

Endless Rest Inscrutable Suspense

PHIL HINE

'All the Goddesses are one Goddess and her name is ERIS! She is Chaos. She is the substance from which artists and scientists build rhythms. She is the spirit in which Children and Clowns laugh in happy anarchy. She is Chaos, she is alive and her message is *you are free.*'

(Left half of my brain) Q: Who, or what is Eris?

A: Eris - Greek Goddess of Chaos and Discord, beloved of semi-mythic groups such as The Legion of Dynamic Discord (LDD) or Erisian Liberation Front (ELF) - or does all this merely exist in the prosaic mind of Robert Anton Wilson, author of 'Illuminatus!', 'Masks of the Illuminati', and 'Schrodinger's Cat' - all essential reading for any terrestrial life-form that considers itself more than semi-sentient.

Q: So what about Eris then?

A: OK, OK. This is what the New Larousse Encyclopedia of mythology had to say - Eris was a daughter of Night, Chronus's Old Lady, and Eris's job was to spread Chaos and Strife. She gave birth to a whole bunch of Gods - Sorrow, Forgetfulness, Hunger, Disease, Combat, Murder, Quarrels, Lies, Injustice and Oaths. The Iliad reports that Eris used to hang out with Ares, the War God, and that she was 'insatiable in her fury'.

Q: She does not sound like the sort of deity you could invite round for tea - why is she so important then?

A: Well, it's true the Ancient Greeks feared Eris - any kind of discord or upset was attributed to her, and generally the subject of Chaos is seen as negative. Say to some people you're into Chaos Magick - they look at you as though you ate babies or something.

Anyhow after the 'fall' of Greece and Rome as centres of where it's at, Eris disappeared for a few centuries and didn't put in another appearance until the late nineteen-fifties, when she appeared to two young Californians, who later became known as Omar Ravenhurst and Malaclypse the Younger. Eris appointed them 'Keepers of the Sacred Chao' and gave them the message to: 'Tell constricted mankind that there are no rules, unless they choose to invent rules.'

With which Omar and Mal appointed each other High Priest of his own madness, and declared themselves each to be a Society of Discordia, whatever that might turn out to be.

Greater Poop: Is Eris true?

Malaclypse: Everything is true.

GP: Even false things?

Mal: Even false things are true.

GP: How can that be?

Mal: I don't know man, I didn't do it.

Malaclypse the Younger spread the word of Eris in his introduction to the Discordian Mysteries - 'Principia Discordia, or, How I found Goddess and what I did to Her when I found Her'. Robert Anton Wilson was on the scene at the time and worked Eris, Chaos and Principia into his and Shea's monumental trilogy 'Illuminatus!' Suddenly Eris shot from historical footnote to mega-star, and the Discordian Movement, if there can be said to be such a thing, is growing on both sides of the Atlantic. Erisian symbols and concepts are being increasingly employed as more and more people get into the idea of a 'religion' based on confusion and madness.

Q: What are these Erisian symbols then?

A: These are things like The Law of Fives, The Holy 23, and the Myth of the Apple of discord. The Law of Fives simply says that all things happen in fives, are divisible by, or are multiples of five, or are somehow directly or indirectly appropriate to five.

Q: Is this true?

A: Why not? In the Erisian Archives is an old memo from Omar to Mal: 'I find the Law of Fives to be more and more manifest the harder I look.'

Q: What about the 'Holy 23' then?

A: Well of course $2+3=5$, which links it to the Law of Fives, but 23 is a number associated with Chaos, and all-out wierdness. In his book 'Cosmic Trigger', Robert Anton Wilson says that the novelist William Burroughs introduced him to 'the 23 enigma' - the number appeared in connection with odd coincidences and events. Hexagram 23 in the I Ching can be taken to mean 'Break Apart', 23 in telegrapher's code means 'break the line', San Paulo in Brazil, has the highest density of chemical pollution in the world - there are 23 factories. Wierd, eh?

Try looking out for 23's. A friend of mine once started a scrapbook of 23's while another person started a record of 17's implicated in odd events - the 23's won hands down. Kenneth Grant in 'Outside the Circles of Time' notes some 23's appearing in Aleister Crowley's life and weaves it into his exposition of the Aeon of Maat.

Q: How about the 'Apple of Discord'?

A: The Apple of Discord is the only Greek Myth that Eris figures in. The story goes that Zeus was throwing a party and did not want to invite Eris because of her reputation as a trouble maker. Infuriated by this snub, Eris fashioned a Golden Apple with 'kallisti' ('To the Prettiest One') inscribed upon it and tossed it into the hall where all the guests were.

Now three of the invited Goddesses, Athena, Hera, and Aphrodite, each immediately claimed it to belong to herself because of the inscription, and started fighting and throwing punches around. To settle the dispute, Zeus ordered all three to submit to the judgement of a mortal - said mortal being Paris, son of the King of Troy. Zeus sent all three to Paris via Hermes but each Goddess tried to outwit the others by going early and offering a bribe to Paris.

Athena offered Paris victory in battle, Hera, great wealth but Aphrodite 'merely loosened the clasps by which her tunic was fastened and unknotted her girdle' - also offering to send him the most beautiful of mortal women.

So Aphrodite got the Apple and Paris was given Helen (of the thousand ships etc.) who was at the time the wife of Menelaus - King of Sparta. Neither Athena nor Hera forgave Paris though, and the Trojan War quickly followed.

Q: This is all very well but how does it tie up with Chaos Magick?

A: Isn't it obvious? Whoever heard of a religion based on Chaos? And as we all know, Chaos is energy. Discordian 'philosophy' is centred around two pairs of dualistic conditions that have, until fairly recently, been mostly ignored by magicians - Order/Disorder and Serious/Humorous - surely these ideas are part of the crux of the whole Chaos paradigm. Personally, I have found that many people who are not at all attracted to Magick or Paganism in their more 'accepted' forms, can accept Eris and Discordianism - the current of Chaos, in a creative, positive sense, though of course she is mischievous, and does get a little bitchy at times.

Moreover, you can structure ritual operations around Eris and invoke her for Inspiration and Creative Chaos. We tried this out last year (Autumn Equinox 1985) and the results were quite interesting.

Q: Would you like to expand on that point?

A: Sure, I had recently obtained a copy of 'The Cardinal Rites of Chaos' which contains a ritual based around Erisian symbolism, and met up with a fellow magician who was (a). into Eris and (b). very skilled at compounding incense. I took this a good hint to begin working to Eris in a very direct way. We wrote a ritual incorporating some of the material from Cardinal Rites, made some Eris incense, made a backing tape and set a date for the working.

Eris must have been feeling particularly humorous that month, as I ended up doing the ritual twice (altered slightly of course). During the first run, at the beginning of the invocations, the magical weapon I was employing - a glass thunderbolt - came apart and I had to hold it together for the rest of the rite. While the rite was interesting ie. one Priestess flaked out on the floor saying 'Why's the room spinning?' and it did produce a 'communication' from Eris, it was the second ritual that was the most successful in that it was a much more rewarding experience and we were able to document and analyse what happened much more rigorously.

Q: How do you mean, 'more rewarding'?

A: Well, here's a quote from my magical record. It's the stage in the rite after we had completed the invocations and the Priestess, Soror E., was 'possessed' by Eris:

'After Eris came into E. I felt as though I had been sucked into a whirling vortex, her face seemed to distort and change several times, I couldn't hold onto the features, a crone with thin cheeks, pointed teeth and old eyes, a beautiful young girl and then something only vaguely human, I was flying through space as a particle but also joined to everything else - no longer aware of the room, background music or anything. I was very calm, then I was engulfed in the Embrace of Eris - pure ecstasy. This seemed to go on for hours.'

Q: Um, I see. How do you account for all this?

A: (Laughs) I don't, or rather, it'll have to wait for another article. Actually, you can posit the existence of a 23rd path on the Tree of Life linking Yesod to Daath and have Eris as the Shakti of Daath... What's that? Oh, you're not into the Qabalah. Me neither, it's just a conceptual device y'know... another model.

Q: Do you have any advice for anyone who wants to use Eris in their workings?

A: According to Malaclypse, we can all talk to Eris using our Pineal Glands. Failing that, try reading 'Illuminatus!' and 'Cosmic Trigger' and 'Principia Discordia', if you can get hold of a copy. 'Cardinal Rites' is also very good (there, that should be worth a free copy).

Q: How are we going to finish?

A: Suddenly. Without any warning at.....



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