Jennings published anonymously in the "Nature Worship and Mystical Series" from the 1880s and 1890s, and associated with the science erotica popular during the Victorian period (pre-National Geographic Society publications)—one of the types of material that Machen probably would have come across while working for Redway. Broad themes of Jennings's contribution to that series would later filter into Machen's fiction in the author's idiosyncratic, often dogmatic, views of ancient and modern modes worship and rituals that are both pagan and Christian. See Jennings in *Phallicism, Celestial and Terrestrial, Heathen and Christian* (1884), and *Nature Worship: An Account of Phallic Faiths and Practices Ancient and Modern* (1891).

22. The computer's name refers to the Sephardic scholar of Kabala, Abraham ben Samuel Abulafia. Casaubon may, and probably does, refer to multiple persons: the historical figure and scholar Isaac Casaubon; his son Méric Casaubon, who edited *A True and Faithful Relation of What Passed for Many Years between Dr. John Dee and Some Spirits*, a work by the English alchemist John Dee for which, besides the editorial work, Méric also wrote a scathing introduction; and the fictional character Edward Casaubon, from George Eliot's novel *Middlemarch* (1872), who in futility pursues the writing of the ultimate work of comparative

mythology, *The Key to All Mythologies*. Eco disavows that the novel's title refers to Michel Foucault, which perhaps makes the title the first of many jokes.

23. Machen's development through the eighteen eighties as a writer of fictional tales owes a debt to Robert Louis Stevenson's manner, and matter, too: See Machen's *The Three Impostors* (1895) in relation to Stevenson's and his wife's, Fanny Van der Grift's, sequel to Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights* (1882), called *More New Arabian Nights: Or, The Dynamiter, the Story of a Lie* (1885). Machen never hid his indebtedness to Stevenson and Van der Grift. See *Things Near and Far* (1923) for one place where Machen gives credit.

24. For a full account of the cultural climate, sources, and dispersal of the Angels of Mons legend, see the work of David Clarke in his book *The Angel of Mons: Phantom Soldiers and Ghostly Guardians* (2005).

In the Autumn 2010 issue of *Machenalia*, editor Gwilym Games addresses the issue of Machen's patriotism during World War I. At the *Guardian* Hay-on-Wye Literary Festival, an audience member asked the panel on which Games sat about Machen's position. Games explains:

It is a complex issue, as I tried to point out quickly; the problem is that Machen and the Angels of Mons debate was part of a wider fervour for the war, and he was one of many literary men on the Home Front who backed the war with enthusiasm, a feeling which faded somewhat as the war went on. But it is an important question, as Machen's patriotic work was read by millions during the war, while the now better-known writers we associate with the war, like Sassoon, Wilfred Owen or Robert Graves, were either unpublished at the time or virtually unread. (44)

25. No angels appear in "The Bowmen." Rather, the story describes phantom bowmen from the Battle of Agincourt (25 Oct. 1415, immortalized by Shakespeare in the "St. Crispin's Day Speech" from *Henry V*) that an English soldier summons to the field at the Battle of Mons (fought 22-23 Aug. 1914) when he prays to St. George in the hope that the British troops will be delivered to safety in their retreat from a much larger German force. In the introduction to his collected war stories, Machen is careful to debunk any claim that he wrote about an actual event experienced by British soldiers:

All vaguer reports to the effect that I had heard some rumours or hints of rumours are equally void of any trace of truth....I take it, then, that the origins of 'The Bowmen' were composite. First of all, all ages and nations have cherished the thought that spiritual hosts may come to the help of earthly arms, that gods and heroes and saints have descended from their high immortal places to fight for their worshippers and clients. Then Kipling's story of the ghostly Indian regiment got in my head and got mixed with the mediaevalism that is always there; and so 'The Bowmen' was written. (*The Bowmen and Other Legends of the War* 10-11)

Later in that introduction, Machen presents what he believes is the actual link between his story and the Angels of Mons legend: Theosophist A.P. (Alfred Percy) Sinnett wrote in the May 1915 issue of *The Occult Review* a report that "those who could see said they saw 'a row of shining beings' between the two armies." Machen found that Sinnett use of the word "shining" was the key word taken from "The Bowmen," which states that a soldier saw "a long line of shapes, with a shining about them" (*The Bowmen and Other Legends of the War* 18).

Machen's introduction is the same one where he compares unfavorably the relative benefits of church attendance to the mirth that can be had at a tavern: "Well, I have long maintained that on the whole the average church, considered as a house of preaching, is a much more poisonous place than the average tavern" (*The Bowmen and Other Legends of the War* 9-10). Machen received from ecclesiastical magazines requests for permission to re-print his story in pamphlet form for distribution to congregants and that Machen add his sources. True to form, Machen made clear in each response that granted permission that he had no sources to share since he had made up the story. He would not prevaricate about the supernatural.

26. Crowley takes the reference from Max (Friedrich Maximilian) Müller, a pioneer of comparative religion and mythology prior to Sir James George Frazer.

"Magick" is the preferred spelling to differentiate the new orders from stage magic and common chicanery. The face put on modern Magick practice is that which was worn by individuals like Aleister Crowley, a person who did not present himself as other than a bombastic, public figure with no interest in the ethics of shame. His order of Thelema defined itself by the phrase, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law." Crowley defines this tenet in *The Book of the Law*, or *Liber AL vel Legis* (1904).

27. See the incident of the moon-child threat from Crowley, parodied by W. Somerset Maugham in his novel *The Magician* (1908) in which the caricature Oliver Haddo depicts Crowley. Machen refers in an oblique, but thinly-veiled manner to the dispute between Yeats and Crowley in the tenth chapter of the second volume of his autobiography, *Things Near and Far* (1923):

I was once talking to a dark young man, of quiet and retiring aspect, who wore glasses—he and I had met at a place where we had to be blindfolded before we could see the light—and he told me a queer tale of the manner in which his life was in daily jeopardy. He described the doings of a fiend in human form, a man who was well known to be an expert in Black Magic, a man who hung up naked women in cupboards by hooks which pierced the flesh of their arms. This monster—I may say that there is such a person, though I can by no means go bail for the actuality of any of the misdeeds charged against him—had, for some reason which I do not recollect, taken a dislike to my dark young friend. In consequence, so I was assured, he hired a gang in Lambeth, who were grievously to maim or preferably to slaughter the dark young man; each member of the gang receiving a retaining fee of eight shillings and sixpence a day—a sum, by the way, that sounds as if it were the face value of some mediaeval coin long obsolete.

(209-10)

The recap of this meeting between Machen and the young man with spectacles (i.e., Yeats) resembles a summary of a section from Machen's *The Three Impostors*, which is fitting since Machen's psychological distress during this period after his wife Amy's death led to a series of odd encounters on the pavements, the streets, restaurants, cafes, and drawing rooms of London. Alan Moore explores this period of Machen's life in *Snakes and Ladders* (1999), republished as the second part of *A Disease of Language* (2005).

For more on the young man with glasses, the Black Magician, and Machen, see p. 81 of *Arthur Machen: Selected Letters*, eds. Roger Dobson, Godfrey Brangham, and R.A. Gilbert.

Crowley's novel *Moonchild* (1917) fictionalizes his arguments with the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, especially between himself and Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers, A. E. Waite,

but also with the prominent non-Order Theosophist Annie Besant. For non-fiction about the reasons for the magical rivalry between Yeats and Crowley, see Ellic Howe's book *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn: A Documentary History of a Magical Order, 1887-1923* (1978).

28. Crowley, in defiance of his puritanical parents, lived his life in a flagrancy that would draw notice to himself, and did so in a way that has led Dinah Birch to describe the sum of his biography as such: "The preposterous delusions of Aleister Crowley...womanizing, drug taking, and posing ended in a lonely and destitute death...a dismal story" (Birch 22).

29. See Saler's essay "Modernity and Enchantment: A Historiographic Review": "The binary and the dialectical approaches to the topic [of enchantment], with their 'either/or' logic, have been common since the late nineteenth century, but the antinomial approach, with its 'both/and' logic, seems to have become the prevailing one in recent years" (693). Furthermore, he explains: "In the binary approach, modernity is inherently disenchanted, a situation viewed with regret as well as hope; in the dialectical approach, modernity is explicitly enchanted, in the negative sense, its universal promises exposed as self-interested ideologies, false consciousness, and bad faith" (698).

Alex Owen dismisses "the dualism of real/not real" in her feminist historical agenda, and the designation of reported phenomena works within a current understanding of the meaning of such phenomena in Victorian culture—whether first-person eyewitness accounts, second-hand, or at a further remove (*Darkened Room* 222).

30. Edward Walford edited this magazine, which George Redway published. Prior to his 1880 split with the publisher Elliot Stock, Walford edited *The Antiquary*, which was first known as *Antiquarian Magazine and Bibliographer* after its relaunch at Redway in 1882.

31. In *Hermetica: The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings which Contain Religious and Philosophical Teachings Ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus* (1924), classicist Walter Scott provides the first ever critical edition of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, eighteen tracts in Greek that are the most extensive collection of Hermetic writings from antiquity. In his edition's scholarly apparatus, Scott re-tells a legend about Hermes Trismegistos from the sixteenth century Renaissance writer Angelus Vergicius (Ange Vergece):

They say that this Hermes left his own country and traveled all over the world...and that he tried to teach men to revere and worship one God alone...the *demiurgus* and *genetor* [begetter] of all things...and that he lived a very wise and pious life, occupied in intellectual contemplation...and giving no heed to the gross things of the material world...and that having returned to his own country, he wrote at the time many books of mystical theology and philosophy. (Scott 33)

Vergicius represents the standard Renaissance version of Hermes Trismegistos, and the reference to the Demiurge is more in the mold of a Hermetic outlook rather than that held by Gnostics. In 1460, Cosimo de' Medici, then ruler of Florence, ushered in a re-birth of interest in and contemplation of Hermetic philosophy and practices when he acquired several formerly lost Hermetic texts that had been recovered and presented to him from the newly-fallen Byzantine Empire. In 1462, de' Medici entrusted his young court scholar, Marsilio Ficino (one of the most formidable minds of the Italian Renaissance), to translate these Greek texts into Latin, a job that Ficino complete shortly before the death of de' Medici two years later. Pico della Mirandola

would later combine his vast knowledge of Chaldean Christianity, astrology, and magic traditions (*mageia*) with Ficino's Hermetic Neoplatonism, which increased the vocabulary and breadth of Hermetic studies.

From the time of Ficino and Pico della Mirandola through the early parts of the seventeenth century, Christian authorities responded to this discovery and introduction of Hermetic texts with a mixture of ambivalence, caution, and hostility. As part of the Yates Thesis of twentieth-century historian Dame Frances Yates, the itinerant priest Giordano Bruno was one of the chief proponents of Hermeticism and for that reason the Catholic Church burnt him at the stake as a heretic in 1600. While the question remain unresolved of whether Yates is correct about the primary charge that led to his death, the scholarly consensus is that Bruno was not persecuted for his beliefs about astronomy of a heliocentric of a heliocentric model for a universe that is infinite in its immensity, a point about which the Catholic Church had no clear opposition to at that time. After Bruno's death, individual efforts continued in pursuit of the teachings of the Hermetic books. However, the orthodox threats, common public suspicions, and popular doubts curtailed these materials from gaining in general popularity in theory or in application. The prolific scholarship of Yates created the modern interest in Hermetic materials, which rivals the influence that Antoine Faivre has had on the study of and interest in Western esotericism. For more on Yates, see her books *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (1964), *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (1972), and *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (1979).

32. Prior to their communication to the Arab world and then a process of transmission to and rediscovery in medieval Europe, Gnosticism and Hermeticism flourished in the same period in the Mediterranean, particularly in Coptic Egypt at Hermopolis Megale and Alexandria. Each path concerns itself with the attainment of personal knowledge of God and the soul. The Gnostic and Hermetic traditions both emphasize that the soul can escape from its bondage to material existence only if it attains to true ecstatic understanding (i.e., gnosis, which has additional aspects that depend on whether the gnosis referred to is cosmological or metaphysical). Older views of the Gnostic tradition emphasized its pessimistic qualities in contrast to the more optimistic Hermeticism. Since the discovery of the scriptures in the Nag Hammadi library (1945), the current view of Gnosticism is that it shares more features with Hermeticism than previously recognized or understood. Dan Merkur provides a clear account of the fundamental differences in the outlook (or insight, as the case may be) of these two ways to attain enlightenment with the numinous:

The Hermetic God was omnipresent and omniscient through the material cosmos. In Gnosticism, God was transcendent, and the physical universe was an evil place created by an evil Demiurge. Hermetic ethics celebrated the divine within the world; Gnostic ethics were abstemious, ascetic efforts to escape from the world. (81)

In the later decades of the nineteenth century, particular in Masonic and theosophic orders and the ritual magic groups of the fin de siècle, cosmological intentions of gnosis dominated. Versluis provides a useful, two-fold definition of gnosis that is relevant to the classical and current applications of the term:

1. Knowledge or direct perception of hidden or esoteric aspects of the cosmos (cosmological gnosis).
 2. Direct spiritual insight into complete transcendence (metaphysical gnosis).
- Cosmological gnosis still entails a subtle dualism of subject-object, to some extent

belongs to the realm of knowledge, and reveals correspondences between subject and object, or between humanity and the natural world. These correspondences may be drawn upon to achieve some aim, as in alchemy, astrology, or magic. Metaphysical gnosis is non-dualistic spiritual insight, as one finds in the work of Meister Eckhart or in that of the contemporary American author Bernadette Roberts. This distinction, Lee Irwin points out, is comparable to that found in the *Corpus Hermeticum* between ‘lower’ and ‘higher’ gnosis, ‘lower’ referring to philosophic learning, ‘higher’ to direct insight into the *Nous* [divine intellect]. (1)

33. Varied critical replies have followed the publication of Faivre’s seminal work on esotericism, published in English in two volumes by the State University of New York Press: Vol. 1, *Access to Western Esotericism* (1994), which contains two works, *Accès de l’Ésotérisme occidental* (1986) and *L’ésotérisme* (1992); and the second volume, *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition: Studies in Western Esotericism* (2000). Experts who question Faivre usually do so based on the position of esotericism in human history and the history of ideas.

See the work of Wouter J. Hanegraaff, President of the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism (ESSWE) and the chair and Professor of History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents at the University of Amsterdam. Hanegraaff challenges Faivre’s theoretical generalization that phenomena of esoteric and occult beliefs and practices historically are unique apart from sociological conditions, and, instead, argues that analysis should tend to evaluate phenomena as historical constructs on an empirical foundation. For more on this position, see Hanegraaff’s *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (2012).

Kocku von Stuckrad, Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Groningen, has proposed an alternative treatment of esotericism, influenced by his collaboration with Hans G. Kippenberg, Professor of Religious Studies at Jacobs University Bremen. Von Stuckrad relies on a methodology indebted to the sociology of knowledge, the same approach that often has marginalized esoteric pursuits as deviance. Esotericism exists only as a scholarly classification and is not independent to historical phenomena. For more, see von Stuckrad’s work in *Western Esotericism: A Brief History of Secret Knowledge* (2005), and Kippenberg’s *Discovering Religious History in the Modern Age* (2002).

34. For more on the historical and literary contexts of Conan Doyle and the Cottingley Fairies, see Alex Owen’s article, “‘Borderland Forms’: Arthur Conan Doyle, Albion’s Daughters, and the Politics of the Cottingley Fairies” (1994).

35. For more on astral travel in the context of modernity, see the work of Alex Owen in her essay “The Sorcerer and His Apprentice: Aleister Crowley and the Magical Exploration of Edwardian Subjectivity” (1997), which discusses the experiments of Aleister Crowley and Victor Neuberg in the Algerian desert.

For the work of literary synaesthetes, see Baudelaire’s *Correspondances* (1857) and Arthur Rimbaud’s *Voyelles* (1871). Prominent members of the ritual magic groups, such as Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers, who spent time in Paris, knew the work of French authors, which is one manner in which their work influenced the English magical orders.

36. Other experts, including historians and those who work with comparative religion and esoteric studies, agree with what Faivre identifies as the common esoteric characteristics: correspondences; living nature; imagination and mediation (the mesocosm); and transmutation. Many of these proponents side with the view that esotericism serves a purpose of renewal in the history of human spiritual practice, but also they have looked to add to the methodological approach of esoteric studies. Arthur Versluis is one such proponent for revision of Faivre's structure, not rejection. Versluis is the founding president of the Association for the Study of Esotericism (ASE), editor of the online scholarly journal *Esoterica*, and current Professor of American Studies at Michigan State University. He sees Faivre's model as one that does not give proper emphasis to gnosis—a point made by Hanegraaff, too. For a concise version of this position, see Versluis's essay "What Is Esoteric? Methods in the Study of Western Esotericism" (2002).

Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, Professor of Western Esotericism at the University of Exeter and Director of the Exeter Center for the Study of Esotericism (EXESES), is sympathetic to Faivre's major points. In addition, and in contrast to von Stuckrad, Goodrick-Clarke takes the position that a better definition of the esoteric requires "a hermeneutic interpretation of spirit and spirituality as an independent ontological reality" (12).

37. Two works of note where St. Augustine attacks the occult sciences are *De Doctrina Christiana* 2.20.30, which condemns the arts of magic in general, and *De Divinatione Daemonum*, "The Spirits' Art of Foretelling the Future," with its prohibitions against contact with any daemon, a reference to a non-human entity of the mesocosm). St. Augustine denounced all forms of pagan religion as superstition, which means any practice and belief that are non-Christian. In *Summa Theologiae*, St. Thomas Aquinas reinforces and develops Augustine's points, in particular section 2a.2ae.92-96 with its focus on various practices of popular magic and superstitions as types of sin.

The European Renaissance did not experience an abatement of learned magic. In his work on magic within the history of ideas, Simon During has demonstrated the richness and variety of the Western magic tradition:

Traditionally, four sources of European magic have been identified: philosophical or spiritual magic such as Neoplatonism; forbidden or 'mantic' arts such as necromancy, geomancy, aeromancy, pyromancy, chiromancy (all of which, in the medieval period, can be thought of as hybridizing popular magic and Christianized memories of ancient magic); natural magic; and the fourth is what Keith Thomas in *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1973) calls 'popular magic.' One form of the latter was the practical use of charms, conjurations, amulets, and medieval spells to deal with problems in the world such as sickness, enemies, natural disasters, dangers, or mishaps. The other consisted of symbols and narratives: ghost stories, omens, and signifiers (the black cat or toad as tied to witchcraft)...Spiritual magic was not a systematized form of magic but an ensemble of partially distinct traditions, each promising power over, or access to, spiritual agencies and nature's secrets. During the Renaissance, the traditions of written esoteric magic most drawn upon were Hermeticism and the Cabbala (especially the version developed after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 and disseminated by Isaac Luria [1534-1572]). (11)

38. Programs for dedicated study of Western esotericism exist at the University of Amsterdam, the University of Exeter, and the Sorbonne.

39. Theurgy is from the Greek term *theurgeia*, from *theos*, “gods,” and *ergeia*, “work.” Anne Sheppard, “Theurgy, the religious magic practised by the later Neoplatonists, has been commonly regarded as the point at which Neoplatonism degenerates into magic, superstition and irrationalism. A superficial glance at the ancient lives of the Neoplatonists, and in particular at Eunapius’ Lives of the Sophists, reveals a group of people interested in animating statues, favoured with visions of gods and demons, and skilled in rain-making” “Proclus attitude to theurgy”, *Classical Quarterly*, 32 (1982), 212-224. Eunapius, *The Lives of the sophists* (c. 395), chap. III, London: Harvard University Press, 1921).

40. See the work of John Dee for the classic example of angelic, Enochian magic from the late-fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and Gustav Meyrink’s novelization of Dee’s and Edward Kelley’s exploits in *The Angel of the West Window* (*Der Engel vom westlichen Fenster*, 1927).

41. Modern scholarship affirms Pico della Mirandola’s defense, such as Maxwell-Stuart who has written that esoteric knowledge was an “essential aid to the fulfillment of the purpose of both individual and human existence—to transcend the historical process locked in time and to enter into a timeless union with God” (Maxwell-Stuart 6).

42. Apollonius of Tyana is the first century CE philosopher whose name usually accompanies a reference to him as some kind of lost alternative to Christianity. Ezra Pound was particularly taken with the apocryphal saying attributed to that Apollonius that the universe is alive (see *Cantos XCI, XCII, and XCVII*). The idea of living nature defines Paracelsianism, the *Naturphilosophie* of the German Romantics, and the vital fluid of Mesmerism.

As part of the history of ideas, Goodrick-Clarke provides a further elaboration on a point that Moore discusses in the documentary film *The Mindscape of Alan Moore*:

Whereas the mystic typically seeks a direct and immediate *unio mystica* with God without any intervening images or intermediaries, the esotericist tends to focus on the intermediaries (angels, devas, *sephiroth*, hypostases) that extend up and down the ladder of spiritual ascent as a preferred form of contemplation. (9)

43. See Saler in his essay, “Modernity and Enchantment: A Historiographic Review,” for a response that may as well be a paraphrase of Ambrose’s point: “Enchantments became associated with the cognitive outlooks of groups traditionally cast as inferior within the discourse of Western elites: ‘primitives,’ children, women, and the lower classes” (696).

Thus, enchantment took on an additional shade of meaning that struck its presence from among the Western elites, as disenchantment was in the ascendant. On a point also confronted in the work of Alex Owen, Saler explains further the confluence of modernity and enchantment:

Whatever else modernity might be, in the particular discourse of ‘modernity and disenchantment’ it was equated with a narrow, instrumental rationality and a hollow, expanding secularism permeating the West since at least the seventeenth century. Perhaps proving that you can never get too much of a bad thing, the discourse of disenchantment continued to be dominant among Western intellectuals in the twentieth century, in two closely related modes that we can

distinguish for heuristic purposes as the ‘binary’ and the ‘dialectical.’ The binary discourse, which has been the most prevalent, defined enchantment as the residual, subordinate ‘other’ to modernity’s rational, secular, and progressive tenets. This marked a departure from the way ‘enchantment’ had been used discursively from at least the Middle Ages, when it signified both ‘delight’ in wonders and the possibility of being ‘deluded’ by them. (695)

Schneider precedes Saler in disputing disenchantment as the dominant paradigm of modern life: “Enchantment...is part of our normal condition, and far from having fled with the rise of science, it continues to exist (though often unrecognized) wherever our capacity to explain the world’s behavior is slim, that is, where neither science nor practical knowledge seem of much utility” (x.).

In the 1973 revision *Profiles of the Future*, Arthur C. Clarke adds a second and third law, with final law relevant here: “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.” Clarke’s third law echoes a moment from “The Sorcerer of Rhiannon,” a story by Leigh Brackett originally published in *Astounding* magazine (February 1942), which states, “Witchcraft to the ignorant...simple science to the learned” (39). Also, in Charles Fort’s *Wild Talents* (1932), “I was a witness of a performance that may some day be considered understandable, but that, in these primitive times, so transcends what is said to be the known that it is what I mean by magic” (296).

44. Rudolph Otto’s seminal work is the 1917 book-length study *The Idea of the Holy* (*Das Heilige - Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen*, which translates as *The Holy - On the Irrational in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*). Otto defines the concept of what is holy as that which is numinous, a non-sensory and non-rational experience or feeling. Like the henosis of the Neoplatonists, and the spiritual thrust of the Hermeticists, the primary object of one’s efforts for the holy is outside the self, with internal experience as vital. Otto’s neologism is from the Latin term *numen* (“deity”). A central part to the *mysterium* (“mystery”) of the numinous is Otto’s phrase *tremendum fascinans*, that which both terrifies and fascinates: fear, trembling, and attraction wrapped together. Perhaps Otto’s largest contribution to the philosophy of religion is the creation of a model of approaching the religious as its own category.

Otto’s numinous is unrelated to Kant’s *noumenon*, the Greek term that refers to an unknowable reality underlying all things.

In their parallel but separate approach to the same end, the opposing paths to “ecstasy” that Ambrose names in Machen’s story “The White People,” and then later uses the girl’s narrative in *The Green Book* to exemplify, can become a reason for, and serve as a basis of, antagonism between the respective proponents and practitioners of these alternative spiritual paths. The idea of the numinous then leads to conflict, with the possible culmination of a destructive rivalry derived from how one directs and expresses their belief. The situation then may play out as one side answering the other with some form of violence, by juridical or political exclusion, encyclical, excommunication, crusade, or other severe measure—a rebuke that by its very nature claims one true way, rather than a consideration of multiple ways (cf. William Blake and “All Religions Are One” and “There Is No Natural Religion,” both from 1788). A strong, deleterious reaction occurs in response to sorcery, revealed as part of the backstory of “The White People,” after *The Green Book* ends and Cotgrave returns the girl’s journal to Ambrose. The rejection of one of the paths by force have as a consequence the termination of a person who walked that

way, and the presentation of the girl's death as a just and merciful punishment for straying betrays as hypocrisy the opening sentence's claim that "each is an ecstasy" and that acknowledges validity of the sorcerer's negative approach (a type of dark night of the soul) versus the saint's positive approach (the ascent to heaven). However, the sorcerer's strivings in a dark night of the soul is not the same process as what San Juan de la Cruz identifies in *Dark Night of the Soul* (*La Noche Oscura del Alma*, whose first appearance is posthumous in 1619). San Juan de la Cruz is a doctor of the Catholic Church like St. Ambrose, one of the namesakes of Machen's character.

45. Also from *Things Near and Far*, Machen, as one who has considered the esoteric in practice and the claims made by its practitioners, compares himself the outlook to the quixotic quest (Cervantes a beloved author of Machen since his childhood):

As for me, I make no deductions, I infer nothing, I refrain from saying 'therefore.' Like Sancho Panza, 'I come from my own vineyard; I know nothing.' Perhaps I may venture to say that I have seen a lousy, lazy tramp drinking from a roadside stream that drips cold and pure from the rock in burning weather. Then the wastrel passes on his ill way, refreshed indeed, but as lousy & lazy as ever. (278)

46. See Corinna Treitel and her book, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern* (2004).

47. In *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction* (2008), Goodrick-Clarke explain the concept in yet another analogy: "The universe is conceived as a cosmic hall of mirrors, in which everything finds an analogy or reflection in something else" (8).

48. See Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan" (finished 1897, published 1816), since the speaker's image of the Abyssinian Maid refers to this concept of the ineluctable disappointment of language's shortcomings and its failure to succeed in its aim for precision. In addition, that female figure is used as a potent symbol of the same order that is here under discussion.

In the final movement of *Burnt Norton* (1936), T. S. Eliot writes about the continual imprecision of language:

Words strain,
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
Will not stay still. Shrieking voices
Scolding, mocking, or merely chattering,
Always assail them. (149-55)

49. See Sage Leslie-McCarthy's essay, "Chance Encounters: The Detective as 'Expert' in Arthur Machen's *The Great God Pan*" (2008). Machen's tales of Dyson and Phillipps from the mid-eighteen nineties are part of a larger context of detection and mystery tales that extend prior to and after Conan Doyle's adventures of the consulting detective. Besides the amateur sleuthing of Prince Florizel of Bohemia and his assistant, Colonel Geraldine, in Robert Louis Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights* (1882), there is the sequel of sorts, from Stevenson and Fanny Van der Grift

Stevenson: *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter, The Story of a Lie* (1885). There are also representative Edwardian works of the Stevenson influence that include G. K. Chesterton's *The Club of Queer Trades* (1905) and *The Man Who Was Thursday: The Story of a Lie* (1908). A pair of collections from Michael Arlen a couple decades later bear the mark, too, for this brand of detection: *These Charming People* (1923) and *Mayfair* (1925).

See S. T. Joshi's introduction in *The White and Other Stories: Vol. 2 of the Best Weird Tales of Arthur Machen* (Chaosium, 2003):

Dyson, the mystic (hence the stand-in for Machen), evokes a 'theory of improbability' to account for the remarkable series of coincidences that leads him to the solution for the case; but this is less interesting than the overall philosophical thrust of the tale, in which Machen utilises the tools of rationalism (specifically, the forensic analysis of evidence in regard to the murder at the heart of the case) to undermine rationalism and thereby to 'prove' to his satisfaction that the matter can only be accounted for by appealing to the supernatural—in this case, the continued existence of 'little people.' (vii)

Joshi is incorrect in his reference to "little people," also called the Turanians by Machen in *Ornaments in Jade*, who, in Machen's invention, are the atavistic survivals of the pre-Celtic peoples who became the fairies in the folk legends. These beings are not supernatural but have powers that appear to derive from magic, which, in fact, makes them akin to Arthur C. Clarke's third law.

H. P. Lovecraft takes the epigraph to his short story "The Horror at Red Hook" (1925) from "The Red Hand": "There are sacraments of evil as well as of good about us, and we live and move to my belief in an unknown world, a place where there are caves and shadows and dwellers in twilight. It is possible that man may sometimes return on the track of evolution, and it is my belief that an awful lore is not yet dead" (11).

50. Life with Amy, from the scant evidence that exists, suggests a relationship that shared in the arts, travel, and good food and drink. Amy introduced Machen to A. E. Waite, and the two men held their first meeting at the British Museum. During the marriage, Arthur Machen held the lease of a vineyard at Les Perruches de Saint Martin at Touraine, and he sold the wine bottled on that land to the Florence Restaurant on Rupert Street in Soho. The wine carried the label "Clos St. Martin" and Azario, the proprietor of the Florence Restaurant, purchased Machen's stock. From those Tourainian grapes, the Machens were able to offer Oscar Wilde "wine of their own growth when entertaining him at the Florence Restaurant in Rupert Street" (Reynolds and Charlton 37).

Wilde mentions this same restaurant in his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891): "That little Italian Restaurant on Rupert Street" (110). The prosecution used the locale in the trial against him, since he often brought his young male friends there to dine, and did not do much to hide his stepping out publicly with them.

In 1894, the year that the Bodley Head Press published Machen's fiction in the Keynotes Series, publisher John Lane received some cases of wine as a gift from Machen.

51. However, as documented in a reply to the English composer John Ireland (cf. my concluding chapter), Arthur Machen did claim to see once what, by Legend's description and Machen's affirmation of independent observation, appear to have been revenants: Children dressed in clothing of a different time and who were dancing on a remote hill before disappearing.

52. The center of Alan Moore's and Eddie Campbell's *Snakes and Ladders* fixates on this part of Machen's life, and illustrates that period with London as if a setpiece from *The Three Impostors* in live action:

Machen has his timeless day in this harmonious city, Syon, Tiphereth, then parachutes on foaming silks of grace, descending down to Yesod, to Baghdad, and thence to the material Earth below, where he will soon become initiated in the Golden Dawn, perhaps that he might better understand where he has been: into the golden dawn itself. (44)

Whatever Stevensonian seed sent its strange tendrils around Machen's encounters at this time has its literal source in the first sentence of the "Prologue of the Cigar Divan," the opening part of Stevenson and Van der Grift Stevensons' *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter, the Story of a Lie* (1885): "In the city of encounters, the Bagdad of the West..." (1).

53. One particular section of "N" identifies the German, Romantico-Theosophical tradition plus cites the symbol of the labyrinth:

It was during this brief ministry in the environs of London, that I became acquainted with a very singular person, whom I shall call Glanville...I discovered early in our association that he was conversant with the reveries of the German Theosophist, Behmen, and the later works of his English disciple, William Law; and it was clear to me that he looked on these labyrinths of mystical theology with a friendly eye. (Machen 7)

"N" borrows from the writings of William Law the Non-Juror, the English cleric from the seventeenth century who was a disciple of Jakob Böhme.

In a section of *The London Adventure: Or, the Art of Walking* (1924), Machen explains what he finds in the notebook the he used between 1895 and 1898, filled with notes and sketches, some of which made their way into "The White People":

That the maze was not only the instrument but the symbol of ecstasy: it was a pictured 'inebriation,' the sign of some age-old 'process' that gave the secret bliss to men, that was symbolised also by dancing, by lyrics with their recurring burdens, and their repeated musical phrases: a maze, a dance, a song: three symbols pointing to one mystery. (107)

In *The Darkened Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England*, Alex Owen uses the image of the labyrinth for the human mind's recesses, the same spaces where something was triggered and released in Machen: "The mansion of the mind, it seemed, contained many rooms—some of them dark, subterranean, and not easy of access. The mind was revealed to be a labyrinth, only parts of which were available to conscious self-scrutiny. This interpretation suggested that the psyche might best be understood in terms of division and fragmentation rather than unitary wholeness" (120).

In the novel *The Green Round* (1933), Machen invents a fictional book titled *A London Walk: Meditations in the Streets of the Metropolis*, and in the third volume of his autobiography, *The London Adventure: or, The Art of Wandering*, he expresses his grief that he cannot write that book. As in *The Green Round*, *A London Walk* is a false document named in 1935 short story "N," and the book fades away mysteriously in both that earlier novel and in the short story.

54. Machen's Berkeleyan consideration continues later in that chapter, and the cause for another lengthier quote is due to the evidence from Machen that he took his approach, even while in the throes of he knew not what, with caution and consideration:

When I speak of that singular rearrangement of the world into which I entered in the late summer of 1899, I do not desire to lay much stress on the sensible, or material, phenomena which were presented to me. I marvel, but I marvel with caution, remembering the manifold deceits of the senses, the phantasmagoria or shadow show that they are always displaying before us; remembering also that when the super-normal is manifested it is usually, in nine cases out of ten, irrelevant and insignificant. (*Things Near and Far* 266)

55. In a case where no good, or weird, thing can last forever, the version of London imposed upon Machen eventually dwindled from the marvelous to some lower station held by the worn out and ordinary. In another passage where Machen brings together a reference to another one of his interests, the fair folk appear in Machen's settling down and recovering from the psychic effects of his grief:

So my Bagdad became like the "White City," magic down at heel; its enchantments silly and clumsy tricks, its mystic architecture a shabby sham, its strange encounters, meetings with people who turned out to be bores or worse than bores. You know the story of the fairy gold: at night the man who had had happy commerce with the People of the Hills found himself enriched with boundless and wonderful treasure; but in the morning the marvel of gold had all turned into a heap of dead leaves; such was my case. (*Things Near and Far* 289)

56. In the short story "N," Machen makes references to the Society for Psychical Research, founded in 1882, and to various causes, including noetic references, that may be behind the perichoresis in an area of Stoke Newington documented at different times by various witnesses:

The S.P.R. had, one might say, discovered telepathy, and had devoted no small part of their energies for the last forty-five years or more to a minute and thoroughgoing investigation of it; but, to the best of his belief, their recorded cases gave no instance of anything so elaborate as this business of Canon's Park. And again; so far as he could remember, the appearances ascribed to a telepathic agency were all personal; visions of people, not of places: there were no telepathic landscapes. And as for hallucination: that did not carry one far. That stated a fact, but offered no explanation of it. Arnold had suffered from liver trouble: he had come down to breakfast one morning and had been vexed to see the air all dancing with black specks. Though he did not smell the nauseous odour of a smoky chimney, he made no doubt at first that the chimney had been smoking, or that the black specks were floating soot. It was some time before he realized that, objectively, there were no black specks, that they were optical illusions, and that he had been hallucinated. And no doubt the parson and the farmer had been hallucinated: but the cause, the motive power, was to seek. Dickens told how, waking one morning, he saw his father sitting by his bedside, and wondered what he was doing there. He addressed the old man, and got no answer, put out his hand to touch him: and there was no such thing. Dickens was hallucinated; but since his father was perfectly well at the time, and in no sort of trouble, the

mystery remained insoluble, unaccountable. You had to accept it; but there was no rationale of it. It was a problem that had to be given up. (10)

In the Prologue to *The Green Book* in “The White People,” Ambrose’s discussion with Cotgrave intimates that a kind of “sympathetic,” or, more accurately, an unsympathetic threat exists from exposure to stories such as those contained in *The Green Book* and other grimoires of its literary ilk. He exemplifies the threat with a folk legend about a daughter’s accident and her mother’s subsequent injury, localized in a way that copied the harm that befell the daughter. Thus, the strength of one’s emotional and mental life, when intensely directed as with a mother for her daughter, can result in extraordinary acts and inexplicable results.

See Freud’s discussion of sympathetic magic from “Animism, Magic and the Omnipotence of Thought,” in *Totem and Taboo: Resemblances between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics* (1913).

The non-scientific literature on the topic of the human mind’s imaginative abilities consists of the type of motley array of materials that can quickly overwhelm a dutiful inquiry. Materials include discussions of the seemingly inexplicable, the allegedly miraculous phenomena sometimes claimed in reports and accounts, and the inclusion of the noetic sciences and the attempts to study alleged phenomena of unknown origins and causes.

Any researcher, leisure or serious, will do well to undertake a search into this area with caution.

The growing familiarity that one gains with the mass of literature allows for great sympathy with the conspiracy-oppressed and diabolicals-plagued characters of Umberto Eco’s novel *Foucault’s Pendulum* (1988). The glut of material on the subject fits into three general categories. The Internet has opened the largest pit for the ever-growing first category, much of which plagiarizes from other unoriginal, often non-existent sources, with their often wild-eyed, raving claims. This out-and-out crankery is to be avoided unless one is interested for amusement purposes only or in stupendous feats of errors. The next category is the intriguing, if inconsistent, oft-debunked, and spuriously-cited pseudo-scholarship of works like Michael Talbot’s *The Holographic Universe: The Revolutionary Theory of Reality* (1991). The material in this category earns a place that is a few notches above the popular *Mysteries of the Unknown* series of books on the paranormal published by Time-Life Books from 1987 through 1991. Finally, one finds quality scholarship represented by, but not exclusive to, the C. G. Jung publications in the Bollingen Series (Volumes 1, 8, 12, 13, 14, and 18 of the *Collected Works*), and the contributions of historians Janet Oppenheimer and Alex Owen.

57. Machen’s final evaluation in print of that time admits to no direct relation that he can understand as existing between his encounters and their meaning, just as language repeatedly disjoints from meaning:

I can set down the facts, or rather such of them as I remember, but I am quite conscious that I am not, in the real sense of the word, telling the truth; that is, I am not giving any sense of the very extraordinary atmosphere in which I lived in the year 1900, of the curious and indescribable impression which the events of those days made upon me: the sense that everything had altered, that everything was very strange, that I lived in daily intercourse with people who would have been impossible, unimaginable, a year before; that the figure of the world was changed utterly for me—of all this I can give no true picture, dealing as I am with what are called facts. I maintained long ago in ‘Hieroglyphics’ that facts as facts do not signify anything or communicate anything; and I am sure that I was right, when I

confess that, as a purveyor of exact information, I can make nothing of the year 1900. (*Things Near and Far* 284-85)

58. See n. 40 from my chapter on “The White People” and *The Green Book*.

Hugh B. Urban provides a helpful overview of the origins of sex magic, its Eastern and Western currents in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and Randolph’s place in that history in the article “*Magia Sexualis*: Sex, Secrecy, and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism” (2004). In that same article, Urban notes that “the same period that saw the proliferation of medical manuals on deviant sexuality, such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886), also saw the proliferation of a growing body of occult works on ‘affectional alchemy’ and the mysteries of love as a profound source of spiritual power” (696).

59. In addition to the work carried out by Alex Owen and Henrik Bogdan, see Hugh B. Urban, including his book *Tantra: Sex, Secrecy, Politics, and Power in the Study of Religion* (2003). A century after Machen’s drafting of “The White People” and the prose poems from *Ornaments in Jade*, Chaos magicians have been interested in the kind of interiority of consciousness explored in that literature and in the collected writings of Crowley (who admired Machen and placed his works on O.T.O. students’ reading lists). In its development, Chaos magick has syncretized alternative spiritualities, including new religious movements, and the varied pursuits and practices from Western sex magic since the late-nineteenth century. In Saler’s use of the term, this highly eclectic form of enchantment is non-dogmatically antinomian and tends to non-duality (e.g., Moore’s interest in the Roman god Glycon).

Besides Moore, see Peter J. Carroll and his book *Psychonaut* (1981). Carroll has written about the intense arousal that leads to excitatory gnosis, an arousal that can be induced sexually.

On the point of transgression that I mention in the section above, Hugh B. Urban has noted a relation between Aleister Crowley, his supplicants, and the work of George Bataille:

Particularly for Crowley and his students, sexual magic offered a powerful source of *transgression*, in Georges Bataille’s (1986, 1991) sense of the term: by deliberately overstepping the moral boundaries of respectable society, the magus hoped to unleash a tremendous source of power and an exhilarating sense of liberating bliss. (“*Magia Sexualis*” 699, emphasis Urban’s)

60. Maude Gonne, one-time adept of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, expresses a similar view of the organization and its membership: “Oppressed by the drab appearance and mediocrity of my fellow-mystics....The *fratre* and *sorore* who so kindly made me welcome among them seemed to me the very essence of British middle-class dullness. They looked so incongruous in their cloaks and badges at initiation ceremonies” (Gonne 211).

61. The female defendant had the longer list of aliases, which included Swami Viva Ananda (the name under which W. T. Stead knew her), Ann Odelia Diss De Bar, and various claims about noble and famous parents, including that she was the daughter out of wedlock of Lola Montez. The 22 Nov. 1901 edition of *The London Times* notes that detective-inspector John Kane, D Division, found the marriage certificate for the Horos couple in a confiscated traveling trunk, with the document dated 13 Nov. 1898:

This certifies that Mr. Frank D. Jackson, of Poddulac, State of Wisconsin, and Princess Editha Loleta, Baroness Rosenthal, Countess of Landsfeldt, of Florence,

Italy, were by me united in Holy matrimony, according to the ordinance of God and the laws of the State of Louisiana, at New Orleans, on the 13th November, in the year of our Lord, 1898. (13)

Harry Houdini describes her as “one of the most extraordinary fake mediums and mystery swindlers the world has ever known” (66).

Not consulted is a biography of Laura Horos that is included in John Mulholland’s book *Beware Familiar Spirits* (1938).

62. The issue of *The London Times* from 20 Dec. 1901 gives the content for one of those newspaper advertisements that the Horos couple placed: “Gentleman, 30, handsome, independent, refined, highly educated, exemplary habits, desires matrimony.---Astor” (10). Theodore Horos used the alias David Astor, and to the prospective young women who answered the advertisements he introduced Laura Horos as his mother.

63. In a twist of irony, W. T. Stead, who had a significant role in pushing the amendment through the House of Commons in 1885 with his sensationalistic journalism series *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon* from *The Pall Mall Gazette*, found himself called to the stand as a witness in this case. As reported in “The Extraordinary Charge of Conspiracy” in *The London Times* on 12 Oct. 1901, a piece of evidence admitted was a document that the Horos couple distributed when in South Africa, which cites Stead:

Occult Science in Cape Town: --Readers of the fascinating ‘Caves and Jungles of Hindostan,’ ‘Isis Unveiled,’ and other works of the late Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, and those who do not despise the labours of Paracelsus and Raymond Lully will be interested to hear that a school of occult science has recently been established in Cape Town by Madame Swami Viva Ananada and a staff of competent assistants....and it seems probably that Madame’s stay in Cape Town will not be short as she has already won a large circle of those who, like her friend Mr. W. T. Stead, take an interest ‘in those things which lie on the borderland of the natural and the celestial worlds.’ (7)

Soon after, in a letter to the editor of *The London Times*, on 14 Oct. 1901, Stead denies anything beyond a passing acquaintance with either Horos:

Sir,—I see with much disgust, from the reports of Friday’s proceedings at Marylebone Police-court, that the female prisoner Horos has been described by a South African newspaper as a friend of mine. As they are being prosecuted under the provisions of the law which, 16 years ago, I was instrumental in forcing through Parliament, I hope you will have the kindness to allow me to disclaim this friendship....I had no idea until the case opened of the existence of any allegations that they were guilty of criminal practices.

Yours Truly, W. T. Stead (14)

However, over a month later newspaper articles continued to relate Stead to the Horos couple. See “Mr. Stead and the Swami,” *The London Observer*, 24 Nov. 1901.

64. For additional details, see the 22 Nov. 1901 edition of *The London Times*:

The witness [detective-inspector Kane], continuing, said that there was a society in Paris called the order of the ‘Golden Dawn.’ The head was Mr. McGregor-Mathers. He was satisfied that it was a perfectly pure order. Amongst the

prisoners' books there were a number connected with the order of the 'Golden Dawn,' both printed and in manuscript. They contained the ritual of the order of the 'Golden Dawn.' The ritual of the 'Theocratic Unity,' was absolutely identical with that of the 'Golden Dawn.' The same symbols were also on the literature of the 'Theocratic Unity.'

65. A Disease of Language, the creative imagination, and Machen's short story "The White People" connect with the essay "A Book I Should Like to Write":

Has not the imagination the potentiality at least of performing any miracle, however marvelous, however incredible, according to our ordinary standards? As to the decoration of the story ["The White People"], that is a mingling I venture to think somewhat ingenious of odds and ends of folk lore and with pure inventions of my own. (41)

66. A complementary way to view what occurs in "The Holy Things" can be found in the final movement of T. S. Eliot's poem *The Dry Salvages* (1941): "For most of us, there is only the unattended / Moment, the moment in and out of time, / The distraction fit, lost in a shaft of sunlight" (206-08).

The Green Book girl of "The White People" has one of those moments after her second meeting with the eikon of the Geniscus, the God of the Woods: "The air seemed full of scent, and flowers, and singing" (Machen 93).

67. In the 1880s, Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers was part of the rediscovery of Enochian magic and he incorporated the materials of Dee and Edward Kelly into the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Florence Farr, along with a sub-group of The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn known as the Sphere Group, experimented with Enochian magic. Aleister Crowley first published the Golden Dawn Enochian material as "A Brief Abstract of the Symbolic Representation of the Universe Derived by Doctor John Dee Through the Skrying of Sir Edward Kelly" in *The Equinox* VII and VIII (later versions are titled *Liber LXXXIV vel Chanokh*, or *The Book of Enoch*).

68. See the article "Merging Spirituality and Clinical Psychology at Columbia," by Sharon Otterman, *The New York Times*, 10 Aug. 2012. My especial thanks go to Dr. Denise Renye for her assistance with these resources and her alerting me to other materials on enstasy and Mircea Eliade.

Chapter 5

1. Foucault 35.
2. Crowley, *The Confessions* 767.
3. Merivale 166.
4. Machen, *Precious Balms* 8.

In *Precious Balms*, Machen collects negative reviews of his work and collates them without comment. This snippet of detraction from the *Manchester Guardian* proved to be good advertising copy, which John Lane used in The Publishers' Announcements section of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, 7 Mar. 1895, for *The Great God Pan*, with a first line that notes: "First Edition exhausted. Second ready To-day."

5. In Machen's introduction to the 1923 Alfred A. Knopf edition of *The Three Impostors: or, The Transmutations*, he comments upon one of the many queries that he received since that work's publication, and which asks him about whether there is "a foundation in reality" for those stories from the Keynotes Series. Machen's reply defends his ability to think creatively, and, in the current context, he admits to the influence that Stevenson has had on his fiction:

I remember when 'The Great God Pan' was issued, a friend of mine said, 'I suppose it is just an old legend that was going down in your part of the country when you were a boy?' I was quite cross. I said to myself, and I daresay to others, 'These barbarians can't bear to acknowledge that anybody can "make up" anything. They know they couldn't do any of the kind themselves and the suggestion that, for all that, the thing is done now and again annoys them.' I was proud of having invented "The Great God Pan": I was not going to have the credit of that fact taken away on the strength of a legend which never existed. And so with 'The Impostors.' I wanted to impress on all enquirers that the whole thing came out of my head—I forgot to add 'and Stevenson's'—and that I had taken a great deal of trouble over the tales, and that there was no foundation in fact of anything between the two covers of the book. (vii-vii)

Cf. "The Word Unheard" section of the Western esotericism chapter, where I cite Machen's bemused alarm over a student of anthropology's mistaking the sources of material from "The White People."

As I explain in the section "Like One that Hath Been Stunned," in the Western esotericism chapter, the period 1899-1900 led Machen to re-consider the imaginative reality of *The Three Impostors*. Also, see Alan Moore's citations of Machen in *Snakes and Ladders*, which considers the question of the origins of artists' ideas with a focus on that period of Machen's life after his wife Amy's death.

6. Compton-Rickett's story carries this opening allusion to Machen: "Dedicated to the Author of 'The Great God Pan, and the Inmost Light'" (17). Sykes attacks the original tale's now-common technique of horror literature to withhold explicit revelations of the main horror and other moves made to delay showing the thing that is the source of dread.

7. Cf. n. 17 in the introductory chapter.

The influence of Machen on Lovecraft can be found throughout the American writer's fiction, but the most-substantial impact from *The Great God Pan* occurs in "The Dunwich Horror" (1929).

8. Some work, like the prose poems of *Ornaments in Jade* (completed 1897, printed 1924), lingered for nearly three decades before publication.

Prior to the Wilde scandal, Lane made a commitment to Machen to publish *The Three Impostors*. However, as MacLeod has found in her research into the John Lane Company Records held by

the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, on 29 Jun. 1895, Lane wrote to Machen to implore the writer to use greater caution in his content. Lane urges Machen to take his “literary reputation” into account and to revise the “‘dangerous’ and ‘risky’ passages” of *The Three Impostors* (MacLeod, *Fictions of British Decadence* 141). Cf. n. 22 from my introductory chapter.

9. Cf. n. 24 and n. 25 in the Western esotericism chapter.

10. Cf. n. 38 in the chapter on “The White People.” Five years after *The Great God Pan*, Machen plays with the idea of the alchemy of language with the grimoire-like *The Green Book*.

11. These lines in Latin state: “And the devil is made flesh (incarnated). And is made human.” The echo is of John 1:14 (KJV), with that verse’s statement on the Logos: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” Yet as Gwilym Games has noted, the Nicene Creed may be considered a source nearer to the phrase’s diabolical inversion of a statement basic to Christian faith. That creed would be a source that many of Machen’s contemporary readers would know, whether they were familiar with the Latin recited in the Roman Catholic Mass or the English-language service of the Church of England. For comparison, the creed’s original language in the Latin liturgical version states: “*Et incarnátus est de Spírítu Sancto / Ex María Vírgine, et homo factus est.*”

Lines 12-13 of the version from *The Book of Common Prayer* of 1662, the one most commonly used at the time of the story’s publication and since, reads: “And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary / And was made man.”

12. Cf. n. 31 in the introductory chapter.

See Hartwell’s seminal anthology, *The Dark Descent: The Evolution of Horror* (1984).

13. The first edition of the Keynotes *The Great God Pan and the Inmost Light* (1894) contains this endnote about Helen Vaughan’s biography:

NOTE.—*Helen Vaughan was born on August 5th, 1865, at the Red House, Breconshire, and died on July 25th, 1888, in her house in a street off Piccadilly, called Ashley Street in the story.*

To consider once more my earlier interpretation of Machen’s character Helen Vaughan, there appear to be two alchemical references contained here: the Red House, which recalls the Athanor of Apollonius of Tyana and the attendant reddening stage of *rubedo*, and the unnaturally prolonged birth of a being who was conceived and born under the Black Sun, the *Sol Niger*.

14. See Borges’s estimation of Machen, especially in the essay “Arthur Machen” (1938). Cf. n. 8 in the Western esotericism chapter.

15. I will continue to refer to Helen Vaughan as “that being,” or as an essence in a temporary form on the way to a Heraclitian becoming.

See Bram Dijkstra’s masterful, exhaustive study of visual depictions of females at the fin de siècle: *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (1986).

A large proportion of the visual art that Dijkstra presents for analysis is a manifestation in a variety of forms of the attraction of Decadence to evil beauty, but the norming effects from

socio-cultural expectations and beliefs that sustain misogyny and gynophobia cannot be ignored, either.

For another use of sinister imagery from *Les Fleurs du mal*, see n. 28 from the alchemy chapter.

16. Cf. n. 25 in the chapter on “The White People” and *The Green Book*, and cf. n. 43 from introductory chapter and Machen’s essay “On Paganism.”

17. In *Darwin’s Ancestors: The Evolution of Evolution* (2008), Michael Rechtenwald notes about vitalism that “the vitalism-materialism debate in Great Britain focused on the question of life: was life a substance or vital influence imparted on matter from without (vitalism), or did life occur ‘on its own’ by virtue of an auspicious set of material conditions, such as organization (materialism).”

In his *The Saturday Review* article, “Mr. Stevenson’s Originality of Treatment” (1886), Andrew Lang reference Hyde as Jekyll’s “appalling vitality” (55).

The “alchemy” entry in *The Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, hosted by the University of Virginia, demonstrates the place of vitalism within classical alchemy and metallurgy:

The oldest surviving works of metal craftsmen combine an emphasis on the change in the appearance of metals with the acceptance of a vitalistic view of nature—a view that included the belief that metals live and grow within the earth in a fashion analogous to the growth of a human fetus. It was to become fundamental to alchemical thought that the operator might hasten the natural process of metallic growth in his laboratory and thus bring about perfection in a period of time far less than that required by nature. (28)

Machen critiques in the third chapter, if lightly, the class confidence of his novella’s gentlemen, as Villiers of Wadham interrupts the start of his stroll that follows an “excellent dinner of many courses” and “an ingratiating little flask of Chianti” to turn to what he hears to be a pathetic human sound of a beggar. The sight of the poverty of the other half distracts Villiers from a romantic notion of the mysteries of the metropolis about which he had been entertaining himself:

‘London has been called the city of encounters; it is more than that, it is the city of Resurrections,’ when these reflections were suddenly interrupted by a piteous whine at his elbow, and a deplorable appeal for alms. He looked around in some irritation, and with a sudden shock found himself confronted with the embodied proof of his somewhat stilted fancies. There, close beside him, his face altered and disfigured by poverty and disgrace, his body barely covered by greasy ill-fitting rags, stood his old friend Charles Herbert.

18. See James Reston’s book *The Last Apocalypse: Europe at the Year 1000 A.D.* (1999).

Cf. n. 30 in the introductory chapter on the use of the phrase *fin de siècle*.

Weir has used the descriptive phrase “the transitional ferment of decadence” (Weir xvi) for the hopes and anxieties and ongoing work of the century’s last years and the next one’s first, a technique of fermentation that, perhaps, Dr. Lipsius found a technique to bottle as the wine of the Fauns in the Red Jar made by Avallaunius (Machen, *The Three Impostors* 222).

19. Versions of the New Woman are recognizable in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and can be counted from the demonstrations against the Contagious Diseases Acts of the sixties (1864, 1866, 1869) and supportive actions for the Married Women’s Property Acts (1870 and

1882). By the nineties, the New Woman was more-commonly associated with challenges to a conservative model for femininity that resisted the cast of the traditional female role, whether the Angel of the Household and the domains of the private, domestic sphere, or a life that included unmarried, non-reproductive sex (seen as an affront to the maintenance of empire with its locus on the home).

20. The term pathogen applies nicely in this instance when one considers the history of a word that derives from the combination of the Greek *pathos* “suffering, passion”, and *gignomai* (*gen-*) “I give birth to.” Of disputed origin, the first documented use of *nosferatu* from an English-language work is in Emily Gerard’s book on Transylvania, *The Land Beyond the Forest* (1888). A few years after the publication of *The Great God Pan*, Bram Stoker in his novel *Dracula* (1897) explores the fear of contamination as the infectious agent strikes British society. His seminal vampire tale receives one of its more effective, and copyright-infringing, filmic treatments in *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens* (1922), directed by F. W. Murnau. As the outwardly-blighted visual representation of the plague-carrier, Grafen Orlok skulks through the expressionistic setting.

21. Two popular, and representative works, about flowers and their meanings in the Victorian era are by Kate Greenaway, *The Language of Flowers* (1885) and Henrietta Dumont, *The Language of Flowers: The Floral Offering* (1852).

However, these books were not expressions of a genuine social phenomenon. As Beverly Seaton has argued, the contemporary notion of the language of flowers, or floriography, as a socially agreed upon symbolic language used by men and women to pass messages of love to each other is probably wrong. Then, as now, there was no universally agreed upon set of meanings for flowers. See Seaton’s book, *The Language of Flowers: A History* (1995).

22. Cf. n. 29 in the Western esotericism chapter and the recent work on enchantment by Saler and During.

23. Cf. n. 21 and the section “Another Turn of the Keynotes” in the introductory chapter.

24. In the twentieth century, one of the final challenges to the lingering influence and presence of perceived Victorian values, in relation to more modern, liberal morals, came with the *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* trial in 1960.

Legal regulation of works deemed obscene date to the earlier Georgian period, with The Vagrancy Act of 1824 especially noteworthy, as one could be prosecuted for the exhibition of obscene materials in public. This legislation links to the Victorian era in that 1837, that inaugural year for Queen Victoria, when the act was amended to extend to materials displayed in shop windows. The key act is the Obscene Publications Act of 1857 (Lord Campbell’s Act), which would not be revised until nearly seventy years later with the Obscene Publications Act of 1959, the same law tested by the trial of Lawrence’s novel.

Other laws bolstered the 1857 Act, which was the first to name the sale of obscene materials as a statutory offense: the Customs Consolidation Act of 1876 applied to the importation of obscene materials, and the Indecent Advertisements Act of 1889. British Parliament and local governments passed these laws, and the Society for the Suppression of Vice, the Evangelical Christian group, made it their self-appointed duty to police the pornographers.

25. In that same year as the publication of *The Great God Pan*, *The Magazine of Art* (Jun. 1894) chastised British society “for our false prudery and hypocritical cant,” a response based on a case from Glasgow where a nude work of art was displayed in a shop window (Myrone 32). That publication and the trial’s witnesses, who supported the shop owner, demonstrate a resistance to the prosecution of the overregulation of expression of the human body.

26. Lesley Hall, Senior Archivist at University College London, has commented on the Victorian patriarch and his function within and without his family:

A picture which conflates the attitudes and practices of a wide range of very different Victorians over the whole extent of Victoria’s long reign into one composite Frankenstein figure owes particular debts to Rudolph Besier’s play *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* (twice filmed, in 1934 with Charles Laughton as Mr. Barrett and in 1957 with John Gielgud in the role) and Samuel Butler’s *The Way of All Flesh*. This conflation is also one of the foundations of notions of Victorian hypocrisy: i.e. moral earnestness and libertine behaviour were both to be found in Victoria’s subjects but very seldom in the same individual.

For more on her research on Victorian Sexology and factoids, or mistruths, see her site: <http://www.lesleyahall.net>

27. The work of Marcus was followed by Ronald Pearsall’s *The Worm in the Bud: The World of Victorian Sexuality* (1969), Milton Rugoff’s *Prudery & Passion* (1972, with a focus on Victorian America), Eric Trudgill’s *Madonnas and Magdalens: Origins and Development of Victorian Sexual Attitudes* (1976), and Fraser Harrison’s *The Dark Angel: Aspects of Victorian Sexuality* (1977).

28. Mary’s mind is destroyed in a Semelê-like event whose agent is invisible to Dr. Raymond and the witness to the surgery, Mr. Clarke. As the doctor explains to Mr. Clarke: ““It is a great pity; she is a hopeless idiot. However, it could not be helped; and, after all, she has seen the Great God Pan”” (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 7). That summary is the final words of Chapter I: “The Experiment,” and immediately follows the description of this terrible description of Mary, who was “lying wide-awake, rolling her head from side to side, and grinning vacantly” (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 7). The doctor’s words that some consolation can be taken from destroying a human life and that description of Mary form a combination of the most-patently misogynistic section of the text. The doctor does express remorse at the end of the final chapter in a letter to Mr. Clarke: ““I recollect your telling me at the time, sharply enough, and rightly too, in one sense, that I had ruined the reason of a human being by a foolish experiment, based on an absurd theory. You did well to blame me”” (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 50).

29. I discovered Byron’s work after I completed my own comparative reading of Stevenson’s *Strange Case* and Machen’s *The Great God Pan*.

30. Chapter I: “The Experiment” takes place twenty-three years prior, 1865, a measurement that is possible based on references made the novella’s second chapter.

The ability to date the year to 1888 is possible because of this reference made in Chapter VI: “The Suicides”: “The police had been forced to confess themselves powerless to arrest or to

explain the sordid murders of Whitechapel” (Machen, *The Great God Pan* 33). Rather than the myth of male violence (cf. Judith Walkowitz), Machen’s narratives of the fin de siècle deal in the myth of the femme fatale (cf. Gail-Nina Anderson).

31. The Charles Booth Online Archives contains copies of the Poverty Maps and Police Notebooks: <http://booth.lse.ac.uk/>

32. In the “Advertisements & Notices” section of *The Pall Mall Gazette* from 7 Mar. 1895 (Issue 9345), the following blurb appears in John Lane’s advertisement: “Since Mr. Stevenson played with the crucibles of science in ‘Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,’ we have not encountered a more successful experiment of the sort. Of its extreme cleverness there is no manner of doubt.” The “Literature” section of the *Glasgow Herald* 13 Dec. 1894 (Issue 298) makes the following statement about Machen’s Keynotes work: “Nothing more striking or more skillful than this book has been produced in the way of what one may call Borderland fiction since Mr. Stevenson gave the world ‘Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.’”

33. In the “Novel of the White Powder,” after Dr. Chambers has performed a chemical analysis for his colleague, Dr. Haberdon, Chambers makes the same somber point about an attack on the integrity of the human form as Dr. Raymond makes at the close of *The Great God Pan*:

‘The most trivial laws of life are not to be broken with impunity; and for so terrible an act as this, in which the very inmost place of the temple was broken open and defiled, a terrible vengeance followed. What began with corruption ended also with corruption.’ (Machen, *The Three Impostors* 211)

As with Reynolds and Charlton, and other critical commentary on *The Great God Pan*, a final state of corruption is where Helen Vaughan remains.

34. See Dr. Raymond’s hubris in his use of transcendental medicine and his self-proclaimed virtuosic skill, preceded in the transcendental field of science by his equally-fictional colleague, Dr. Henry Jekyll.

35. Sect. 11 of the Labouchère Amendment to the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 reads:

Any male person who, in public or private, commits, or is a party to the commission of, or procures the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and being convicted thereof shall be liable at the discretion of the court to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labor.

The document can be viewed here at the Proceedings of the Old Bailey, London’s central criminal court (1674-1913): <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/static/Gay.jsp>

Sect. 11 became known to lawyers as the blackmailer’s charter.

In *Strange Case*, Mr. Enfield says to his cousin, the lawyer Utterson: “Blackmail, I suppose; an honest man paying through the nose for some of the capers of his youth. Blackmail House is what I call that place with the door” (10). Unknown to them at the time, they are looking at the back of their friend’s, Jekyll’s, property.

36. The abbreviations of J. Saul’s testimony stand for the Public Record Office and the Director of Public Prosecutions.

37. The Charles Booth Online Archive contains an interactive version of the map in digital format: <http://booth.lse.ac.uk/>

Chapter 6

1. Machen, *Far Off Things* 19.

2. Tennyson 337. In the memoir about his father, Hallam Tennyson derives this thought from a saying by Roger Bacon: *Opportuni magnis conatibus rerum transitus*.

3. Plato's Prayer to Pan from *Phaedrus* 279 B8-C3, trans. Rosenmeyer.

4. Browning, *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came* 199-202.

5. (Purefoy Machen, *Where Memory Slept*, 1941)

6. In *Far Off Things*, Machen considers that at this time he suffered from the want of contact with literary mentors, too, or, at least, the lack of literary encouragement of even a minor variety. This neglect begins from Hargrave Jennings, who did not reply to Machen's letter about a point made in Herodotus about the Egyptian Mystery Religions that Jennings's book on Rosicrucian history, , failed to mention. However, Jennings's passing of Machen's letter on to Redway brought the publisher and the young writer into communication. Machen describes his literary disconnections of those years as a silence that he found some benefit from his experiencing:

Mr. Hargrave Jennings conformed perfectly to all the literary men whom I encountered in my early days. I came into contact with four or five men of a certain reputation; or perhaps I should say I came within sight of them; and they could very easily have flung me a word or two of encouragement, which would have been very precious to me then. But I never had that word, and so was forced to go on and do my best without it; the better way, no doubt, but a hard way.

(*Far Off Things* 144-45)

In *Things Near and Far* (85), Machen says to have made only £635 from eighteen books published over forty-two years, according to his accounting. The family legacies lasted from 1887 through 1899, and Machen paid his bills in the twentieth century as a freelance journalist and as a reporter for the London *Evening News*.

7. For an admirer of Coleridge, Machen does a fine job of his own in reflections upon his perceived failure to realize his creative imagination in literary works. Machen's consideration of what he has not done appears at some point in each of his three autobiographies, with that distance between intention and result eloquently stated in the run up to the line about fire and clay:

But that gulf between the idea as it glows warm and radiant in the author's heart, and its cold and faulty realisation in words is an early nightmare, and a late one, too.... If this road have led to nothing but a blank wall failure, that way may rise from the valley and climb the hill and lead into a fair land....But now, with ripper understanding, he perceives...the depth of the gulf between the idea and the word,

between the emotion that thrilled him to his very heart and soul, and the sorry page of print into which that emotion stands translated. (*Far Off Things* 100-01) Machen's fictional doppelgänger of his early-eighteen-eighties self is Lucian Taylor, the thwarted visionary of the novel *The Hill of Dreams* (1907, cf. my introductory chapter section "The Imperfect Copies and the Perfect Originals"). This young man has failed to make a living as an author in London, endured poverty and suffering in the pursuit of art, but unlike Machen he has fallen into drug addiction. Lucian's demise is ruled "death by misadventure," this rash act of suicide (Machen, *The Hill of Dreams* 308), a frustration that one finds nicely-summed up in the above quote.

In his essay "Books I would Like to Write," Machen names "The White People" as an idea whose reality he could not realize, a claim that may be his Man from Porlock:

Forthwith I thought of 'A Great Romance,' a highly elaborate and elaborated piece of work, full of the strangest and rarest things. I have forgotten how it was that this design broke down; but I found by experiment that the Great Romance was to go on that brave shelf of the unwritten books, the shelf where all the splendid books are to be found in their golden bindings. 'The White People' is a small piece of salvage from the wreck. (8)

Further indications of Coleridge's influence on Machen abound in the Preface and various chapters from that quirky work of literary opinion, *Hieroglyphics: A Note Upon Ecstasy in Literature* (1902).

8. For more on Machen and the topic of taverns and ale, see:

From the *London Evening News*, the articles written by Machen, "Don't Take Away My Beer!" (22 Nov. 1916), "Let Us Keep the Tavern" (22 Aug. 1917), and "My Ideal Tavern: A Reply to Mr. Geo. R. Sims" (17 Dec. 1917).

Taverns and Temples: A Guide to Some London Haunts of Arthur Machen, a pamphlet co-authored by Mark Valentine and Roger Dobson (Caermaen Books, 1986).

Arthur Machen's The Anatomy of Taverns, ed. R. B. Russell (Tartarus Press, 1990).

Cf. n. 25 in the chapter on Western esotericism.

David Cody makes this point about the state of non-Evangelical Christianity in his article, "The Church of England (the Anglican Church)":

In the mid-nineteenth century, then, the Church of England was disorganized. Though its adherents were largely conservative, a considerable portion of its leadership was, ideologically speaking, perilously close to Catholicism, and the religious census of 1851 showed that it was reaching only about fourteen percent of the population of England.

9. In an early work of criticism of the literary supernatural, two decades after the Keynotes reviews, Dorothy Scarborough chooses Machen's work as singular in its distasteful content: "Arthur Machen deals with strange, sinister aspects of supernaturalism unlike the wholesome folklore that other writers reveal to us....One feels one should rinse his mind out after reading Machen's stories, particularly the collection called *The Three Imposters* [sic]" (247). The "wholesome" folklore that Scarborough prefers resonates with the sterile, benevolent Pan in prose fiction that Merivale examines in *Pan the Goat-God: His Myth in Modern Times* (1968). Henry Williamson wrote this reminiscence about a meeting with Machen: "He obviously still felt his miseries; and that, one thought, was why he had never succeeded as a novelist" (40).

10. See Chapters IX and X of *Things Near and Far* (1923), and cf. the section “Like One that Hath Been Stunned” in the chapter on Western esotericism.

11. In his 1923 essay, “With the Gods in Spring,” written the same year as the second volume of his autobiography, Machen remains with the theme of the seeker. He is not content to wallow in a woebegone manner for what will not return:

We shall go on seeking it to the end, so long as there are men on the earth. We shall seek it in all manner of strange ways; some of them wise, and some of them unutterably foolish. But the search will never end. ‘It’ refers to ‘the secret of things’; the real truth that is everywhere hidden under outward appearances.

The pilgrimage for that secret is encoded in *Four Quartets*. In *Little Gidding*, T. S. Eliot writes, “We shall not cease from exploration” (239), and, in *East Coker*, there is this encouragement: “For us there is only the trying. The rest is not our business” (189).

While the term “survivals” has a negative connotation when considered in the context of the work of the forensic medicine and criminal anthropology of Cesare Lombroso and the cultural criticism and aesthetic alarmism of his student Max Nordau, the term does relate to more positive moments in Machen’s writing. For example, this event witnessed by a guest in the English countryside in the prose poem “Midsummer” emphasizes that a world of wonder remains, but its corners are remote and not a common sight:

He saw the farmer’s daughter, the girl who had waited on him hours before and behind her came girls with like faces, no doubt the quiet modest girls of the English village, of the English farmhouse. For a moment they fronted him, shameless, unabashed before one another, and then they had passed. He had seen their smiles, he had seen their gestures, and things that he had thought the world had long forgotten. (Machen, *Ornaments in Jade* 36-37)

“English” is emphasized in this above passage because these ongoing, if hidden rites are a living past. If there is a cultural memory of that version of English belief at the time of the fin de siècle, when Machen finished the pieces that are *Ornaments in Jade*, he gestures to them in a way that gendered action and the practice of belief are present as they are in the earlier Keynes fiction and in the later story “The White People.” However, there are no overtones or implicit references that “Midsummer” ends with a practice of sorcery. The tone is one of beneficence. As a companion to Machen’s Gray’s Inn reference, where the overly familiar urban scene can be a thin place that brings a person to extraordinary awe, the local countryside can be as mysterious as the farthest spot of an uncharted continent, as sketched in “Novel of the Black Seal”:

I surrendered wholly to the charm of the country. Above the faded house on the hillside began the great forest—a long, dark line seen from the opposing hills, stretching above the river for many a mile from north to south, and yielding in the north to even wilder country, barren and savage hills, and ragged common-land, a territory all strange and unvisited, and more unknown to Englishmen than the very heart of Africa. (Machen, *The Three Impostors* 148)

12. However, a conservative view of gender does speak in the outer framing of “The White People” and in the silence of Helen Vaughan in *The Great God Pan*.

13. Cf. n. 34 in the chapter on “The White People” and female adolescence.

In *The Weird Tale*, Joshi assesses Machen's central interest as discernible for these major features:

The notions of ecstasy, of the veil, and of the sacrament: can these be sufficient to unlock the mysteries of Machen's entire output? I rather think so, since, in spite of the superficial variety of form and genre, Machen's work returns again and again to these basic principles. (14)

These points do not account for the elements of Western esotericism, philosophical alchemy, or Victorian sexuality present in Machen's eighteen nineties work; these omissions weaken Joshi's attempts at critical evaluation.

14. In that same essay, which is based upon her introduction to her giving a public reading of the story "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," O'Connor refers to a notion that can be found in the verve of *The Green Book*: "The lines of motion that interest the writer are usually invisible. They are lines of spiritual motion" (59).

Cf. n. 21 in the chapter on "The White People" and female adolescence.

15. Cf. n. 42 in the chapter on Western esotericism.

See Eliot's *Four Quartets* and *The Dry Salvages* (1941):

While time is withdrawn, consider the future
And the past with an equal mind.
At the moment which is not of action or inaction
You can receive this: 'on whatever sphere of being
The mind of a man may be intent
At the time of death'—that is the one action
(And the time of death is every moment)
Which shall fructify in the lives of others (152-59)

16. Cf. n. 73 in the alchemy chapter.

17. Bleiler is a pre-eminent scholar of the twentieth century on the fields of science fiction and the literary supernatural. Among his major contributions are the pair of Hugo Award-nominated volumes *Science-Fiction: The Early Years* (1990) and *Science-Fiction: The Gernsback Years* (1998). A still-useful guide for researchers is the massive *Guide to Supernatural Fiction* (1983). Before Bleiler's high praise, Lovecraft had given his nomination for Machen's story first in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, which refers to the text as "the curious and dimly disquieting chronicle called *The White People*" (91). Later, in a letter to Fritz Leiber, from 9 Nov. 1936, Lovecraft judges that Machen's work is second only to a piece of long short fiction written by Algernon Blackwood: "Blackwood's longish short story *The Willows* is the greatest weird tale ever written. (With Machen's *The White People* as a good second.) Little is said—everything is suggested!"

18. See Stephen King's *The Stand* (1978). The novel's initial apocalyptic event is the accidental escape and spread of a human-engineered superflu from a U.S. Army military base. A real-world parallel to that invented scenario garnered international attention in January 2012. Reports emerged that researchers at the Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam engineered a mutated, highly-infectious strain of A(H5N1), more commonly known as the bird flu virus. This new

form of the virus is transmissible many times above any previously-recorded, human-transmittable influenza strain, including the strain behind the 1918 influenza pandemic.

19. See Pascal's *Pensées*, Sect. III, no. 210:

“The last act is tragic, however happy all the rest of the play is; at the last a little earth is thrown upon our head, and that is the end for ever.”

20. The other Herakleitos epigraph, Fragment 60, is relevant to the earlier chapters on the girl of *The Green Book* and Helen Vaughan from *The Great God Pan*: “The way up and the way down is one and the same” (trans. Burnet).

21. Other names on the donor list included: George Bernard Shaw, Algernon Blackwood, Max Beerbohm, Siegfried Sassoon, and Walter de la Mare. In addition to the work of Valentine, see Reynolds and Charlton.

22. During his acting career in the Edwardian period, Machen performed in period costume as Samuel Johnson, the evidence of which survives in photographs held by his family and reprinted in publications from the Friends of Arthur Machen society. Dr. Johnson was one of Machen's favorite writers.

23. The large spiritualist community of Lily Dale in Chautauqua County, New York is one example of the persistent interest in non-quantifiable reality and life-after-death. The HBO documentary *No One Dies in Lily Dale* (2010) explores the dynamics of this town.

24. John Ireland composed music throughout his career that found inspiration from Machen's fiction, often posing this question about the extent of that influence: “How can the critics begin to understand my music if they have never read Machen?” The symphonic rhapsody *Mai-Dun* draws inspiration from the novel *The Hill of Dreams*, and the piano work *Legend* is dedicated to Machen. Quotations from Machen, along with Arthur Symons, appear in the preface to the trio of piano pieces that form *Decorations: The Island Spell, Moon-Glade, and The Scarlet Ceremonies*. That final piece references content from *The Green Book* of “The White People” (70): “Then there are the Ceremonies, which are all of them important, but some are more delightful than others—there are the White ceremonies and the Green Ceremonies and the Scarlet Ceremonies. The Scarlet Ceremonies are the best.” *The Forgotten Rite*, a tone poem and prelude for orchestra, evokes Machen's sense of the other-worldly and the favored theme of a reality beyond the veil of appearances. Among their correspondence is a long letter that Ireland wrote to Machen after an odd experience at Harrow Hill within the Downs north of the village of Patching in West Sussex, England (here recounted by Ireland's biographer Muriel Vivienne Searle):

It is said that on one occasion John Ireland arose early, cut some sandwiches and chose Harrow Hill as the place for his picnic. (In the far distant past there had been a leper colony in the area. A steep path led up to what was known as Friday's Church because the clergyman attended it on Fridays for a service for the benefit of the lepers who were allowed to participate through a squint so that they shouldn't contaminate the congregation.) Just as he was about to start eating, he noticed some children dancing around him in archaic clothing—very quiet, very

silent. He was a little put out about having his peace invaded by children; he looked away for a moment, when he looked back they had disappeared. The incident made such an impression on him that he wrote about his experience to Arthur Machen. The reply he received was a postcard with the laconic message: ‘So, you’ve seen them too!’ (Searle 86)

A sympathetic attitude toward paganism provides one other connection between the composer and the writer, though Ireland identified with paganism in a way in which Machen would never do so. In a letter to Reverend Kenneth Thompson, Ireland writes: “As you know, I am a rather bad sort of Anglo-Catholic. I am a Pagan. A Pagan I was born and a Pagan I shall remain—that is the foundation of religion.”

25. For more on the interest in fairies, see the critical work of Caroline G. Silver in *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness* (1999), and Alex Owen in “‘Borderland Forms’: Arthur Conan Doyle, Albion’s Daughters, and the Politics of the Cottingley Fairies” (1994).

Machen’s version of the fair folk, which figure most-prominently in “The Pyramid of Fire,” “Novel of the Black Seal” and “The Red Hand,” are a pre-Celtic race that diverged in pre-history from the modern human race. These fairies are different from the types that I discuss in “The White People.” In an unpublished manuscript for an edition of *The Three Impostors* from Arkham House that was never published, “On Re-Reading *The Three Impostors* and the Wonder Story,” Machen writes that these strange “people still lived in hidden caverns in wild and lonely lands” is “wildly improbably.” S. T. Joshi presents this document in the Introduction to the Chaosium edition of *The Three Impostors and Other Stories: Vol. 1 of the Best Weird Tales of Arthur Machen* (2001).

26. Cf. n. 63 in the Western esotericism chapter.

27. Cf. the Eliza Armstrong case, which provided the materials that Stead needed to write *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon*. Stead received help from the Salvation Army, including William Booth’s son, Bramwell, to purchase a child for sex to demonstrate the ease at which such a transaction could occur and, thus, to speed through the passage of the Criminal Law Amendment that had languished for parts of three years in the House of Commons after a swift vote of passage in the House of Lords. When the mother and the alleged father of Eliza Armstrong brought a criminal complaint against Stead and his accomplices (a former prostitute and a midwife and abortionist), the act of sensationalism led to guilty verdicts and a sentence of three months imprisonment for Stead, which he served with pride. The above-cited *The New York Times* story notes how Stead met his guests while he was dressed in his prison uniform, to commemorate the anniversary of his time served with honor, in his mind.

28. Cf. Anthony Cummins’s article, “Émile Zola’s Cheap English Dress: The Vizetelly Translations, Late-Victorian Print Culture, and the Crisis of Literary Value” (2009).

29. Besides the attempt to summon Lombroso to Cambridge House by way of King’s control of the spirit Julia, the article’s author makes another reference to the doctor of forensic medicine and Stead: “On two occasions, however, this egotistical virtue has shown Stead to be the type of

man which would have formed a unique subject for study by my friend, the late Cesare Lombroso” (SM2).

30. In *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* (1978), Foucault challenges the repressive hypothesis of Victorian society and sex and interrogates how the period had “an institutional incitement to speak about it [sex], and to do so more and more; a determination on the part of the agencies of power to hear it spoken about, and to cause it to speak through explicit articulation and endlessly accumulated detail” (17-18).

31. Alfred Watkins worked out his theories of ley lines in the book *The Old Straight Track* (1928), which follows an earlier and much shorter publication, “Early British Trackways” (1922). Umberto Eco plays with such ideas about the occult significance of landscape, mixed with telluric currents, in the novel *Foucault’s Pendulum* (1988).

32. Machen has had an influence on music and film in another way, too. Stephen C. Smith reveals that in 1931 at the beginning of Bernard Herrmann’s career, before his winning Academy Awards and scoring historically and culturally significant feature films, the composer entered the following note in his diary: “From now on I have decided that my compositions will be governed by the following idea. ‘Art should be an adventure into the unknown’ (Secret Glory of Arthur Macken [*sic*])” (26).

On the film industry influence, Adrian Eckersley adds in his article “A Theme in the Early Work of Arthur Machen: ‘Degeneration’” (1992):

One factor which distances us from tales such as these is their own success in creating a genre. Machen was one of the first writers to create a sense of horror with roots more in biology than in spirituality, and in doing so he became the parent of the innumerable blendings of science-fiction and horror in the twentieth-century film industry. (287)

33. In *Hieroglyphics: A Note Upon Ecstasy in Literature*, Machen writes: “*Omnia exeunt in mysterium* was an old scholastic maxim; and the only people who have a plain answer for a plain question are the pseudo-scientists, the people who think that one can solve the enigma of the universe with a box of chemicals” (106). In the Introduction to Richard Middleton’s collection of short story *The Ghost Ship* (1913), the same quote is used by Dorothy L. Sayers on the title page of her bestselling anthology *Great Short Stories of Detection, Mystery and Horror (The Omnibus of Crime, 1928)*, which includes in its contents Machen’s “Novel of the Black Seal”:

Man is so made that all his true delight arises from the contemplation of mystery, and save by his own frantic and invincible folly, mystery is never taken from him; it rises within his soul, a well of joy unending. Hence it is that the consciousness of this mystery, resolved into the form of art, expresses itself usually (or always) by symbols, by the part put for the whole. (xi-xii)

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