Moorish Mail-Order Mysticism

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“Mail-order mysticism” may sound like a joke to the serious, orthodox, traditional, or academic “expert” in religion – & to the professional gurus whose “Work” consists of personality-monopoly & psychological authoritarianism – but the Moorish Orthodox Church takes it seriously. There’s something magical about the mail – voices from the Unseen – documents as amulets – and something very American, democratic & self-reliant – mysterious urban folklore – old ad’s for AMORC in crumbling yellow magazines – HooDoo catalogues, dreambooks – ancient spirits-of-places intersecting with modern communications networks that are placeless, spooky, & abstract. And the mail itself now seems antique – a lost modernity, 19th century, sepia, violet ink – a fitting medium for the transmission of secrets.

Do-it-yourself Enlightenment? Why not? It may not be the best way or the only way but it is a way. A genuine vein of initiation runs thought the “plane” where one finds Dr Bronner’s soap labels, the lost Books of Moses, the apocryphal grimoires of Marie Laveau, Hollow Earth Theory, old Theosophical journals in your grandmother’s attic, “What Did These Great Men Have In Common?”, Noble Drew Ali’s Moorish health-products, the mail-order
courses of Druids and occult Orders, millennarian tracts, mysterious classified ad’s, Mexican lithography, & c., & c.

It all adds up to a “New World” religion, a translation of “Wild(er)ness” into the strange lost margins of commodification and “communication” – both a betrayal & an apotheosis (like all religion) – a playground for the Trickster – a mundus imaginalis of the postal system & the printing press & the poetics of Desire.

Literal belief in one or another of these mail-order revelations would destroy our ability to believe in all of them simultaneously, like a palimpsest of angelic alphabets, a field of magical “correspondence(s)”, a conceptual transformation-space of mythic energies and mythopoesis. The eros of postal mysticism lies in the whole pattern it makes, rather than in one part or another, one “course” or another. Sometimes those who sneer the most ironically at this textual spiritism are secretly drawn by its imaginal sensuality, even while their rational brains reject it all as high weirdness & superstition. However, one can believe (or “believe”) both/and, rather than either/or. One drifts in a world of reveries, and “rejoice, fellow creature! All is ours!” – Or, at least: – an opening.

Egyptomania – the imaginal “Islam” of old cigarette boxes & masonic bric-a-brac – the HooDoo figure of the “Old Moor”, author of almanacs, herb-doctor, Maroon – the northwest African element in american folklore – plus the Native American component of the great New World HooDoo synthesis – the Santeria orisha called El Spirito Indio – psychic tribalism, animism, totemism, and the Nature-religion natural to our Wilderness-haunted collective (un?)conscious – plus the psychedelic heritage of the 1950s & 60s, which combined with Moorish Science & the “Wandering bishops” tradition, to produce the Moorish Orthodox Church: – Sabbatai Sevi & Jacob Frank the “False Messiah” – secrets of Canaanite paganism – Jewish magick & amulets – Protestant chiliasm, the revolutionary Anabaptists, Ranters, Antinomians – plus, Apostolic high-liturgical gnostic autocephalous Church ritual – magical Taoism, “Aimless Wandering”, tatrik intoxicants, initiation through