Extra-Terrestrial Aesthetics as an Explanation of the Paradoxical

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Paradox.

What is meant by the Paradox or the Conceptualization of the Paradoxical? When I refer to the Paradox, I refer to contradiction, incongruity, perceptions, combinations that seem absent of reason and logic. When I talk about the Conceptualization of the Paradox, I mean attempts by modes of thinking to rationalise this immeasurable value.

I feel it is essential to present the current use of the word Paradox. In its contemporary mode this is seen by Suzi Gablik in the discourse of deconstructionism:

> Is deconstruction the only answer - cultivating paradox and leaping, as it were, over one's own shadow? Implosive strategies demand going to extremes - until the system devours its own empty forms, absorbs its own meaning, creates a void and disappears...there is nothing to be had from it. The only thing you can do is to let it run, all the way to the end. (Gablik, 1993, p. 40)

Let me begin first with its entymological construction : 'Para' 'Doxa'. 'Doxa' (Greek) meaning: opinion and the prefix 'Para' (Greek) meaning: 'beside or beyond'. The subject being dealt with, Paradox in this form is beside or beyond opinion, that is to say, beyond rational expression, but perhaps 'paradoxically' not beyond perception. Perception : 'The act or faculty of perceiving, instinctive recognition (of truth, aesthetic quality etc.)'. The actual definition of the noun: 'Paradox' is something:

> Seemingly absurd though perhaps actually well-founded statement; self-contradictory or

> essentially absurd statement; person or thing conflicting with pre-conceived notions of what is reasonable or possible; paradoxical nature. (Oxford English Dictionary)

I would like to pit my own definition of paradox alongside the dictionary and contemporary definitions in an attempt to complement this enquiry and express some understanding of what I mean when I refer to the 'Conceptualization of the Paradoxical'.

If I were to formulate my own version of the noun 'doxa', now with the prefix: 'Para', I find an interesting offspring. Let us move from 'Doxa' in the noun 'Doxology' and its definition: a formula of praise to God. 'Doxa' in this usage meaning 'Glory'. One thus ends up with an expression, Paradoxology, that could be taken to mean: Beside or beyond a formula of praise to God. I have found this new coinage particularly useful in the context of my own enquiry, as I feel it sums up the contemporary in relation to the paradoxical.

The word Paradox in a modern or contemporary use of this understanding has somehow become the substitute for what would have been expressed as God. God is taken to mean an incomprehension of the unknown quantity, but nevertheless perceivable, not through the normal senses, or through the normal reasoning processes. This concept, associated with myth, therefore became more poetical and aligned with the more intuitive reasoning processes.

When I refer to the Great Paradox, it is somehow like a reference to the greatest Paradox of all, which is some

kind of concept of God. I am not going to pretend that these immeasureable values are non-existent, it is just this is seemingly implied in the use of contemporary language. There is little use made within contemporary language in expressing this sort of paradoxical thinking. Paradoxical thinking finds itself exposed in contemporary culture, expressed mostly in art and literature, as opposed to theology and philosophy. Somehow the terms have changed but the contradictions still remain. My only complaint is that there is less of an intention to approach the subject of paradox because of more scientific modes of thinking that appear in the empirical mind-set of contemporary discourse.

In effect what I am proposing throughout this enquiry (borrowing from Georges Bataille's expression), on initial viewing, is An Absence of Myth within contemporary culture. More exactly, an Absence of a basis of expression within current existing discourse that is adequately equipped to deal with the incongruous nature of the Paradox, as if this expression was only relevant to science. I am not wholly suggesting that contemporary culture has somehow become vacant along the line, but rather that it has opted for a mode of expression that was never designed to pick up on the subtle nuances within experience other than that which would be analytical and perceived through an empirical process of reasoning.

The scientific method as applied today involves

> observation and quantitative analysis...As a result, most scientists claim to limit themselves to descriptions of 'how' things work to the exclusion of 'why' they work, usually ignoring any possibilityof valuative analysis...The myth of a value-free scientific method has had consequences that affect the technologies and our very lives. (Arnold, 1992, p.24)

There is formally no equivalent of myth in contemporary culture and if anything like it does crop up, it is labelled 'Paradoxical', indicating perhaps, a form of mythical behaviour. Paradox, in this case, assumes the worst and behaves not unlike a full-stop. What it does hint at, is the potential of a mythological discourse when used in contemporary language, hence it is like an 'alert' or 'flashing warning light' admonishing any further enquiry: "myths, in other words are 'hidden persuaders'" (Hutchinson, 1985, p. 78).

I am not suggesting that myth does not exist but rather it has become irrelevant within the contemporary framework, perhaps indicating on deconstructionist terms, that this is out of our jurisdiction "And so there is a policy of going nowhere, of not occupying a position, of hovering, having no positive horizons, no goals, no constructive alternatives" (Gablik, 1993, p. 40)

But contradiction and paradox, remain as an undercurrent within experience and within existence. My enquiry is as much a query as to whether it is a healthy business to ignore this undercurrent as it might well be the shifting ground that supports the foundation of our own

experience or existence. "There is a high price to pay in terms of emptiness and disenchantment. There you will have all the seduction, and the sadness, of nihilism". (Gablik, 1993, p. 40)

Ancient cultures, waves of existence did not choose to ignore this undercurrent but sailed upon it, aware perhaps that the ground (of reasoning) they built upon was the back of the whale (Leviathan), and from this perspective contemporary culture has perhaps mistaken this hard flesh for solid ground; the tower of Babel perhaps?

The problem it might be said, with having no comprehension of a living mythology is that it renders a culture incapable of forming an opinion (doxa) about contradiction, when confronted with paradox. When a Paradox appears, close the book on it, suggesting that if one were to ignore the contradiction it will somehow get fed up and go away. Close the X file.

This forms the general thrust of my enquiry in relation to the Great Paradox, which is in essence the sublimation or replacement word for the God-head within contemporary culture.

Chapter 1:

CONCEPTUALIZING THE PARADOX

What is common to contradiction whether it be recognised as God, God-head, or its more modern counterpart, 'The Great Paradox' is that it falls into the category of belief systems. Ideologies, without forcing the point too much, would fall under the hood of religion. It is for this reason that I want to make my stance clear in relation to the following three categories: Orthodox Religion (theology), cult and occult. My emphasis resides with the latter occult category for reasons that will be made clear as my understanding of the categories unfold, theology, philosophy and art literature often slipping outside this definition.

I would like to make clear that I do not value the expression God-head over the word Paradox, but rather feel that they are an evaluation of the same subject matter of Contradiction and have forged similar limiting attitudes towards its nature and I feel it is essential to be aware of this connection,and when stressed from the esotericist's perspective:

> The ignorant man goes no further than the concept of God as an old man with a long white beard who sat on a golden throne and gave orders for creation. The scientist will go back a little further before he is compelled to draw a veil...and the philosopher will go back yet further before he draws a veil called the absolute; but the initiate (esotericist) will go back furthest of all because he has learnt to do his thinking in symbols, and symbols are to the

> mind what tools are to the hand - an extended application of its powers. (Fortune, 1963, p. 30)

The conceptions outlined above by Dion Fortune allude to the conclusive tendencies of these types of discourse, all sharing the same objective, to come to conclude on the God concept in comprehending paradox.

The modern gnostic, Christian conception of the God-head as a benevolent white bearded old man, is not so far away from the agnostic, atheistic standpoint, where the replacement terminology becomes 'Paradox'. In its current understanding it is considered irrational and therefore of a paradoxical nature, hence there can be no logical outcome to this, so there can be no enquiry here. Both types of enquiry attempt to conclude on this phenomenon of Contradiction, because on the one hand it has been decided that there can only be one universal myth and on the other hand because of the absence of myth (which Bataille would argue is an impossibility) there can be no further enquiry. The Esoteric position is somewhat different, presenting the possibility that there exists a "Peculiar method of using the mind" that may embrace this phenomenon. (Fortune, 1963, p.51)

The esotericists position might be considered a little more flexible and is not interested in reaching a formal conclusion. They perhaps consider this to be the key to any understanding of the Paradox where mythology is active. Thus, it is a living process that does not, in its

purest sense, see conclusion as the ends. Rather they see it as the temporary means whereby a myth (the means) may embrace some poetical sensibility of The Great Paradox. Their concept accepts contradiction as a logic of its own, and does not aim to capture its absolute nature but is satisfied with fleeting aspects of it through the temporary construction of a myth. Joseph Campbell talks about this fleeting nature as a consistent theme within mythology, while Bataille also talks about, having to embrace this 'masochistic' attitude which is the necessary adjustment to be made in the comprehension of contradiction. Myth is a language of its own making, solely designed to express the subtle nuance of contradiction, hence a Conceptualization of the Paradox.

For the purpose of my enquiry now it will be sufficient to state that my interest in the three categories, cult, occult and orthodox religion is that they represent through the associated texts and accompanying iconography, the few reliable examples of a body of thinking or expression that to varying degrees were and are solely devoted to the Conceptualization of the Paradox, or an attempt to accomodate a concept of the paradoxical. The arts, theology and philosophy play no less a role but, perhaps they are more free-lance in their commitment to the subject matter in conceptualizing the paradox. What other purpose can be assigned to them when the politic has been removed from their original

intention?

It is for convenience that I have coined the noun 'Paradoxology' as it makes no distinction between modern and ancient discourse in both, of which mythology is a participant. The empirical discourse of contemporary culture and the poetical (mythological) discourse of ancient culture share a common ground which is that of experience and the potential of mythology. But, the former merely ignores this potential for Myth. This 'formula of praise to God' in contemporary culture is to be found in the attending word Paradox/ology. When God is pulled out of the equation due to an empirical treatment of a secular discourse, then mythology is ruled out within this treatment, the vacuum will have to exist after all, and a definition of contradiction has to exist. Making reference to the Paradox and the attendant language/discourse surrounding it is essentially making a reference to the potentiality of myth. Myth is the language used to treat the subject save when it is used in the 'full-stop' sense.

The word Paradox becomes the one treatment of this condition within contradiction, which is all too often void of any further enquiry and one finds that mythology is this 'Further Enquiry'. I wish to reiterate that the absence of myth only exists within a given discourse that has no grounds on which to express it. The prerogative of contemporary discourse is that myth is both quaint and primitive, or meaning falsehood or lie, and certainly not

to be perceived as making any reference to reality :

> The term 'myth' has taken upon itself a meaning in everyday English usage that betrays its real content. It is a much maligned word. To call something 'a myth', to label a politician's assurances as 'mythical', is now just the journalese for saying these things are false and unreliable. Alternatively, we may simply bundle up myths with legends, fairy stories, and all manner of other fantastic or imaginative literature. (Barrow, 1992, p. 4)

I hope that at this stage it will be fairly clear where I stand within my own definition of what is meant by 'paradox' and 'a conceptualization of the paradoxical'. I would like to take this further into the specific arena of orthodox religion, cult and occult as these will form the grounds on which parallels will be drawn within the formulation of any concept or notion of a modern mythology.

Mainly from the perspective of the occult, I will look at the initial three categories, orthodox religion, cult and occult. They are all steeped in religious language/iconography but they do not all create myths or perpetuate them; however, this has been seen as an integral aspect of the occult discourse. Cult invents a new myth or perspective upon an existing myth. Christianity exists on a given basis of mythology, the interpretations are open of course, but the mythology itself is quite fixed (literal Bible readings). Philosophy and theology on the other hand, are disciplines surrounding myth but enquire from the outside and remain detached from the mythology itself. This is perhaps why

they do not qualify as religion as such, but rather as more secular ideologies. Orthodox religions such as Christianity, ironically from the occult perspective, it could be said, do not qualify as active religions, in the sense that they do not create any further mythology of their own.

There is a further motivation when inquiring into these categories, cult and occult, in that they define or inform their counterparts in contemporary culture. They outline the levels of participation in the more paradoxical modes of contemporary discourse and attendent iconography and media. This will be identified, within this enquiry, in science-fiction film. Iconography is taken to mean the terms (discourse) that attempt to decipher and express some sense of 'The Great Paradox' (the meaning of life), the result being a fresh creation, or re-creation, of myth.

I will approach this task by underlining some fundamental differences: what qualifies as cult and occult, and the distinction made between cult (deviant) and orthodox cult (acceptable). The examples I have chosen to represent and highlight these catagories are, in the case of orthodox cult/Christianity, the Bible; in the case of deviant cult, Raelianism, and in the case of occult, the occidental version of the Mystical Qabala, the Tarot Disciplines in the The Book of Tokens and Rudolph Steiner's 'Knowledge of the Higher Worlds, how it is

Achieved'. The first category will be self explanatory, and for the second category I will draw from the actual literature surrounding the Raelian Movement. But I wish to focus particular attention on the third category (occult) as it forms the vantage point from which I view the others and also forges a closer link with that which I regard as the purely paradoxical, and it may become obvious that my bias lies here.

The actual definitions, of these categories, before bringing my own perspective in, are basically as follows: CULT: "Specific system of worship; devotion to a person, idea, or activity; popular fashion", and: OCCULT: "Esoteric;...involving the supernatural, mystical (mysticism), magical, [L occulo-cult-hide]. It is useful to note that in forming an opinion on the cult and occult position I have drawn from Joseph Campbell's evaluation of these categories. He decides that the inevitable clash between the early gnostic tradition and Christianity in the twelfth century, brought about a school of gnosticism that became more dualistic in its interpretation of religious texts, namely the Christian, Old and New Testaments. Early Christianity integrated early Pagan rites and rituals which did not entertain the now acceptable dualistic codes of morality and the apocalyptic language of themes such as redemption, salvation, and The Last Judgement. He assigns these latter attributes to the occidental (Western European) perspective/interpretation

upon the intention of Christ's teachings. The following will give us a useful insight on this position, bearing in mind that gnosticism was essentially the mixing of Western Theology with pagan philosophy.

> The Classical heritage of symbolic forms...the Classical and the Gnostic, became mixed at certain points, but, though mixed, never really fused; for in the Gnostic view, as in the authorized Christian, the world of nature (pagan) is seen as corrupt, whereas in the Pagan mysteries it was known as divine...in the Orthodox the corruption of nature was attributed to man's fall, but in Gnosticism to the Creator, so that whereas according to the former (Christian) redemption was to be gained through an act of repentance and thereafter obedience to what were taken to be God's laws, the Gnostics strove for release from corruption through a systematic disobedience of those laws in either of two ways, through ascetiscism or its opposite, the orgy. (Campbell, 1991, p. 145-6)

The basic point that I want to make before I enter into the specifics of these areas, is that they are all regarded as gnostic in their various philosophies. This includes that of the Christian doctrine, and its counterpart agnosticism, which is related to the more contemporary modes of philosophy and is still categorised as gnostic in the same Oxford English Dictionary. The various discourses in the collection of essays in 'Myth and Philosophy' somewhat narrow the distinctions made. (Reynolds & Tracy, 1990) But there is basically only one way to make any real distinction between them, and this will entail examining them in relation to one another.

The broad definition of gnosticism that Campbell presents us with basically encompasses the notion of

religion and I am in agreement with this up to a point. My original stance would have been that gnosticism represented that of the occult, as my own definition was that of the Oxford English Dictionary, which states that: "'Gnostic' pertains to Knowledge; having esoteric knowlege, mystic." Because of the obvious clash of definition I have decided to stay true to the dictionary definition. When referring to the occult position I will refer to it as the esoteric, mystic tradition and perhaps more in keeping with the Pagan tradition than that of the gnostic described by Campbell. I feel this is necessary as in my view there is nothing esoteric (the dictionary definition of gnostic) in the gnostic traditions of cult as their doctrines are made very clear in both cult deviant and orthodox. I am satisfied with Campbell's definition of gnostic when referring to cult, but prefer the Esoteric Mystic Tradition as a suitable indication of Occult. The dictionary's second definition of 'Occult' is to: "conceal [Astron (star)] hide by passing in front of", and the definition of Esoteric: "Meant for the initiated, not generally intelligible."

Chapter 2:

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE PARADOX WITHIN CULT

Why then do I want to look at cult, and its supposed revival? The reason is that cult exists as an active narrative in contemporary culture, oddly enough as a minority revival of that type of reasoning that is in line with the ongoing enquiry into the meaning and frame of mind that will accomodate contradiction, paradox and paradoxical thinking. The cult attempts to do this in a personality way, whereas the occult draws from a more ancient mode of reasoning, somehow approaching the subject of God-Head/Paradox from perhaps a more healthy perspective, providing an alternate, Doxology, in a formula of praise to God/Paradox.

For a closer look at this theme in the light of cult and its pattern of obsession with Armageddon and Apocalyptic themes, I would like to refer briefly to an article written in the Independent by Paul Valley (Valley, 1995, p.11). It's title is: 'Its the End of the World as they Know it' and the article begins thus: "Seemingly sane people believe 1996 is the year of Armageddon. Could they be right?" He speculates about the number of cults (Raelanism not included) obsessed with this Biblical theme, the concept of 'Milleniumism', and looks at those who have attempted to predict its exact date of onslaught. In particular he focuses on those who

have missed the mark, to no avail, after queuing up for the big event. He suggests that according to the more 'fundamentalist' cults the:

> final 'day' must be due to begin soon. The Book of Revelation sets this out in graphic detail: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse appear and the wrath of God falls upon the world, then appears the Anti-Christ before Christ returns to defeat the forces of Darkness and reign for 1000 years...there then follows a final battle with Satan and the final judgment of all the dead...In every period of significant social change since milleniumism has reared its head. The reformation produced Doomsday cults...It re-emerged with the Enlightenment of science - the growth of interest in measurement and qualification produced a liberalism which spread to Biblical scholarship. In the United States and Europe there came the Irvingites, Mormons, Seventh day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses, all... consumed with End-Time preoccupations. (Valley, 1995, p. 11)

Raelianism.

PL. 1: Rael on the Late Late Show

I must begin somewhere and it might as well be cult Deviant as I have nominated it. There is no point in my view in producing a descriptive speel on orthodox cult (Christianity), that is in isolation, as this is probably

already familiar to most. They are both to be regarded as various areas within gnostic cult. I accept Joseph Campbell's analysis at face value. I feel it is more beneficial to pit one gnosticism against the other as this will produce the necessary results for a comparative evaluation.

There are a myriad of deviant cults, but I have chosen Raelianism in particular because of its obvious parallels to orthodox cult and its opposing gnostic philosophy. But more especially it is relevant to consider its interpretation of Biblical texts into the language of Extra-terrestrial terminology and its enticing re-write of Orthodox Christian mythology, that is, the reinterpretation of the iconography of the Old and New Testaments. This is the perfect complement to Joseph Campbell's Ascetic versus Hedonistic (orgy) principle stated earlier.

This is consistent with the themes surrounding the Apocalyptic discourse of the Raelian Movement (cult deviant) perceived as cult although preferring not to be known as such. They place considerable emphasis on the Apocalyptic theme; the name of the magazine reflecting this, "Apocalypse International".

But first, let me present some background information on the origins of this organisation (Movement) and where relevant present the more obvious parallels within Christian Orthodox, gnostic and occult gnostic. I would

like to open up this analysis with what might be perceived initially as a sensational heading, borrowed from a Raelian Information pack, which is designed to summarise its aims and its philosophy, or more appropriately, its theology.

WHAT HAPPENED:

> On 13 December 1973 French journalist Rael was contacted by a visitor from another planet, and asked to establish an Embassy to welcome these people (the Elohim) back to Earth.
>
> And substantiating this in bold letters:
>
> "AN EMBASSY FOR PEOPLE FROM SPACE"
>
> In Genesis, the Biblical account of creation, the word 'Elohim' has been mistranslated as 'God' in the singular, but it is a plural, which means 'those who come from the sky'[1] (Richard, Raelian information pack, pp. 2-3)

The above example has to qualify as cult (deviant) when first perceived, but let us probe a little more before we draw any conclusions just yet. The two key points, before I go any further, that seem to define cult within a contemporary understanding are, text-sensationalization, and a sexually deviant philosophy. Raelianism is a re-interpretation of what is an existing, established holy text, in this case the Old Testament version of the Bible.

The Raelian philosophy is a re-invention of an already interpreted mythological basis - the Christian literal word-for-word doctrine - and its attendant analogies, allegories, parable and essentially the guts of

APOCALYPSE INTERNATIONAL

Notre véritable nom n'est pas Paul ou Jean, Dupont ou Durand, mais un code génétique, c'est ce qui est écrit dans la Bible : "chaque être vivant possède un nom qui lui est propre". Raël

Our real name is not Paul or John, Smith or Jones, but is our genetic code, as is written in the Bible : "every living being possesses a name which is unique to him". Rael

Pl. 2: 'Apocalyspse International' Cover, issue no. 87

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its iconography. But, what is especially common to both philosophies is the Apocalyptic theme that seems to underly the interpretation. Joseph Campbell offers a useful insight into this tendency, in the theme of redemption through reincarnation:

> Our usual Christian way (of interpretating) has been to take the mythological metaphors of the Credo literally (with its attendant dualistic view) maintaining that there is a Father in Heaven that does exist; there is a Trinity, there was an incarnation, there will be a Second Coming, and each of us does have an eternal soul to be saved (Campbell, 1991, p. 158)

The use of 'Christian' in this context is understood to be gnostic. Campbell's principle treats the Christian doctrine as the ascetic end of gnosticism, whereas Raelianism is to be treated as the 'Hedonistic' opposite.

Let's look at these particular doctrines seperately, bearing in mind that as Christain themes, they will already be intelligible to most and their counter interpretation within the Raelian movement may oddly enough seem equally as intelligible.

Within the Raelian Movement you can see where conventional prejudice might target, in the previous caption we are introduced to notion of extra-terrestrials as a basis of reasoning from which to interpret religious texts, but more importantly, further prejudice might well be expected when viewing their doctrine on 'Sensual Meditation'. From the ascetic Christian perspective this practice may be regarded as sexual deviancy, with the Raelian emphasis appearing hedonistic, orgiastic and

conjuring up images of intoxicating paganistic immorality. This prejudice is the legacy of the early Christian Gnosticism, which expressed an extreme distain to pagan rites and rituals that involved the worship of the earth goddess, where it was customary to engage in orgiastic rites.

The gnostic rite of either asceticism (denial), or its opposite the orgy (excesses), were both born out of the view, according to Campbell, that the body was a corruption, and the excessive practice of either would ensure redemption, as mentioned earlier. But the origins of these two traditions lay in pagan rites. The ancient traditions clashed with Judaic/ Christian doctrine which were largely incompatible and inevitably went either way, expressed as either an ascetic doctrine or an orgy; hedenistic doctrine.

The Raelian philosophy opts for the latter, 'orgy', in the form of 'Sensual Meditation' and makes no moralistic judgement in regard to this, arguing that guilt is an obstacle to spiritual enlightenment. On this account it does not express the same dualistic (good/evil) moral prerogatives of Christian philosophy. It is not surprising that the Christian philosophy, an ascetic theory, would not be particularly tolerant of, nor likely to yield to a hedonistic discourse.

The Raelian position is highlighted within their philosophy on 'Sensual Meditation' when they make the

comparison with the Japanese culture and attitudes.[2] Standard practices towards sex as regarded favourably if sought out in 'love hotels':

> favourable environments for spreading the message in Japan (which would appear to be the message of the Elohim)...We wish to make the most of this fortunate environment to have more Raelians each year. (Richard, issue 93, p.30-1)

So it is fairly clear where they stand on this aspect of their doctrine. It is worth noting that this non-dualistic approach is more pagan than gnostic under the terms of Campbell and would appear initially to be consistent with the Mystic, Esoteric, Non-Dualistic tradition. Therefore, it would seem to qualify as more occult in its outlook. However, the actual occult emphasis is:

> Every preconception, every cherished opinion with regard to the things in question must disappear, truth alone must guide. There must be a perfect readiness to abandon any idea, opinion or inclination, directly logical thought demands it...It would go badly for him if his imagination and preconceptions were to run away with his intellect. (Steiner, 1969, p.86)

I concede to the view that the occult in this sense does not sever its links with the pagan, presenting if you like ,a non-prejudicial theory. And this, I would suggest, is what has armed conventional prejudice towards cult and indeed occult; cult has borrowed an aspect of the occult's non-dualistic emphasis within the esoteric position, and pulled it out of context.

As this may well be, the Raelian Movement

nevertheless fulfils pretty much all other criteria of gnosticism as stipulated by Campbell, and this will be apparent within the following parallels. These parallels are simply a re-write of the traditional ground mythology found within the Christian doctrine or its interpretation of its mythological basis, the Bible. What is offered, by the Raelian Movement, down to precise speculative detail, is essentially a scientific evaluation of Biblical texts. It could almost be described as a fantastical obsession with a technological interpretation of an older orthodox, mythological belief, that at first glance has drawn a great deal of its fascination from the spoof sci-fi, U.F.O. tradition.

The Movement itself, would avidly deny any connection with Scientology or Ufology, but one can only speculate on the possible difference. They also campaign for their legitimacy as a genuine, authentic religion in their own right. The Raelian movement might be seen to offer a fresh interpretation of text, and on these terms almost legitimates a re-reading of sci-fi iconography as a mythological base of its own. When it enters into the religious arena, it almost automatically elevates itself into the the domain of mythology, a modern mythology.

From the perspective of its contribution to the paradoxical discourse, or a conceptualization of the paradoxical, it is an overwrite of mythology and therefore fresh contribution to it, but its discourse is still

gnostic and I am unsure if it is any more active in producing a living mythology other than that of a replacement, re-write of a science-fact nature. The Raelian non-dualistic, occult discourse will certainly shake up a few of the prejudices of its members and its matter-of-science-facto pre-condition might stifle its more poetic esoteric inheritance. This decision is for the Raelian Politic. From their own viewpoint their 'revolutionary' philosophies and views on 'Sensual Meditation' may not seem fixed, but active. As regards the rest of their philosophy it is merely a sci-fi re-write of already established Biblical terminology.

The Raelian movement is basically what convention might describe as a cult or sect that revolves around a particular personality, Rael (which is the name presented to him by the Elohim), his real 'earthly' name being Claude Vorihon. Rael, in so many words, is compared in the various literature surrounding him and the movement, to the second coming of Jesus.

The aims of this orginization are:

> To inform without convincing, the international Raelian movement values open and honest dialogue. It wishes to inform, not to convince the public about the messages of the Elohim.

And what is the message of the Elohim?

> The messages dictated to Rael explain how the Elohim used their mastery of genetics to scientifically create life from inert chemicals using D.N.A.[3] (Richard, Raelian infromation pack,p. 5)

The above supports their interpretation of Baptism

and the notion of Redemption. The Last Judgement motif is based on whether you are worthy of regeneration or a useful enough individual to be replicated. This can be found in their Baptismal equivalency, "In the Transmission of the Cellular Code". (Richard, Raelian information Pack, p. 12) This ritual entails: (interpreted as) sending a true (serious) Raelian Member's D.N.A. code up to the Elohim, telepathically, so that you may be replicated (redeemed/resurrected), if of course you are worthy of replication/regeneration. This is like the Christian theme in which Baptism assures your redemption on the Last Day of Judgement. Only a serious Raelian student can have their cellular code transmitted, so securing eternal life.[4] The purpose of this ritual transmission is to bring to the Elohim's attention that you are associated with the Raelian Movement:

> The Elohim have been recording the emissions of every human on earth right from conception and thus have a record of every person's thoughts and actions which they use to judge whether they are worth recreating that individual scientifically on their planet. (Richard, Raelian information pack, p.12).

And to explain Rael's position within the scheme of things:

> All the great prophets, including Buddha, Moses, Jesus and Mohammed were messengers of these extra-terrestrials. Jesus was born from the union of one of these Extra-terrestrials and a 'daughter of man'. (Richard, Raelian information pack, p. 5)

and his task was to spread the Biblical messages in anticipation of the Age of Apocalypse.[5]

The Age of Apocalypse is the age that Rael is supposed to represent, and the Movement intricately interprets the '666' theme from the perspective of this being the time span, in days, in which he was in contact and instructed by the Elohim. In answer to any queries as to what exactly 'The Age of Apocalypse' might mean:

> In 1945 humanity entered the Age of Apocalypse. The word 'apocalypse' comes from the Greek and means 'revelation'. This is the time when our scientific development allows us to understand the true origin of humanity. With this same level of technology we can also either destroy or liberate our world. This age of apocalypse has been anticipated by religion. For example, in the Bible, it describes how in the Age of Apocalypse the blind will be able to see (advanced microsurgery and electronic prosthesis), humanity's voice will be carried beyond the oceans (satellite communication), and humanity will equal itself to God' (we have already created human genes entirely synthetically). (Richard, Raelian infromation pack, p.5) The parenthesis is their emphasis.

Their ongoing activities as a whole are regarded as 'Operation 666'. Rael's position within this was touched upon earlier, but what basically takes place with their literature is a concerted effort to dispel any prejudice. They quote first from the Bible:

> Here is wisdom, let him that hath understanding count the number of the Beast: for it is a number of man and his number is six hundred threefold and six. (Richard, issue 91, p. 23)

Not the number of 'a man', that we are normally lead to believe, but the 'number of Man' in the plural sense. This has the effect of getting Rael off the hook as regards accepting responsibility for being the apocalyptic

Beast. Quoting from the 'Apocalypse International', they go on again to relinquish Rael's role of being in any way connected with the Anti-Christ, this mimicking somewhat the 'Temptation of Christ' theme :

> At the end of 666 days (Rael) had to pass the last test of selection, Satan's trial, before getting a psychic activation of his potential (Richard, issue 91, p.23)

And finally we come to the crux of this science-facto approach:

> The Elohim have contacted Rael in our time because we can finally rationally understand our origins. They have asked him to make these origins known throughout the world and to establish an embassy for them where they will meet with us officially. (Richard, Raelian information pack, p. 5)

Giving up his job as a sports journalist, Rael had two priorities in line with the messages of the Elohim, the first of which was to: "prepare humanity for the arrival of these extra-terrestrials" and secondly, to teach: "Sensual Meditation at courses all over the world". (Richard, Raelain information pack, p. 4) These are techniques taught to Rael by the Elohim (extra-terrestrials) which enable us to develop our potential, our individuality (the particular signiture of our D.N.A.) and our common humanity.

The reason that the Elohim chose Rael was because his "step father was Jewish and...mother Catholic", which was considered an "ideal link between two very important peoples in the history of the world". The Elohim finally conclude their communication with Rael, saying: "we have

been following you since your birth and even before". (Richard, Raelian information pack, p.4)

The implication that Rael is the Second Coming is treated as matter-of-fact and it is taken further by suggesting that he is Jesus' half brother. It is considered advantageous that his parents were of the denomination that they were. What you notice about the promotional material found in their bulletins is that they quite openly challenge the Orthodox Christian parallels with a kind of matter-of-fact, freedom of information tone. A good example of this is that like their counterpart they oppose the Darwinian theory of evolution, challenging what they describe as the "Neo-Darwinian Myth" (Richard, Raelian information pack, p.23) in which one of the Raelian members (a chemical engineer) constructs an intricate argument against which he claims that the "theory of evolution lies in direct contradiction with the law of entropy" (Richard, Raelian information pack, p.23) This anti-Darwinian view is shared also by the Christian doctrine, but what is so enticing about the Raelian discourse is that they consistently offer you a plausible explanation, or simply baffle you with science.

Their doctrine could be viewed as yet another 'Theory of Everything' all the questions have been answered. In a way it is a replacement theory for a previous 'Theory of Everything' in Christianity's story-book interpretation of the Bible. Barrow mentions that within such mythology:

"Theories of Everything...nothing happens by chance...all things are interwoven into a tapestry of meaning pulled taut by the cords of certainty". (Barrow, 1992, p. 4)

In the Raelian manifesto, which states their political agenda, one of its aims is a universal (cashless society) credit system and if I were to briefly indulge in a little conspiratorial speculation by referring back to the previous Apocalyptic article:

> The restoration of the state of Israel, the growth of a cashless society, the possibility of universal ID cards, the recent peace treaty to mark the end of wars in the Middle East - all these are predicted in the Bible as coming just before the Second Coming. It is setting the stage for a one world dictator who will appear to be the saviour of mankind and will introduce a universal credit system, but who will turn out to be the Antichrist. But the Bible doesn't give us a year and people who name one are are clutching at straws...Rev. John Celia...fears that the phenomenon is growing. Around 700 new groups have appeared in the last 20 years, half of them in the last 7 years. (Valley, 1995, p.11)

One of the other prejudices aimed at cult, is its relationship to its members' commitment, leading to a member's eventual psychological incarceration. There is an article at the front of one of their issues that quells a member's possible desire to leave (yet still believing in the Elohim) stating basically that the message of the Elohim exists as one organic whole within the organisation, and that the message cannot be separated from a commitment to the Movement. This inevitably sorts out any potential couch-potatoes.

The above gives some indication of how the key aspects or parallels, of Biblical reference within cult are re-written. This can be interpreted as a fresh insight on Biblical literature or as a blatant re-write of a hitherto existing, orthodox interpretation of an already accepted doctrine, such as the Christian view-point of its mythological Biblical tradition. Before going into the occult aspect I would like to reiterate the tradition or behavioural traits of gnosticism that have already been outlined, so that a distinction might be made between this tradition and the occult from the outset. As Campbell outlined earlier, both tendancies within this gnostic tradition are to be found in their treatment, as it were, of morality. On the one hand the Christian orthodox ascetic principle, on the other hand the hedonistic, cult position.

However, the occult perspective does not entertain either or any one of these and yet would not condemn them. Rather it treats them, at the risk of interpreting their philosophy, as fragmented insight. As a result they form extreme responses/impulses, indicating an incomplete system of knowledge. And in reference to the Christian (gnostic) doctrine on asceticism: "Someone may derive satisfaction from asceticism as someone else does from wine drinking, but he cannot hope that asceticism of this kind - will help him to higher knowledge". (Steiner, 1969, p. 106)

What is fundamentally different in view of occult texts is that they are not concerned with presenting Political manifestos and terms of obedience for humanity as a 'whole or universal State of Mind', but rather their position is that humanity will approach this 'peculiar' state of mind if it genuinely seeks it, and each individual must arrive at this.

Chapter 3:

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE PARADOX WITHIN OCCULT.

> Why do we know nothing of our experiences beyond the frontiers of birth and death? The questions should be put differently. The right question is: How is such knowledge acquired? In true meditation the path opens. Through meditation the remembrance of experiences beyond birth, death is revived. Everyone can acquire this knowledge; in all of us lies the faculty that can enable us to recognise and contemplate for ourselves the genuine Mysticism, Spiritual Science, Anthroposophy Gnosis (meditation) teach. But the right means must be chosen. (Steiner, 1969, p. 43)

It is useful to reflect on what this: "Peculiar method of using the mind" (Fortune, 1963, p.51) might be, and on this position I can only state that which it is not, and that it is void of the political as it is commonly understood. Occult is that which is 'concealed' presently from the uninitiated, literal state of mind, which we find is a tendency within the previous mentioned gnostic tradition. It was hinted that within the Raelian tradition there was what at first appeared to be an occult non-dualistic tendency within its practice of 'sensual meditation'. I feel, at the risk of interpreting the Occult perspective, that the occult would treat this 'liberation' as fragmented, as it would also treat the counter practice in its more Orthodox mode (Christian).

> The signs of the Occult script are not arbitrarily devised, but correspond to the forces actively working in the world. The language of things is learnt through these signs. It becomes immediately apparent to the candidate that the signs he is now coming to know correspond to the figures (Qabalistic Symbolism etc). (Steiner, 1969, p. 81)

It is for this reason that much Occult literature falls into the category of symbolism and poetry, and would tend to speak on more poetical terms, equating mythology with this language. The reason is, as I see it, that in such literature, symbolism is directed at the individual interpretation. The notion of initiate in Occult takes place in a similar way to that found in English literature, where a student is taught to appreciate a poem. But, even this comparison is problematic because on the one hand, the latter is taught to recognise the literal structure, as Joseph Campbell put it: "the denotation as opposed to the connotation" (Moyers, 1988, program 1). The Occult student on the other hand is concerned with what Rudolf Steiner describes as its "clairvoyance", its 'connotation', and the capacity of a poem, symbol or mythology to induce this clairvoyant state. It is suggested by Steiner that literature with a capacity of this kind is the result of 'Gnosis or Meditation'.

> The candidate grows in the appropriate way towards clairvoyant knowledge and during the process there develops in him, as a faculty of soul, the power impelling him to 'decipher' the happenings and beings of the spiritual world as he would decipher the characters in a script. (Steiner, 1969, p.80)

This literature will mean nothing at all to the uninitiated, although he does mention an occasional exception to this rule. The occult, esoteric position does not concern itself with the question of whether or not UFO's or extra-terrestrials exist, but would rather

attribute this to part of the bizarre quality of intricate experience, that should be treated as anything but bizarre, otherwise it turns into a distraction, a fixation or a conclusion which would stand in the way of further knowledge. The following quote may make reference to UFO/Extra-terrrestrial forms:

> If a pupil has progressed so far that he can perceive spiritual phenomena which are also physically visible to his outer sight, he will then not be so far from the stage of seeing things which have no physical existence and must therefore remain entirely hidden (occult) for anyone who has not received instruction in occult science. (Steiner, 1969, p.49)

In order to orientate ourselves within the previous discourse on extra-terrestrials, apparent in the Raelian doctrine, I would like to indicate the occult position in reference to this phenomenon. Extra-terrestrials are not alien to the occult discourse as the following quote from Steiner will indicate:

> There are also the beings of the higher worlds who never incarnate physically; their colours (auras) are often wonderful, also often horrible. Indeed, the wealth of colour in these higher worlds is immeasurably more than in the phsyical world...Once a person has acquired the faculty of seeing with spiritual eyes, he encounters, sooner or later, the beings mentioned above, some of them higher than man in rank and some lower; they are beings that never enter physical existence. (Steiner, 1969, pp. 58-9)

The fundamental difference between the occult treatment of these 'beings' and the Raelian doctrine is that the occult treats them as beings of a spiritual realm, as opposed to the Raelian perception which regards

them as an advanced civilisation or rather, our ancient forefathers in excess of 25,000 years. In real terms between the two discourses there is only a grammatical difference in acknowledging the same phenomenon.

The Raelian position hints at these occult qualities which would initially suggest an improvement but stifles the quest for further knowledge, perhaps, with a fixation on extra-terrestrials and technology. The following might indicate the difference between say, cult (Raelian) and Occult. The separation seems to be that Occult is not interested in entertaining the idea of speculation:

> It should be emphasised that the occult investigator must not lose himself in speculation as to the meaning of one thing or another. By such intellectualising he merely diverts himself from the right path. He should look out on the world with fresh healthy senses and a keen power of observation, and then give himself up to his feelings. He should not try through intellectual speculation to determine what the things mean, but should rather allow things themselves to tell him. (Steiner, 1969, pp.49-50)

It is the poetical aspect of occult literature, text or symbolism that holds the key to any understanding of its nature, and the Initiation process that seems to surround the occult tradition. I would like to also make a distinction between occult literature and occult science. occult literature or symbolism stands on its own, and are the result of meditations in this sphere, whereas occult science is a school of thought that is designed to initiate one into this sphere.

> ancient experiences and ancient wisdom are given wheresoever the ways to knowledge are indicated

> ...contemplative reflection, meditation of this order is the means by which super-sensible knowledge is attained. (Steiner, 1969, p.31)

And in reference to the occult student:

> He should take as his starting point writings which sprang from such revelation during meditation. In the literature of Mysticism, Gnosticism and modern Spiritual Science the pupil will find such writings and therein material for his meditation. (Steiner, 1969, p. 41)

In real terms it is impossible to make a distinction between them as this would form an act of paradox, a 'Catch 22', because on the one hand to understand occult literature, one must be initiated into this 'peculiar state of mind', and on the other hand there can not be literature without this state of mind. This is by no means limited to the traditional occult texts, as it is acknowledged by this occult body of thinking which stipulates that such literature is the result of meditation of this kind, giving scope to art and contemporary literature, but would stress that such literature could be the result of an incomplete meditation and therefore fragmented. In relation to artistic endeavours:

> It should be remarked that artistic feeling coupled with a quiet introspective nature, is the best preliminary condition for the development of spiritual faculties. Artistic feeling pierces through the surface of things, and by doing so reaches their secrets (Steiner, 1969, p. 50)

Without initiation into its symbolism it can become problematic and may then become misleading. All existence and experience is poetical and magical for the initiated

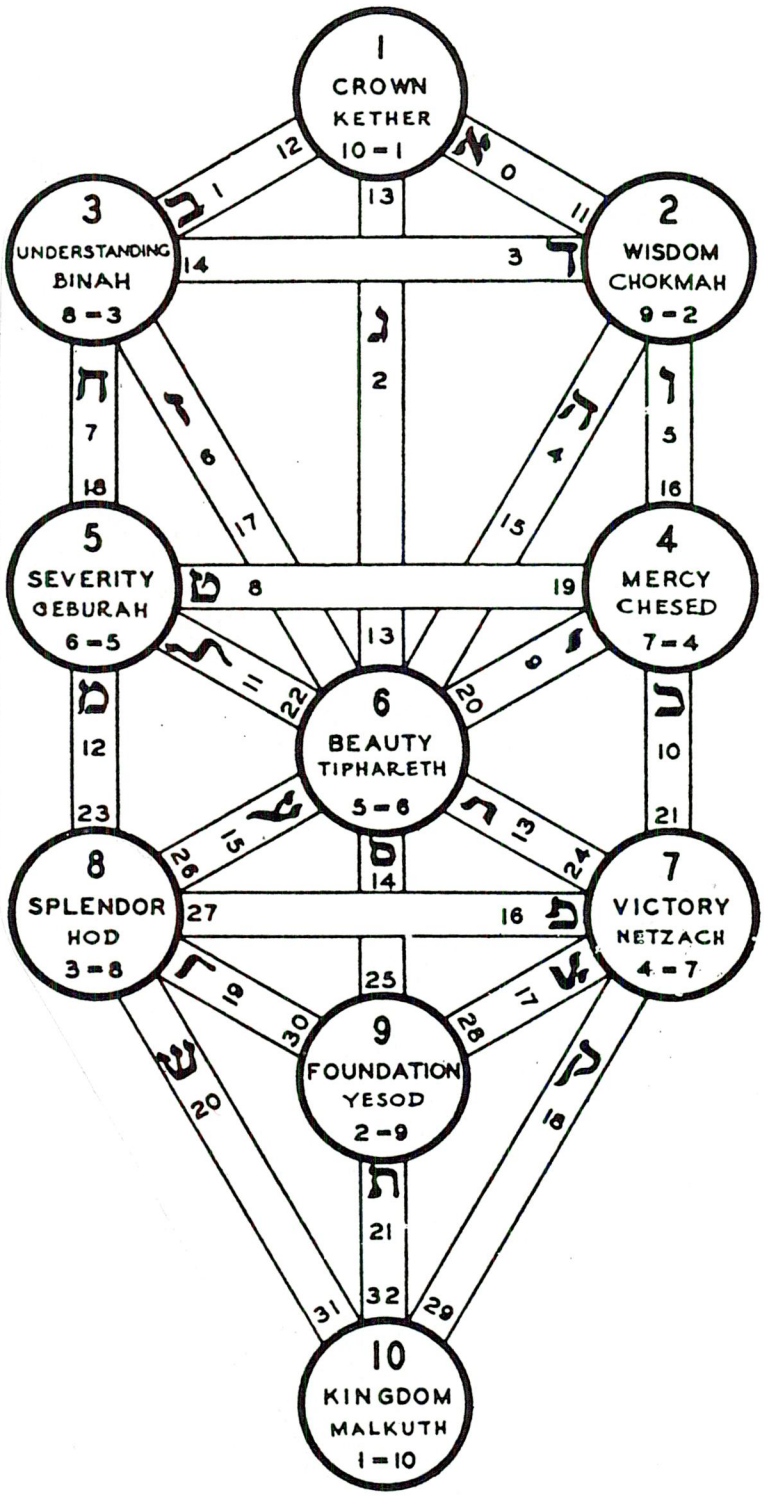
having been tuned into its rhythms.

> Through such meditation a complete transformation takes place in the pupil. He begins to form entirely new conceptions of reality. All things acquire different values for him...The existence of this eternal reality can be doubted only by those who have not themselves experienced it. Thus meditation is the only way which also leads man to knowlege and vision of the eternal, the indestructible core of his being. (Steiner, 1969, pp. 41-2)

The example that I turn to as best representing this form of discourse is to be found in the 'Book of Tokens'. This is a book of poetical discourse resulting from the meditations of Paul Foster Case, a recognised world authority on the Tarot and the Qabalah. These poems are described as "unusual and beautiful Qabalistic mediations" (Case, 1978) which I am in perfect agreement with .

In order to appreciate such a poem (meditation) I would again offer both the occult perspective of Rudolf Steiner from his book 'Knowledge of the Higher Worlds How is it Achieved' and also that of Dion Fortune in the teaching of 'The Mystical Quabalah', which is essentially an initiation into the symbolism of the Qabalah symbol 'The Tree of Knowledge'[6]. And as regards symbolism: "Higher knowlege in its direct form can be imparted to the initiate only in sign language already described " (Steiner, 1969, p. 81)

Of the 22 meditations (poems) within the Book of Tokens I have chosen one, 'The meditation on Nun' (meaning fish, the imaginative intelligence). Death is the 13th



PL. 3: The Tree of Knowledge

card of the major Arcana (major Arcana cards represent our journey through life within the Tarot discipline). This card has been associated with a legacy of prejudice and it is interesting to receive a poetical reading or evaluation of its attributes from the perspective of a Qabalistic meditation. (Plate, 4) Within this book the two traditions of the Tarot and Qabalah are synthesized. It is best to avoid any speculation as to what their origins are, as this would be lengthy. What is important is that such literature exists, and is available as a body of active mythology from an esoteric tradition recognised as occult.[7]

From a purely objective viewpoint the theme running through occult is that of Concealment and Initiation. The theme of concealment (the occult definition), its symbolism in 'The Tree of Knowlege' in the Qabalah, and the meditational poetic language used in the Book of Tokens in conjunction with the Tarot discipline is, essentially, misinterpreted as the non-dualistic position. Occult is to be treated as a science as opposed to a mythology or, more correctly one might describe it as the science of mythology. That is to say that when initiated, to one's full potential, all mythology unfolds beyond mere analogy or allusion. This is the 'Unveiling of Knowledge' theme, that is inscribed as the definitive pattern or motif within all mythology.

What will be apparent in the selected poem, the 'Meditation on Nun' is its emphasis on the task of pulling

THE MEDITATION ON NUN

* * * *

1 I AM the Fish
Which swimmeth in the Sea of the Great Waters,
Bearing all things in my belly,
Even as it is written:
"He had his dwelling in the Great Sea,
And was a fish therein."

2 This is the Great Fish wherein the prophet abode
Three days and three nights.

And because of Jonah's suffering
Is the Great Fish an emblem of all pains and sorrows,
For as the prophet's anguish
Brought him to follow my way,
So are all pains and sorrows the portals
Through which man passeth
To the heart of the Great Mother.

Verily, the Mother is the Sea
Wherein swimmeth the Fish,
And the Fish and the Sea are one.

3 That One is the All,
And entereth into all.
Everything that is,
Even those things which men account unclean,
Is an aspect of this All,
Which is myself.
And as the Fish is hidden in the waters of the Sea,
So is the secret of the One
Shut up within the semblance of the Many.
Therefore is the Fish a sign of the Secret Wisdom,
For that Wisdom is naught but the discovery of the One.

4 To thee, O Israel,
Is the opening and the shutting of the Gates.
To thee,
After many questionings
Of "What?"
And "Which?"
Shall appear as in a flash of lightning
The unfolding of the secret.

That dazzling whiteness,
Too brilliant to be borne by mortal eyes,
Lighteth the path of every blessed one
Who attaineth to immortality.

5 Yea, immortality is known to the wise
Who understand the secret of my perpetual being —
The secret whereof the Fish concealeth and revealeth the mystery.
For the Fish is the Perpetual One,
The Father of Salvation.
Therefore is it written,
"Joshua was the son of Nun."
What, then, is this that continueth without ceasing?
Verily, it is I, myself,
And that which changeth not
Is the Motion which carrieth all things from place to place.

Change perpetual is at the root of all things,
And change hath two faces,
A face of life, and a face of death.

For know ye, O Israel,
That what men call life and death
Are as beads of white and black strung upon a thread;
And this thread of perpetual change
Is mine own changeless Life,
Which bindeth together the unending series
Of little lives and deaths.

PL. 4: Meditation on 'Nun' (Case, 1978, pp. 129-131)
(Refer to Appendix)

the two dualistic modes of discourse of good and evil into some self-evident central ground of conciousness. This is not just limited to this poem/meditation but is also a theme underlying the remaining twenty-one meditations and it is this current of thought, that undermines the more dualistic modes of discourse. It at first, seems barren of any moralistic stance and therefore, ironically, is open to prejudice from a dualistic politic viewpoint.

It is at this point that I present the the Occult slant from Steiner's perspective and I trust that the poem, meditation reflection may be self-explanatory, with reference to the language of mythology and symbolism, which I believe makes for its purest expression within occult, esotericist philosophy.

Rudolf Steiner presents us with an introduction to the problematic area of interpretation and to the theme of initiation:

> All rules and teachings of spiritual science were originally given in a language of symbolic signs. And those who wish to know the full significance and extent of these teachings must first learn to understand the symbolic language. This understanding depends on the individual concerned, having already taken the first steps in occult science. (Steiner, 1969, pp. 32-3)

It is worth bearing in mind that Steiner is actually talking about occult,and makes no small demands on its definition, and that, by implication, its very nature is beyond logical discourse. He concedes that it is a notoriously difficult subject to talk about, and a lot of misleading information may come as a result of a half-

hearted enquiry into it. Basically, literature viewed as occult is often void of politics so there is less chance of its content being misunderstood. It is through this unfixed media that an impact upon the individual, in regard to content, will either make an impression or not, and politics have no place in this type of discourse.

This I recognize as a purely poetical treatment of a particular medium within the conceptualization of the paradox. This is, the masochistic aspect of mysticism described in the 'Abscence of Myth', an enjoyment of the idea of being steeped in contradiction, a prerequisite for the Initiate, and this is within the occult notion of Initiation: "The mystic is fundamentally a man for whom tortures become delights" (Bataille, 1994, p. 89). Steiner also describes fragmentation as being the result of speedier approaches of enquiring into the nature of Occult. He feels that this trend can often be detrimental to the participant as they are ill-prepared to receive or witness this knowledge.

Occult is basically literature/text that deals specifically with what could be described as a form of 'non-speculative' speculation. Essentially, it is the science of what would be regarded by empirical, logical discourses as scientific speculation. More appropriately, in reference to my own enquiry, I regard it as a direct cohesive, confrontation of any attempt, that I am aware of, in the conceptualisation of the paradoxical. Paradox

is taken to mean, in the case of occult, an underlying truth and yet a reality that is not perceiveable without initiation of some form or other. Occult means to conceal, its literature conceals a truth which only the initiate may decipher.

> They are not merely words: they are living powers. And while you follow the words of one versed in occult science, while you read a book that originates from genuine inner experience, powers are at work in your soul which make you clairvoyant just as the forces of nature have created out of living substance your eyes and ears. (Steiner, 1969, p. 56)

Chapter 4:

THE HIDDEN PARADOX: MODERN MYTHOLOGY.

> Joseph Campbell believed that everything begins with a story...He was in Japan for a conference on religion and he overheard another American delegate, a social philosopher from New York say to a Shinto priest: 'We have been now to a good many of your ceremonies and seen quite a few of your shrines, but I don't get your ideology, I don't get your theology?'. The priest paused as though in deep thought, and then slowly shook his head (saying): 'I think we don't have Ideology, we don't have Theology, WE DANCE'...Joseph Campbell...didn't have an ideology or a theology. Mythology was to him the song of the universe, music so deeply embedded in our collective unconscious, that we dance to it, even when we can't name the tune. (Moyers, 1988, program 2)

In contemporary culture there is not so much an 'Absence of Myth', but rather the contemporary discourses, - which are, in a sense, testimony to a consensus of perceived experiences within this time - simply do not acknowlege its existence, because of the scientific empirical nature of its discourse. The language gap must first be filled in if we are to cross the barrier between the Paradox and the God concept. Mythology is this language, and we can be sure that in contemporary culture, within the language surrounding notions of the Paradox, the ground work of contemporary mythology might well be found.

It might be fair to say that within this context, any paradoxical thinking of this time would make reference to the concept of God, ironically without the concept of God. Mythology is now the discourse of the 'no God' (Atheist) idea found within the expression of Paradox.

I would like to posit the proposition that if such a thing as 'Modern Mythology' is to be recognized - essentially the existence of myth in a contemporary context - then I would suggest that in order to decipher any notion of contemporary myth one must approach this task from the perspective of philosophies cult and occult, mentioned previously. It was argued earlier that contemporary culture does not facilitate the terms of myth and that one must look towards those philosophies that do embrace this language of myth. I would suggest that one may view contemporary iconography from the perspective of Myth and therein find its contemporary equivalent. For my purpose here, I regard contemporary iconography, as more readily realised in science-fiction film.

This area is more relevant to the forms of media that seem to express some connection with those parallels expressed in mythology, as defined by Joseph Campbell. Film is the realm of fantasy and where there is fantasy there is myth and where there is myth there is the 'hidden persuader'. Baxter suggests that science fiction literature supports logic and order whereas science fiction film supports illogic and chaos, and in effect is anti-science:

> Its roots lie not in the visionary literature of the Nineteeth Century, to which science fiction owes most of its origins, but in older forms and attitudes, the medieval fantasy world, the era of the masque, the morality play and the Grand Guignol...No medieval morality play could dramatize more meaningfully nor in such readily

> acceptable images the desirability of remaining firmly in the grip of our simpler emotions, sustained only by faith in a benign creator...bypassing intellect to make a direct appeal to the senses.(Baxter, 1979, pp. 10-12)

This 'hidden pursuader' exists in the realm of gnosis (meditation) as outlined by Steiner earlier. What I am proposing is that if Modern Mythology is to exist, then it can only be identified within the esoteric formulation. The language of myth is the persuasive qualities within analogy, parable, allegory and that which informs Iconography. These are the devices that have been utilized by religious philosophies from the beginning of time. I regard these attempts to raise consciousness, through this medium of hidden persuasion, as the narrative of paradox. Essentially, Modern Mythology can only sensibly, be recognized when viewed from the perspectives of cult and occult, where their equivalent philosophies may be recognized in the fabric of the more contemporary discourse and the medium upon which they perform and communicate.

> ...myth and philosphy (categories whose exact referents are very much at issue) are two different but broadly overlapping modes of discourse that have been, and still remain, related to one another in a variety of ways. On the one hand they reject the notion - still very potent in contemporary academic culture - that philosophy is intrinsically superior to myth. (Reynolds & Tracy, 1990, p. 3).

Joseph Campbell forms the voice of reason within such a comparison and posits the view that mythological motifs such as the hero/heroine adventure and the assimilation of

knowledge achieved throughout the trials of their journey, appear in the various scenarios within science fiction films such as 'Star Wars'. To Campbell these various 'Trials' are essentially about:

> ... losing primarily thinking about yourself and your own self protection... giving yourself to an Other, that is a trial in itself is it not? There is a big transformation of consciousness that is concerned. And what all the myths have to deal with is, transformation of consciousness, that you are thinking in this way and have now to think in that way.

Moyers: " But how is the consciousness transformed?"

Campbell: "By the trials... tests, or certain illuminating revelations. Trials and revelations are what it is all about". (Moyers, 1988, program 2)

I am sympathetic with Campbell's view that mythology is an active process and often the result of a meditative attempt to communicate a fundamental motif within consciousness. He recognizes the pattern within unconnected ideologies, such as Buddism and Early Christianity, that managed to arrive at similar conclusions within the themes of consciousness. Campbell is reluctant to treat this connection as an easy formula passed down merely from generation to generation, but rather prefers to view them as the result of a common meditation undertaken by various distinct cultures. He nevertheless is pointedly unwilling to decide what a modern mythology might entail, but his own reflections virtually imply this order.

I would like to take Joseph Campbell's implication a

little bit further and offer an actual example of modern mythology, as defined by the terms previous to Campbell's, in that of the occult discourse which I believed to be quite compatible with Campbells own outlook. I wish to look at an example of Science fiction film, based on a true story by Whitley Strieber, called 'Communion'.

I consider this film to be in keeping with the principle themes within occult philosophy, namely that of Concealment and Revelation. I have chosen 'Communion' not just because it embraces this singular theme but conversely because of its additional treatment of Extra-terrestrial forms as enfolding the further theme of spiritual 'higher worldly Beings', outlined previously within the scope of the occult discourse.

What I am suggesting is that if one can find an example of film - distributed within, and the product of contemporary culture - that embraces almost to a 'T' the fundamental principles of occult science and philosophy, then one need not see 'modern mythology' as a non existent or irrelevant medium within contemporary culture. It is from this perspective, viewed through occult, the science of myth, that one is given a glimpse as to the nature of contemporary mythology, a kind of initiation if you like. As to what these contemporary myths and riddles might mean, this paradoxically remains the sole revelation of the individual for whom their own peculiar meditations, within their lifetime, may only reveal the particulars.

'Communion' I feel is a recognition of this mythological basis within contemporary culture. 'Contemporary' in that it embraces the forms, images, the iconography that is the product of this time and particular to this century. It is these forms and peculiar imagery that I regard as Extra-terrestrial Aesthetics, and it is on these terms that one may speculate that the language/iconography associated with Extra-terrestrial spaceships and flying saucers will be as irrelevant a few hundred years from now as the Biblical description of the 'shining cloud' and 'chariots of fire' of the ancients are today.

The Raelian Movement crosses this great aesthetic divide with their particular rewrite within this mythological basis, with what might be regarded as an intelligible contemporary interpretation of the mythical heritage of biblical texts. It offers an example of modern mythology taken into the realm of contemporary gnostic belief, which I designated as cult. Occult, I would argue, has its counterpart in contemporary culture with its own all pervasive themes and this may be witnessed in a science fiction film such as 'Communion'.

> 'DANCE, DANCE, WHEREVER YOU MAY BE, I AM THE LORD OF THE DANCE SAID HE...' (Sung in pantomime scene in 'Communion')

For my part modern mythology can only reasonably be recognized, as an active process within this film genre. What I have attempted to do here is to present an agenda

whereby, in this light, modern mythology may be sensibly perceived and offer a platform from which to view contemporary iconography. Within the restraints of this enquiry it will only be possible to outline some of the key elements of the occult discourse, but essentially these aspects are salient and to avoid needless repetition I have decided to focus on the climactical scene as this contains all the relevant parallels in regard to the occult discourse. But nevertheless a rudimentry summary of the story line will not go amiss.

Communion is essentially a sci-fi film of the nature described by Baxter earlier. Whitley (played by Christopher Walkens) is a struggling writer who finds himself in a situation where he is gradually confronted with the unfolding reality of extra-terrestrial Beings. He attempts to establish what exactly this relationship is, their interest in him and eventually his understanding of them. The film takes the form of a system of revelations, which in turn inform him, and us, as to what the exact nature of this relationship/communion is. This paralells the occult themes of Concealment, Initiation and Revelation as defined by Steiner. Whitley is to be viewed from this persective as an 'Initiate', for whom the truth of his relationship to these Beings is only fully realized in the "Chinese Box" scene.

This is the scene that I wish to focus on as it contains the fundamental realization within the occult

philosophy, which is that of embracing the Paradox. As a result, contradiction is perceived as having a logic of its own. This scene I feel conceptualizes the paradox in the purest contemporary understanding. It presents a modern mythology.

After a spell of retro-hypnosis Whitley finally slots the pieces of the jigsaw together. These hypnosis sessions serve as the revelationary aspect of the film and form the basis of Whitley's self analysis and spiritual detective work, upon which evidence the viewer is informed, as he is, of the intricacies of his experience. Eventually he is satisfied that he now understands this relationship and decides to confront these (spiritual) Beings, which can be equated with the 'Crossing of the Threshold' theme also described within occult teaching and an aspect of much spiritual writings. This is essentially where the Initiate accepts and confronts this 'Threshold' reality and moves beyond the mere concept of paradox to a treatment of it as a lived reality. A little dialogue from the Joseph Campbell interview, in reference to the Star Wars 'Bar Scene' - in which we witness a host of these extra-terrestrial Beings - may illuminate this Threshold concept.

Moyers: "What did you think about the scene in the bar?"

Campbell: That's my favourite, not only in this piece but in many many pieces I've ever seen. Well you are on the edge, you are about to embark into the outlined spaces...This is the jumping off place

PL. 5: Star Wars bar scene

> and this is where you meet the people who have been out there, they run the machines that go out there and you haven't been there. It reminds me a little bit in...Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Treasure Island', that atmosphere before you start off the adventure, you're in a sea port and there is old salts, seamen, who've been on the sea and that is their world and these are the space people. (Moyers, 1988, Program 2)

With Whitley's decision to confront these beings he decides to return to the holiday home up in the mountains, which incidently is where the known series of abductions take place. He describes his little excursion to his enquiring wife as: "I'm going out to buy some cigarettes", and his wife replies: "But you don't smoke?". This implies to the viewer something to the effect: 'well I'm off to do something I don't normally do, and that is meet extraterrestrials'. He is dressed well and the wife comments: "You look like you're dressed for your First Communion".

Whitley arrives at the holiday home where the security system is going hay-wire, which is an indication to the viewer that the Beings are nearby, and sure enough the glowing ship is radiating just a short distance from the drive-way. He walks into the Spaceship and is welcomed by one of the Blue Troll-like people - whom his son, also an abductee, describes as the 'Little Blue Doctors' - The 'Doctor' removes a camcorder from Whitley's hand and safely places it near the door along with his hat. The interior is old and is arranged like an amphitheatre.
Whitley:" Is this a dream? I must be awake".

PL. 6: The 'Little blue doctors'

They proceed to greet one another with a variety of conventional greetings from many cultures. They conclude this ritual with a dance - essentially a play on the song earlier - and the scene then makes a dynamic shift as it approaches the Chinese Box scenario. He is ushered towards a Caberet set-up, where he faces an exact replica of himself dressed as a magician with a deliberately stereo-typical Top hat and Wand in each hand. The magician's hair is slicked back and his eyes, devious, outlined with black eye-liner, making for a fairly overall sinister mood.

Whitley: "(looking at a book on the counter says) This is the cook book, (implying that this is the magic book)".

Magician: "Let's say a few things, first I'd like to say, Seasons Greetings... (hinting at the vacation, they were celebrating Christmas when he was abducted), then I'd like to say keep your hands on the table at all times (the voice is digitized from time to time, to inform you the viewer that this is the alien Being speaking so there is no mix-up). Right. Now. I want to go home, please let me go home (the magician is mimicks exactly what Whitely had said to them during one of his abductions. The magician openly mocks him in a cry-baby tone.) Are you old?

You've broken my mind. I'll kill you! Can we talk this over. I can't wake up!".

PL. 7: Cabaret set-up

Whitley: "(He then joins in at mimicking himself, as if to say I know what you are doing) I am the dreamer, you are the dream".

Magician: "Look the only thing that really matters here, is what I am about to show you (one of the 'tall thin ones with the big eyes' puts on a performance where its face horizontally bisects, leaving behind it a slimy sticky residue, which then reveals an even more stereo-typical, grotesque alien)." (The Masks of God).

Whitley: "(Not convinced) That's not it, I didn't come all this way for you to tell me that THAT'S what it is. Is there something behind? Because I don't believe that one. (Magician does a digitized laugh). It's just like a...Box. A Chinese Box (a fake suprised look on the magician's face), you open it, and there's another one inside, another one inside and another one inside. You're not going to let me see you, are you?"

PL. 8: Bisecting alien

Magician: "It is a Chinese Box... and you're not, going to be allowed to see. OK, so just get that clear".

Whitley: "You're not going to let us see you. That's a good idea".

(while Whittley says this, the magician rotates a make-believe Screwdriver to the side of his head, which ironically, is Whitley's head). (Mora, MCMXC)

PL. 9: Magician and Whitley

The implication here is that these Beings have been tampering with his mind : 'You've broken my mind', a shift in consciousness. The scene ends with the opening up of a fresh paradox, presented to us as a contemporary parable. In the following scene Whitley and his wife indulge in a short period of speculation within the confines of an Art Gallery environment to satisfy the desire to rationalise and identify with such beings. Whitley's wife previous to this, represented the more cynical aspect of those who have had no recollected experience of this phenomenon. Later, in the art gallery scene she has also gone through her own form of initiation, through the experiences of her husband.

This film is a parable where the themes of occult are apparent in the masochistic sense, as described by Bataille earlier. The occult themes of Concealment, Initiation and Revelation are also recognised by Campbell in the motif he describes as "Departure, Fulfillment and Return" in relation to the hero/heroine journey. In the Moyer, Campbell interview, Moyer asks Campbell: "Is the adventurer who takes (this) kind of trip, a hero in the mythological sense?

Campbell: "He is ready for it, this is a very interesting thing about these mythological themes. That the achievement of the hero is one that he is ready for and it is really a manifestation of his character. And it is amusing the way in which the landscape and the conditions of the environment match the readiness of the hero, the adventure that he is ready for is the one that he gets" (Moyers, 1988, program 2)

Whitley, from Campbell's perspective, is to be viewed as the hero in the 'hero/heroine adventure' where the environment moulds itself to the individual's personal mythology. This can be considered as a living mythology and an attempt to conceptualize and comprehend the living organism of the Great Paradox.

After Whitley's 'hero' journey he settles down to write about his experiences, only this time he is accompanied by his Muse, which appears as one of the large-eyed alien masks. It seems to protrude from the outlined edges of the paradox, a reality achieved during his initiation in the Chinese box scene. When referring to the mask, which hovers beside him at his word-processor,

he turns to the camera (to us, the audience) and says: "How do I write a book about you?". This is essentially a reference to 'The Masks of God', in Campbell's terms the whole point to mythology.

PL. 10: 'A story about you'

CONCLUSION.

The examples offered within this enquiry are the aesthetics that surround, and result from, a 'Conceptualization of the Great Paradox'. Extra-terrestrial aesthetics is one formulation, whereas occult/esotericism is the pure aesthetic of Paradox. The processes of cult, in this case, are the contemporary aesthetics surrounding the paradox.

This enquiry has been motivated by a need to acknowledge other forms of discourse and how these forms affect one's own perceptions. These forms are the Initiation material from which one might perceive the ubiquitous motif of myth and paradox. I feel that if one is compelled to talk in terms of myth and what impact this may have, upon consciousness, then you must look to the devices utilised by the 'myth makers', that is, those types of discourse that mobilise symbolic language as a means of communicating the nature of paradox. This is an attempt to tap into what this communication might be, the sensibilities of paradox and drawing on Dion Fortune's analogy earlier, if images and symbols are to the mind the tools of a more perfect perception, then myth is the 'hidden persuader'. Myth must communicate as a voice on its own and speaks of something that can only be communicated in symbolic form. Each myth is as a singular word in this peculiar sentence/consciousnes. Myths should

be viewed as isolated words in a sentence, and until these words are given meaning, there is no intelligible sentence. The words/myths in isolation are Paradox, the Great Paradox the sentence, hence, a conceptualization and fuller comprehension of its 'paradoxical nature'.

The formulas that, occult/esotericism posit, in the context of this enquiry, are a type of intelligence, a 'peculiar state of mind', upon which one may view a living mythology. "...since collective thinking is never completely abolished in any society, it has been acknowledged that there has been no break in continuity between the archaic and modern world" (Hutchinson, 1985, p. 77) The logic of myth is only defunct when the logic of its content is discontinued. The motivations of mythology have become concealed in contemporary discourse, as 'An Absence of Myth'. The intellect may conceal and disguise this reality by removing the word or vocabulary from its understanding, barring its fuller expression.

Contemporary discourse, in this light, may need to re-initiate itself in accordance with 'this peculiar state of mind', if there is to be an understanding of myth as something other than a convenient collective form of reasoning, that goes no further than the concept of God/Paradox with a white beard.

The tackiness often associated with the genre of science-fiction film, which I have suggested is an aspect of contemporary mythology, could be viewed in terms of a

contemporary 'concealment' theme. It is only when one attempts to view beyond the kitsch that the revelationary logic of the 'Great Paradox' is unveiled. The trial is a journey through the corny and the kitsch, the acquisition of knowledge is perhaps, an ability to view, without prejudice, its more noble content. The meanings of mythology have always had to be unmasked, but one must first recognize the underlying logic of mythology. From a 20th Century perspective, is not mythology kitsch?

END NOTES:

1 In the book of Genesis of the original Bible (here we assume that he means the Old Testament) it does not say 'God', in fact it uses the words 'Elohim', which in ancient Hebrew is a plural and means 'those who come from the sky'. Thus Genesis is a written account of how people from another planet created all life on earth. (Richard, Raelian information pack, p. 5)

2 As the Japanese do not have a view on sin, sex is enjoyed without much sense of guilt, and the use of Love Hotels by all sorts of people with all kinds of combinations between two sexes...the sexual liberation of the Japanese people. Extra-marital sexual activities are common in these love hotels, society is tolerant of such activities... (Richard, Issue 93, pp. 30-1)

3 They claim the usual party-line as with all religious orders to be a non-profit making organisation, having no paid members along with the usual contribution to Humanity's well-being. A Raelian member is, nevertheless, obliged to pay 10 percent of net earnings for the upkeep of the various literature surrounding the Movement.

4 These transmissions are only done at four specific dates in the year. They are always done at 3p.m :

Commemorating the start of the age of Revelation on August the 6th 1945; December the 13th; Rael's first meeting with the Elohim in 1973. October the 7th: Rael's second encounter with the Elohim in 1975. The 1st Sunday in April: Commemorating the creation of the first human being by the Elohim. (Richard, Raelian information pack, p.12)

5 Just after the first atomic bomb explosion of Hiroshima in 1945, the Elohim selected Marie Colette Vorilhon to be his mother. She was born in Ambert on the 22nd October 1922. On December the 25th 1945 they (the Elohim) took her inside a U.F.O. and inseminated her. They then erased it from her memory so as not to psychologically unbalance her, and on the 30th September 1946 Rael was born from this union (this being the Virgin Mary scenario)...On the 13th December 1973 he was contacted by a visitor from another planet who entrusted him with a message for humanity which clarifies our origin and our potential future. (Richard, Raelian information pack, p. 4)

6 The Tree of Knowlege symbol is the Qabalah and the book itself is the instructional use of the symbolism, which is the Occult understanding of the Qabalistic symbol, the Tree of Knowlege. This is to provide some concept of the format of this tradition for someone who may be unfamiliar with its presentation.

7 In reference to how accessible Occult is, it is stated:

> For every human being there is within himself a higher man besides the everyday man as we may call him, the higher man remains hidden until he is awakened. And he can be awakened only by each individual himself, but as long as his higher being is not awakened, the higher faculties which slumber in everyone and lead to Supersensible Knowledge will remain concealed. (Steiner, 1969, p.35)

APPENDIX:

COMMENT ON NUN

NUN, pronounced Noon.
Transcribed as "N".
The number 50
Meaning: Fish.
The Imaginative Intelligence.

The Imaginative Intelligence attributed to the letter Nun is a specialization of the image-making faculty inherent in the universal consciousness. As manifested in human mentation, it is the force by means of which man transforms his environment, and hence it is essentially destructive in its effects upon existing condidtions, for it destroys the old to build the new...Death is the ruler of form, and the world of formation, as THE EMPORER is the ruler of the creative world. That is to say, all forms must change and what changes them is imagination.

The Book of Exodus says that Joshua was the son of Nun. His father's name signifies "Perpetuity". Joshua means "the nature of Reality is to liberate". The name Jesus is a varient of Joshua.
Concerning the doctrine in the succeeding portion of this paragraph, the following comment was given at the time the outline of the text was first received:

The attribution of Motion to Nun becomes more intelligible when it is remembered that the older philosophers used the term Motion to designate what is now more commonly called Change. Thus Aristotle enumerates four kinds of Motion: first, change of position; second, generation and dissolution; third, alteration; fourth, increase and decrease. (Case, 1978, pp. 132-4)

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