

= Kenneth Grant =

Kenneth Grant ( 23 May 1924 ? 15 January 2011 ) was an English ceremonial magician and prominent advocate of the Thelemite religion . A poet , novelist , and writer , he founded his own Thelemite organisation , the Typhonian Ordo Templi Orientis ? later renamed the Typhonian Order ? with his wife Steffi Grant .

Born in Ilford , Essex , Grant developed an interest in occultism and Asian religion during his teenage years . After several months serving in India with the British Army amid the Second World War , he returned to Britain and became the personal secretary of the Aleister Crowley , the ceremonial magician who had founded Thelema in 1904 . Crowley instructed Grant in his esoteric practices , initiating him into his own occult order , the Ordo Templi Orientis ( O.T.O. ) . When Crowley died in 1947 , Grant was seen as his heir apparent in Britain , and was appointed as such by the American head of the O.T.O. , Karl Germer . Founding the London @-@ based New Isis Lodge in 1954 , Grant added to many of Crowley 's Thelemite teachings , bringing in extraterrestrial themes and influences from the work of H.P. Lovecraft . This was anathema to Germer , who expelled Grant from the O.T.O. in 1955 , although the latter continued to operate his Lodge regardless until 1962 .

In 1949 , Grant befriended the occult artist Austin Osman Spare , and in ensuing years helped to publicise Spare 's artwork through a series of publications . During the 1950s he also came to be increasingly interested in Hinduism , exploring the teachings of the Hindu guru Ramana Maharshi and publishing a range of articles on the topic . He was particularly interested in the Hindu tantra , incorporating ideas from it into the Thelemic practices of sex magic . On Germer 's death in 1969 , Grant proclaimed himself Outer Head of the O.T.O. ; this title was disputed by the American Grady McMurtry , who took control of the O.T.O. Grant 's Order became known as the Typhonian Ordo Templi Orientis , operating from his Golders Green home . In 1959 he began publishing on the subject of occultism , and proceeded to author the Typhonian Trilogies , as well as a number of novels , books of poetry , and publications devoted to propagating the work of Crowley and Spare .

Grant 's writings and teachings have proved a significant influence over other currents of occultism , including chaos magic , the Temple of Set and the Dragon Rouge . They also attracted academic interest within the study of Western esotericism , particularly from Henrik Bogdan and Dave Evans .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early life and Aleister Crowley : 1924 ? 1947 = = =

Grant was born on 23 May 1924 in Ilford , Essex , the son of a Welsh clergyman . By his early teenage years , Grant had read widely on the subject of Western esotericism and Asian religions , including the work of prominent occultist Helena Blavatsky . He had made use of a personal magical symbol ever since being inspired to do so in a visionary dream he experienced in 1939 ; he spelled its name variously as A 'ashik , Oshik , or Aossic . Aged 18 , in the midst of the Second World War , Grant volunteered to join the British Army , later commenting that he hoped to be posted to British India , where he could find a spiritual guru to study under . He was never posted abroad , and was ejected from the army aged 20 due to an unspecified medical condition .

Grant was fascinated by the work of the occultist Aleister Crowley , having read a number of his books . Eager to meet Crowley , Grant unsuccessfully wrote to Crowley 's publishers , asking them to give him his address ; however , the publisher had moved address themselves , meaning that they never received his letter . He also requested that Michael Houghton , proprietor of Central London 's esoteric bookstore Atlantis Bookshop , introduce him to Crowley . Houghton refused , privately remarking that Grant was " mentally unstable . " Grant later stated his opinion that Houghton had refused because he didn 't wish to " incur evil karma " from introducing the young man to Crowley , but later suggested that it was because Houghton desired him for his own organisation , The Order of Hidden Masters , and thereby didn 't want him to become Crowley 's

disciple . Persisting , Grant wrote letters to the new address of Crowley 's publishers , asking that they pass his letters on to Crowley himself . These resulted in the first meeting between the two , in autumn 1944 , at the Bell Inn in Buckinghamshire .

After several further meetings and an exchange of letters , Grant agreed to work for Crowley as his secretary and personal assistant . Now living in relative poverty , Crowley was unable to pay Grant for his services in money , instead paying him in magical instruction . In March 1945 , Grant moved into a lodge cottage in the grounds of Netherwood , a Sussex boarding house where Crowley was living . He continued living there with Crowley for several months , dealing with the old man 's correspondences and needs . In turn , he was allowed to read from Crowley 's extensive library on occult subjects , and performed ceremonial magic workings with him , becoming a high initiate of Crowley 's magical group , the Ordo Templi Orientis ( O.T.O. ) . Crowley saw Grant as a potential leader of O.T.O. in the UK , writing in his diary , " value of Grant . If I die or go to the USA , there must be a trained man to take care of the English O.T.O. " However , they also argued , with Grant trying to convince Crowley to relocate to London . On one occasion Crowley shouted at him : " You are the most consummate BORE that the world has yet known . And this at 20 ! "

Grant 's family disliked that he was working for no wage , and pressured him to resign , which he did in June 1945 , leaving Netherwood . Crowley wrote to Grant 's father , stating that he was " very sorry to part with Kenneth " and that he felt that Grant was " giving up his real future . " To David Curwen , an O.T.O. member who was another of his correspondents , Crowley related his opinion that " I may have treated him too severely . " Crowley put Curwen in contact with Grant , with Grant later claiming that he learned much from Curwen , particularly regarding the Kaula school of Tantra ; in his later writings he made reference to Curwen using his Order name of Frater Ani Abthilal . Although they continued to correspond with one another , Crowley and Grant never met again , for the former died in December 1947 . Grant attended Crowley 's funeral at a Brighton crematorium , while accompanied by his new wife , Steffi .

= = = The New Isis Lodge and Austin Osman Spare : 1947 ? 1969 = = =

Steffi Grant introduced herself to the occult artist Austin Osman Spare in 1949 , having learned about him while she was modelling for Herbert Budd , a tutor at St. Martin 's School of Art who had studied alongside Spare . Steffi purchased two of Spare 's artworks , which she gave to Kenneth as a present for his twenty @-@ fifth birthday . She subsequently introduced her husband to Spare . At the time , Spare had fallen into poverty , living in obscurity in a South London flat . Although making some money as an artist and art tutor , he was largely financially supported by his friend Frank Letchford , whom he affectionately referred to as his " son " . There was some animosity between Letchford and Grant , although it is apparent that Spare preferred the former , having known him for 12 years longer , and placing him first in his will . Grant desired a closer relationship , and in 1954 began signing his letters to Spare " thy son . " Letchford claimed that Spare often told the Grants " white lies ... to boost a flagging ego . " Grant 's first published work represented a brief " appreciation " of Spare 's work that was included in a catalogue for the artist 's exhibition held at Temple Bar in London in 1949 .

Grant had continued studying Crowley 's work , and a year after Crowley 's death was acknowledged as a Ninth Degree member of the O.T.O. by Karl Germer , Crowley 's successor as Head of the O.T.O. Grant then successfully applied to Germer for a charter to operate the first three O.T.O. degrees and run his own lodge , which was granted in March 1951 . As this would mean that his lodge would be the only chartered O.T.O. body in England at the time , Grant believed that it meant that he was now head of the O.T.O. in Britain . Germer put Grant in contact with Wilfred Talbot Smith , an English Thelemite based in California who had founded the Agape Lodge , knowing that Smith was the only man who had practical knowledge of the O.T.O. degree work . Smith was eager to help , and wrote at length on his experiences in founding a lodge , although he was made uneasy by Grant 's magical seal of " Aossic " for reasons that have never been ascertained , and their correspondence soon petered out .

Grant began restructuring the system of the O.T.O. by augmenting its grading structure with that of

Crowley 's other occult order , the A ? A ? . This attempt failed , as Grant 's attentions were increasingly drawn into his founding and running of the New Isis Lodge . The lodge became operational in April 1955 when Grant issued a manifesto announcing his discovery of an extraterrestrial " Sirius / Set current " upon which the lodge was to be based . In this manifesto , Grant claimed that a new energy was emanating down from Earth from another planet which he identified with Nuit , a goddess who appears in the first chapter of Crowley 's Thelemic holy text , The Book of the Law . Germer however deemed it " blasphemy " that Grant had identified a single planet with Nuit ; on 20 July 1955 , Germer issued a " Note of Expulsion " expelling Grant from the O.T.O.

Grant however ignored Germer 's letter of expulsion , continuing to operate the New Isis Lodge under the claim that he had powers from the " Inner Plane " . Upon learning of Grant 's expulsion , Smith feared that the O.T.O. would split up into warring factions much as the Theosophical Society had done following the death of Blavatsky . Grant 's Lodge continued to operate until 1962 . According to Grant , the group consisted of about thirty members , and met every seventh Friday at the lodge 's premises , which for a while were in the basement of Curwen 's furrier 's store at Melcombe Street , near to Baker Street in central London . During the period in which he worked with the lodge he claimed to have received two important texts from preternatural sources , the Wisdom of S 'Iba and OKBISh or The Book of the Spider .

From 1953 to 1961 Grant immersed himself in the study of Hinduism , becoming a follower of the Hindu guru Ramana Maharshi . He was also interested in the work of another Hindu teacher , Lord Kusuma Haranath , and was credited with encouraging and helping to create the three @-@ volume Lord Haranath : A Biography by Akella Ramakrishna Sastri . He also authored articles on Advaita Vedanta and other Hindu topics for Indian journals like the Bombay @-@ based The Call Divine , as well as for Richard Cavendish 's Man , Myth & Magic . Many of these articles would be collected into a single anthology and published as At the Feet of the Guru in 2005 . Grant believed that the O.T.O. 's sex magic teachings needed to be refashioned along tantric principles from Indian religion , in doing so relying heavily on Curwen 's ideas about tantra .

After Spare 's death , Grant began to focus more on his own writing career . From 1959 to 1963 , Grant privately published the Carfax Monographs , a series of short articles on magic published in ten installments , each at a limited print run of 100 . Nine of these volumes included original artworks produced by Steffi , reflecting the increasing collaboration between husband and wife which would be reflected in many of Grant 's subsequent publications . The Carfax Monographs would eventually be assembled together and re @-@ released as Hidden Lore in 1989 . In 1966 he also privately published a small book of his poems , Black to Black and Other Poems . During the 1950s and 1960s Spare also authored a number of novels , although these would only be published by Starfire Publishing between 1997 and 2012 .

= = = Typhonian O.T.O. and growing fame : 1970 ? 2011 = = =

In 1969 , Grant co @-@ edited The Confessions of Aleister Crowley for publication with Crowley 's literary executor John Symonds . Over the coming years he edited ? often with Symonds ? a range of Crowley writings for republication , resulting in the release of The Magical Record of the Beast 666 ( 1972 ) , Diary of a Drug Fiend ( 1972 ) , Moonchild ( 1972 ) , Magick ( 1973 ) , Magical and Philosophical Commentaries on The Book of the Law ( 1974 ) and The Complete Astrological Writings ( 1974 ) . The release of these publications has been described as being " instrumental in the revival of interest in Crowley " .

At this point , Grant began describing himself as the O.H.O. ( Outer Head of the Order ) of the O.T.O. , claiming that he deserved this title not by direct succession from Crowley but because he displayed the inspiration and innovation that Germer lacked . A document purportedly by Crowley naming Grant as his successor was subsequently exposed as a hoax created by Robert Taylor , a Typhonian O.T.O. member . In the early 1970s he established his own Thelemic organisation , the Typhonian O.T.O. , which produced its first official announcement in 1973 . Although adopting the O.T.O. degree system used by Crowley , Grant removed the rituals of initiation designed to allow a

member to enter a higher degree ; instead he personally promoted them through the degrees according to what he believed were their own personal spiritual development .

In 1972 , Frederick Muller Limited published the first book in Grant 's " Typhonian Trilogies " series , The Magical Revival , in which he discussed various events within the history of Western esotericism while also encouraging future interest in the subject . He followed this with a sequel published in 1973 , Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God , in which he examined Crowley 's sex magical practices and the Tantra . This was followed in 1975 by Cults of the Shadow , which brought the first Typhonian Trilogy to an end with a discussion of the Left Hand Path in magic , making reference to both Crowley and Spare 's work , as well as to Voodoo and Tantra . That same year , Grant also published Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare , a collection of his late friend 's images based on 20 years of research . The volume did not sell well , with much of the stock being remaindered , although became a rare collector 's item in later years . Grant had begun work on the book many years before , and had agreed for 500 copies to be published by Trigram Press Ltd in 1967 , although at the last minute the project was cancelled . He had also authored new introductions for re @-@ releases of two of Spare 's works , a 1973 publication of The Anathema of Zos and a 1975 release of The Book of Pleasure .

In 1977 , Grant began the second Typhonian Trilogy with Nightside of Eden , in which he discussed some of his own personal magical ideas , outlining magical formulae with which to explore a dark , dense realm that he variously called ' Universe B ' and ' the Tunnels of Set ' , conceived as a ' dark side ' of the Qabalistic Tree of Life . Grant made connections between this realm and the extramundane deities of H.P. Lovecraft 's horror fiction . The book proved controversial among occultists and Thelemites , and starkly divided opinion . The sequel appeared in 1980 as Outside the Circles of Time , and introduced Grant 's thoughts on the relevance of Ufology and insectoid symbolism for occultism . This would prove to be the final Grant volume published by Muller , who would merge with Blond and Briggs in 1984 , while the publishing rights to his works reverted to him the following year . His next book would not appear for another eleven years after Outside the Circles of Time .

In 1989 , Grant began his relationship with Skoob Books Limited , a publisher linked to the Skoob Books bookstore in Bloomsbury , central London which had begun to develop a line of esoteric titles under the leadership of Caroline Wise and Chris Johnson . In 1991 , Skoob Books published Grant 's Remembering Aleister Crowley , a volume containing his memoirs of Crowley alongside reproductions of diary entries , photographs , and letters . From 1989 to 1994 , Skoob reissued a number of Grant 's earlier books , and in 1992 published the sixth volume in the Typhonian Trilogies , Hecate 's Fountain , in which Grant provided many anecdotes about working in the New Isis Lodge and focused on describing accidents and fatalities that he believed were caused by magic . The seventh volume of the Typhonian Trilogies , Outer Gateways , followed in 1994 , discussing Grant 's ideas of older Typhonian traditions from across the world , with reference to the work of Crowley , Spare , and Lovecraft . It ends with the text of The Wisdom of S 'Iba , a work that Grant claimed he had received clairvoyantly from a supernatural source .

After Skoob Books closed its esoteric publishing division , in 1996 Grant transferred the publishing rights of his books to two companies , Starfire Publishing ? which decided to bring out his trilogies and novellas ? and Fulgur Limited , which published his work on Spare . In 1997 Starfire published Grant 's first novel , Against the Light : A Nightside Narrative , which involved a character also named " Kenneth Grant " . He asserted that the work was " quasi @-@ autobiographical " , but never specified which parts were based on his life and which were fictional . In 1998 , Starfire published a book co @-@ written by Grant and his wife Steffi , titled Zos Speaks ! Encounters with Austin Osman Spare , in which they included 7 years ' worth of diary entries , letters , and photographs pertaining to their relationship with the artist . The following year , the next volume in the Typhonian Trilogies , Beyond the Mauve Zone was published , explaining Grant 's ideas on a realm known as the Mauve Zone that he claimed to have explored . A book containing two novellas , Snakewand and the Darker Strain , was published in 2000 , while the final volume of the Typhonian Trilogies , The Ninth Arch , was published in 2003 . It offered further Qabalistic interpretations of the work of Crowley , Spare , and Lovecraft , and the text of another work that Grant claimed had been

given to him from a supernatural source , Book of the Spider . That same year , Grant also published two further volumes of fictional stories , Gamaliel and Dance , Doll , Dance ! , which told the story of a vampire and a Tantric sex group , and The Other Child , and Other Tales , which contained six short stories .

Grant died on 15 January 2011 after a period of illness . He was survived by his wife .

= = Legacy = =

While highlighting Grant 's reclusive character , the historian Dave Evans noted that Grant was " certainly unique " in the history of British esotericism because of his " close dealings " with Crowley , Spare , and Gardner , the " three most influential Western occultists of the 20th century . " The occultist and comic book author Alan Moore thought it " hard to name " any other living individual who " has done more to shape contemporary western thinking with regard to Magic " than Grant , thinking him " a schoolboy gone berserk on brimstone aftershave . "

In 2003 , the historian of Western esotericism Henrik Bogdan expressed the view that Grant was " perhaps ( the ) most original and prolific English author of the post @-@ modern occultist genre . " Although based in Thelema , his Typhonian tradition has been described as " a bricolage of occultism , Neo @-@ Vedanta , Hindu tantra , Western sexual magic , Surrealism , ufology and Lovecraftian gnosis " . Although membership of Grant 's own occult groups remained small , his Typhonian Thelema represented a significant influence over various other occult groups and currents . They included chaos magic , as well as the Temple of Set , the Dragon Rouge , and Andrew D. Chumbley 's Cultus Sabbati .

The occultist Peter Levenda discussed Grant 's work in his 2013 book , The Dark Lord . Here , he asserted that Grant 's importance was in attempting to create " a more global character for Thelema " by introducing ideas from Indian Tantra , Yezidism , and Afro @-@ Caribbean syncretic religions .

= = = Non @-@ fiction = = =

= = = Fiction = = =

= = = Poetry = = =