

Monsters of the Rue Macabre (forward) by Tom Bradley

Contributed by Tom Bradley

Foreword to
Monsters of the Rue Macabre
(Lazarus Media Books)
by Tom Bradley

...it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived...
--Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

The emblematic monster of the age, our default thing that goes bump in the night, was given an airing, with full iconic attributes and telesmatics, in 1855. Eliphas Levi, the pseudonymous goyish magus, wrote as follows in his *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*:

Yes, we confront here that phantom of all terrors, the dragon of all theogonies, the Ahriman of the Persians, the Typhon of the Egyptians, the Python of the Greeks, the old serpent of the Hebrews, the fantastic monster, the nightmare, the Croquemitaine, the gargoyle, the great beast of the Middle Ages, and--worse than all these--the Baphomet of the Templars, the bearded idol of the alchemist, the obscene deity of Mendes, the goat of the Sabbath...the exact figure of the terrible emperor of night, with all his attributes and all his characters... a chimera, a malformed sphinx, a synthesis of deformities.

Let me ask you something. Does this extensive roll call of bugaboos and boogymen seem to be missing someone--and a really big someone at that? Take a look at the particulars, made definitively manifest in Levi's frontispiece engraving. We see a goat's head, its horns, floppy ears and beard forming a pentagram, planted on a single point (recently vulgarized by the Republicans). We see wings, a woman's breasts, a caduceus standing in for the hermaphroditical ithyphallus, and the delicately lascivious hands of an archbishop flipping the two-fingered benediction salute.

You know exactly who this is, even though his horrendous name escapes mention. In fact, from the standpoint of a certain widespread orthodoxy, his dread moniker should subsume the entire list. It should appear at the top of the paragraph, with all the other names merely appended as AKAs. And why does this unspecified monster merit such puffing up?

Well, consider the formidable nature of his opposite number, the monstrous hypertrophism of his arch-nemesis, Superman to his Lex Luthor, Batman to his irritating little jerk with smeared makeup. Our unnamed spook goes up against the greatest monster of all: Gaw-w-w-wd, with a capital Gee and a really impressive whizz. To serve as the all-but-equally-matched sparring partner of such a Supreme Being, you need to have The Absolute Eternal Principle of Evil sequined on your tights. Satan himself is a smashing novelty act. So, why would one of Europe's greatest occultists disdain to mention him?

An unprecedented kind of mind has suddenly appeared out of nowhere during the last couple millennia. In human history's long context, this mental mutant is more grotesque than Abigail and Brittany Hensel rolled into one. It is characterized by a megalomaniacal sense of itself. Enflamed and encrusted with growths like the insupportable noggin of the elephant man, this self cannot help but look upon the world to presuppose a somewhat larger Self: the One and Only CEO and Sole Manufacturer of Absolutely Everything.

When first confronted by this bizarre monomaniacal pathology, the poor Romans were so flustered as to react self-defensively, with large carnivores. In the present book, you will meet one of the Empire's top wranglers, who employed lions (and, even more effectively, mastiffs) to exterminate some of the earliest vectors of the Gaw-w-w-wd bacterium. A few pages later you'll say hello to the concentration camp matron who helped quarantine descendants of the folks responsible for incubating the original strain.

These days, with modernity's benumbed metaphysical instincts, Gaw-w-w-wd is sometimes seen merely as a vaporous joke. Dawkins and dead Hitchens are all over YouTube, setting forth the only two alternatives discussable in contemporary major industrialized cosmology. On the one hand, they fearlessly inform us, there is a spiritual vacuum more nearly perfect than that of deep space, as it contains no dark matter. (The smart money's on that one.) On the other hand, we have this burlesque of a Popish Heavenly Father-cum-Prot Lord, as kidnapped from his Jewish tribal tent.

The Aghori mendicant luxuriating among cremations on a Varanasi ghat; the Shivwit squaw waltzing in mescalinal bliss through the Utah tar sand; the Theosophist humming ragas on a Pasadena bus bench; the Osakan salary-man sardined on a commuter train: all of these honest heathens would jeer at Dawk and dead Hitch, and dismiss their dialectic as counterintuitive on the one hand, infantile on the other. And so would Eliphas Levi himself, being consciously versed in the Once Universal Prisca Theologia.

"Spiritual vacuum," did those neo-atheists say? In all times and places, right up until Descartes had his triple nocturnal

emission during that long weekend on the Donau, just about everyone knew the air is full of spirits, as Philo Judaeus said. And not only the air. The dirt and rocks, the water and fire, everything positively pullulates with centers of consciousness, a goodly proportion of whom would appear monstrous to the uninitiated eye. There seems to be a scarcely imaginable number of varieties and ranks and orders: undines, sylphs, gnomes, salamanders, you name it. Kobolds, even. The unseen universe resembles nothing so much as a gander down a microscope at a smear of ditch water, or maybe one of those promotional scuba diving videos which the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's Tourism Ministry shoots at the Gulf of Aqaba. Amoebas, sea slugs and winged gryphons are everywhere.

As far as Jehovah goes, our luxuriating Hindu, our Amerind peyotist, our gentle Theosophizer, our son of Shinto God Hirohito, our French occultist--not a single member of our lovely pagan quintet would scoff like a neo-atheist at the notion of that big bully's existence. (That's the key word to keep in mind.) They're happy to have YHWH out there, and gladly include him among Philo's unseen beings. He's just the most obnoxious, the biggest oaf with the worst B.O., the Dubya-Obama of the clan. Miguel Serrano, prophet-seer-revelator of Esoteric Hitlerism, calls him The Plagiarist Demiurge. According to the Valentinians, he is a monster spawned by Sophia. Boastful, blind and insane, he's the Unitary Executive, the jealous god ("I'm the decider"), and thou shalt have no others before Dubyadabaoth-laldaobama.

Speaking of other "gods," it's about time for a non-monster to appear in this Foreword to Monsters of the Rue Macabre--rather, not to appear. Listen now to Xenophanes of Colophon:

One god there is, in no way like mortal creatures in bodily form or in the thought of his mind. The whole of him thinks, the whole of him hears. He stays always motionless in the same place. It is not fitting that he should move about now this way, now that... Effortlessly he wields all things by the thought of his mind.

In Christendom and thereabouts, this immobile, bodiless Mind is routinely confused or morphed with Gaw-w-w-wd. But you can't have monstrosity without deformity, and there's no deformity without attributes. And what is Satan's rival but a bundle of attributes every bit as lumpy as Croquemitaine's?

When you come close as humanly possible to glimpsing Xenophanes' motionless "god"; when you've gotten the barest hint of the Theosophical Akasha, or Pure Spirit; when through your brain briefly flits the most delicately adumbrated semi-notion of what the Hindus call That--you can't help but be stunned by the outrageousness of the monotheist's blasphemy. You begin to understand the rationale behind certain exhibitions in the Roman arena.

Far from constituting the impossible combination of personal god and ultimate reality, the monotheistic deity is nothing more than the jerry-rigger of existence--a botched job by definition: both Frankenstein and Frankenstein's fuck-up. What unspeakable presumption to tart up the Creator Monster and try to fob him off as the Ultimate Reality! Plunging the unthinkable That elbow-deep in AIDS babies, Sub-Saharan famines, genocidal wars and all those other theodical migraines that sometimes cause thoughtful priests to suffer erectile dysfunction right in the middle of an altar boy--it boils down to a congenital deficiency of the imagination peculiar to the sons of Shem and the cults they spawned.

If something has hands that can get besmirched in the work of creation, it can be named. And if it can be named, or even imagined, it exists, every bit as materially as you and I. It will rot eventually, like the little arms and legs pickled and fricasseed by the Galician Were-Wolf who hides between these pages.

To those who know how to read the New Testament narratives correctly (i.e., between the lines, as a veiled esoteric text), it comes as no surprise when the nineteenth verse of the second chapter of the Beloved Disciple's gospel states--

Thou believest that there is one God; thou dost well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

The correct interpretation of this passage: we the clued-in are nowhere near as superstitious as the contemptible devils, including those demonic grotesqueries behind the pulpit, who "believe, and tremble," and lurk and leer and spasm in their silken chasubles.

Of course, Baphomet himself, AKA Aleister Crowley, says it even better than Saint John:

...the vulgarians conceive of nothing beyond the Creator.

So, open this book and let vulgar Gaw-w-w-wd in. He'll be the bitch of your personal Buchenwald, the bestiarius who goads the ox that butt-rapes you to death in the Coliseum, the Galician Were-wolf that pickles and fricassees your babies. Let him be the biggest monster trundling down our Rue Macabre. He's the three-hundred-pound drooler on the bus, seated right across the aisle from you, the one with the erect phallus and the guns and knives bristling from his greasy raincoat pockets.

Stay calm. Don't look at him. Pretend he's not there. You don't want him noticing you. Stare straight down at this book in your lap and wait to disembark calmly, but with all available dispatch, at the next stop. For god's sake, whatever you do, don't lay this lovely volume aside and fish out a grimoire from your backpack and start intoning barbarous syllables of

invocation. Don't call out the aliases of his rival. That Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie sort of thing only encourages Heavenly Faw-w-w-wther. It makes him think you take him seriously.

And, this freak mutant, this botched late-term abortion, is not, under any circumstances, to be taken seriously. You must never doubt that he wields a certain percentage of the omnipresent, omniscient omnipotence of the Supreme Being he wants you to think he is. And, compared to us, he comes a lot closer to the timelessness that his priests claim for him, and also extend to his Eternal Foe, in the name of public relations. But, what, in the end, do those perfectly mensurable superiorities signify?

Serrano's "plagiarist Demiurge" may have mucked us together like golems from the mud, and set us squirming and sinning elbow-to-elbow with all the bugaboos and boogymen that you will find in this book. But he did not insufflate our lungs; neither did he gastrulate our astral monads. We, the victims and beneficiaries of this strange material dispensation, are his brats and his bottom bitches, but not his feats of legerdemain. We owe him nothing but lower back pain, post-nasal drip, dandruff, and so forth.

On the far side of the Khyber Pass, learned Brahmans who have memorized the Vedas can, on a whim, with a single thought, annihilate the entire universe, including all of its most elaborately tricked-out monster-gods.

Meanwhile, our own cheap imitation Brahmans, Dawk and dead Hitch, are sounding like a couple of seven-year-old lads. They're tucked nervously in their bunk bed for the night. Dawk is averring loudly that Oberaufseherin Koch is not really hiding in the closet, waiting for the light to be turned off, her sharp tattoo-flaying knife at the ready. Our bedtime boys bravely announce to the darkness that Carpophorus the bestiarius by no means lurks at Frau Ilse's side. His favorite rutting elephant is not straining at the leash, sniffing dead Hitch's sneakers with its lubed-up proboscis.

Just keep talking, boys. Don't worry about a thing.