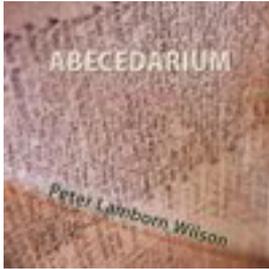


## Brainwashed - Peter Lamborn Wilson "Abecedarium"

Written by Justin Patrick

Sunday, 09 May 2010 16:32 - Last Updated Sunday, 09 May 2010 21:01

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As most elementary school kids know the letters of the alphabet are the building blocks used to construct tiny words, big words, made up words; with a dash of punctuation entire sentences can be built from letters making up short articles like this one or filling up volumes to create massive epic narratives or turgid philosophical treatises. Yet like the atoms that make up our universe the letters of the alphabet contain within them subatomic particles and secret histories. Peter Lamborn Wilson has done a remarkable service in teasing out the ghosts trapped within the Roman letters by tracing them back to more arcane iconographies, all the while giving a reminder that when writing originated it was considered a magical art, and one closely allied with statecraft. While those two functions have not disappeared they have been (deliberately) obscured as the symbols transformed over time.

### [Xexoxial Editions](#)

In this meditation on the mysteries of A through X (Wilson affirms that X is the actual and secret last letter of the alphabet), seed thoughts are planted as he rambles through a mnemonic chain of Cabalistic associations connoted by each letter. He cracks their individual codes and makes public what had previously been private and veiled. In doing so he continues the work Gerard de Nerval began when writing in *Aurelia* that “the magic alphabet, the mysterious hieroglyphics, reach us only in a defective corrupted form, altered and falsified either by time or by those beings who have a vested interest in our remaining ignorant.” Ancient imageries are unearthed by following the mutation of the alphabet from Hebrew to Hieroglyphic to Proto-Sinaitic and into its transition phase before it was stamped and sealed in the Roman mold.

Peter Lamborn Wilson’s mantle as Hakim Bey has not been taken up in this text, as he instead adopts the persona of Rabbi M.-A. Ouaknin. According to him, “the process of alphabetization consists of a Mosaic attempt to purify the pagan pictograms of imagery – to suppress the image...changing the position changes the meaning but also makes the image harder to grasp.” The book seeks to restore knowledge of these original images and thereby power to the individual, for inasmuch as the alphabet serves as a tool of repression, it can also be subverted and used as a tool of liberation.

He briefly recounts when discussing letter A that a foolish schoolmaster punishes a boy for his unwillingness to learn the alphabet beyond aleph, thus insinuating that all the remaining letters are contained within the first. Wilson sees in this letter humanities domestication of wild animals, particularly the bull or ox and the beginnings of agriculture, from which the State itself will be born. He asks the reader to see the built in animal contained by each letter. The Hebrew equivalent for C is Gimmel, which can be translated as camel and he uses it as a means to broach the topic of travel, trade and drift. He writes in the alchemical blocks of poetic prose that characterize this work, "the Camel not the Wheel. Ibn Khaldun says wool & hair & fur of wild animals possess more aura than domesticates:--bedouin dialectic. Jade, silk, tea, the emergence of Capitalism on the margin between settled & unsettled. Nomadism: safety valve for civilization's discontents. Tourism tries to serve the same function but fails because it erodes difference instead of reinforcing it."

Wilson writes of [Defixiones](#) under the heading of letter F, to elucidate the connection between writing and magic. Defixiones were a type of curse or love spell common throughout the Graeco-Roman world. Words were scratched with nails (Hebrew Vav means nail) into lead sheets and thrown into pools, tombs, or otherwise buried. Spelling words is a type of magic that casts a spell. Writing brings with it not only magic but "the miseries of the State, separation & alienation" that he writes about under the letter M. Pre-alphabetic memory glyphs "like wampum, usually belong to complex & wealthy societies that developed ways of preventing the emergence of State or money or any other such witchcraft or blasphemy against the great spirits." Whether etched in stone or brushed in ink the written word represents a gash between nomadic tribal cultures and the Establishment. Primal energies are trapped in the form of letters. Just as a magician seeks to bind spirits within the triangle of manifestation through words of power, so to do written laws seek to bind mankind by clamping down natural inclinations.

Even as "the letters have served to repress more than to express the powers they encapsulate behind their hermetic seals" a way of deliverance is offered. The seals can be broken and the true knowledge of their meaning can be used for the expression of freedom. Following the golden thread backwards the disconnection between the alphabets present form and its original form can be remedied. By reawakening the images that lie dormant inside the letters he gives "a possible praxis of liberation." The ox goad of imperial culture can be slung off in favor of immediatism with the abiding hope that the zones of temporary autonomy will grow wider in perpetuity. The only thing at stake is continued ignorance and enslavement. With inter-textual deftness Wilson hyperlinks formerly dissociated ideas to point a way out.

Addendum: The *Larsen and Friends* album [ABECEDEA](#) is the perfect soundtrack to accompany the reading of this book.

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### Logokons

by mIEKAL aND and Liaizon Wakest, a Xerox Sutra Edition also available from Xexoxial Endarchy offers a complimentary read in the form of visually poetic bitmap mandalas as it wanders through an alphabet populated by such strange beasts as the "bibliostrophe," "magniwisdom," and the "zingtut."