

XVI



A radical collection of writers confronting
what it means to practice magick
in the shadow of the Tower



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This is a book of modern magick.

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THE SYMBOL OF OUR CIVILISATION is the city, and the symbol of the city is the tower. Seven steps to divinity which began in Sumeria. But the tower is seen as malefic, under the influence of Mars. A setting above the ignorant masses, the few celebrating penthouse consummations with paid for priestesses, sheer sided watchtowers rising above the prison. Perhaps it has always been so, but this is the age in which the Tower has reached its apotheosis.

From the Tour d'Eiffel to the WTC, from Canary Wharf to perhaps the ultimate folly, the Burj Khalifa in Dubai rising above a city built almost at the behest of Ozymandius, this is the age of the Tower, and it's fall.

The Tower in our global culture is a symbol of domination rather than spiritual longing for closeness to the Divine. The call to prayer and union has been lost in translation and exegesis as surely as the Koran, the Bible and the Torah have been. Language decays into the repetition of catchphrases for brands whose deep structure is devoid of meaning.

We are, as Banksy has sprayed, *One Nation Under CCTV*, drones imprisoned in the perfected form of Bentham's panopticon. Our emails are read, our searches recorded, our phonecalls intercepted, our urine blood and saliva swabbed and sequenced by the latest incarnation of the witchhunters. The Devil, we are told, is long-bearded and swarthy, but his accomplices may look just like us. The message we are fed is trust no-one.

It is the corporation and the state that does what it will. Dystopia is here, not simply as Orwell's human face being stamped upon forever, but in a triumph of newspeak where freedom means consumption, democracy is a choice between Pepsi or Coca-Cola, and hard won liberties are willingly seceded under the abstract threat of terror. The Tower rises above a bland corporate landscape whilst we sit oblivious, hunchbacked over our laptops.

Yet this is a universe built on revolutionary change and man and his works are not exempt from tasting the lightning. The Tower speaks. The whole house of cards can come down. As magicians, we know that it spends its energy and falls. It is structurally doomed, built to be struck asunder. The martial law we can look forward to is not that of the militarised and jackbooted New World Order, it is the inescapable law that all towers and civilisations will fall.

As we confront ecological collapse, political control, wars of terror, wars on consciousness, and an extinction crisis which engulfs

our own species, we are in a state of emergency. A macrocosmic crisis looms darkly over our own microcosmic initiations. These attacks on our freedoms and our world can lead to freedom itself, the sudden enlightenment, the lightning path and the initiatory crisis that the Tower also represents. Some need the urgency of falling masonry to understand, to take action.

This book is a brave and prophetic attempt to show a magick that is engaged in the world, which understands Kether in Malkuth, that sees Eden around us as surely as Blake saw his angels. We are as awake as any all-seeing eye. Some may criticise and say that this is a political rather than a magical book. What then are we to make of the machinations of John Dee, Earl Bothwell, the manifesto of Jack Parsons, or the liberation theology of Thelema? How can magick exclude the world from the circle and then seek to create change in it? Magick and politics have always been intertwined serpents. Within this book we find rites and rituals alongside calls to arms, the individual struggle next to global visions, and this is how it should be. Magicians have long dreamt of new orders, hatched byzantine conspiracies and raised hell. We have been both inside and outside of the establishment, but our ideas are now clearly outside the palisades. The initiation of XVI is not going to make comforting reading for many. Yet, if we are to consider ourselves Gnostics, we must see through the concrete and solid seeming lies to the Sophia concealed. This collection seeks to raise intent and awareness of the unique times we find ourselves in, whilst being open to the resourcefulness and indomitable nature of the human spirit to find solutions and responses to it. We can do something. Magick has been a current of liberation and that is the only unifying creed in this anthology. This dream is concealed within and beneath the Tower.

Whether collapse is soft, hard, catastrophic or gradual, what is undeniable is that the charges have been primed at every level of the edifice of our civilisation. This has been done by the masons themselves, the first time they placed a brick on a brick. It is truly an inside job. The decision has been made to pull, the detonation plunger has been pressed. The Tower is swooning into freefall. As we are inside the Tower, we may not be aware of the significance of the dull thuds. It simply depends what floor you are standing on and if you see the snapshot of bodies falling past your windows. Here is the wake up call, it is coming down around us. Our currency has lost all its value. The crisis will not pass.

FOREWARNED

We dare to ask, what does it mean to practice magick in this age? The response has been sixteen and one essays from very different writers. Those that have taken up the challenge range from Chaos magicians to Druids to Typhonians and independents. Sexual and chemical adventurers are found alongside aeonic speculators and collapsetarians. This gathering of artificers is a sign of growing diversity, rather than a magick which is trapped in fundamentalist ghettos, divided and dwindling into cloddish entropy. It is the generosity of spirit in our writers which makes this possible, a choosing to act rather than simply talk. To engage with the past is safe, to dare to confront our times and to walk into the future is infinitely more dangerous.

In opposition to the Tower we raise the image of the maypole. A living symbol on a human scale. An image of resistance. Dancers weave around, attached to it by umbilical ribbons rather than isolated and alienated by insurmountable walls. We are diverse and yet intimately connected in community. May Day is a euphoric and revolutionary event. It is this artistic spirit which promises endless acts of creation coming out of destruction. Matter is re-energised and created anew. We do not have to sit mournfully in the ruins of consumerism. But May Day is not for the faint of heart, scores are settled when the existing order is turned on its head. Wrongs are righted as power shifts to the dancers and revellers rather than those who cannot, or will not move. The green spring rises from the red blood of a revolution in consciousness. The XVIth house is War, a warning to those who would wall themselves up in their towers that all the occult secrets we need to know are contained in the fluid plasma of lightning.

Kings cast down break their crowns on the cobblestones. We dip the hems of our robes in their blood and write fresh symbols which transcend the babel of mere words. You cannot stand outside this process, this revolution. May Day engulfs the spectators in misrule and mania and transforms them. By the mere possession of this book, you too are implicated.

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Vernal Equinox 2010