

8

FROM LAYERED TRUTHS
TO HORNS AND HOOVES:
EXU'S JOURNEY

To the other devilish Dan

Granting that you and I argue. If you beat me, and I not you, are you necessarily right and I wrong?... or are we both partly right and partly wrong? Or are we both wholly right and wholly wrong? You and I cannot know this, and consequently the world will be in ignorance of the truth.¹

The Book of Chiang-Tzu

For thousands of years in Yoruba lands, families gathered around fires against the cold West African nights, singing songs and telling stories of their gods. Olodumare sent the Orixas to make the earth bountiful, but nothing they did succeeded and the rain would not fall. They asked their master what was going wrong, and he bid them count their number. The Orixas counted sixteen, so Olodumare inquired after the seventeenth. 'What, you mean Oxun?' they replied, scratching their imaginary heads. 'She's at home, cooking our dinner... why?' The only Mama in a gang of chauvinist Papas had been left out of the work, and without her love, there could be no success. The Orixas begged Oxun's assistance, but this was a goddess scorned, and she refused, until Olodumare himself, supreme master of the universe, descended to plead with her. Even then she made a condition. If the baby she was

carrying were born male, she would join the others. If not, battle would begin in earnest.

The baby was a girl in her belly, but Oxala worked his magick and Exu was born masculine... more or less, but with Exu, you can never be sure. An ambiguous fellow at the boundary, he is both male and female, and sometimes sculpted with bits of both. He limps along, with one foot in the spirit world and the other dragging along in the material. The master of the crossroads forces harmony upon the small-minded, hijacking the program even before it begins, holding things up until the right choice has been made and balance has been struck.

Exu¹ is neither good nor bad, neither one nor the other, neither both nor neither, but he is potent. The messenger (*ele*) of divine authority (*agbara*) will pass your message on to the other Orixas, and he can grant your wishes, but if your mind is closed he might crack it open and laugh at your suffering. His accidents enlighten, and he is unpredictable, but his tricks can be dreadfully cruel. He topples walls to crush people standing in stupid places.² His enchanted snakes hide in the grass at the crossroads to bite villagers so he can sell cures when they limp into the marketplace, another of his domains, where exchange and trickery are common. He is both problem and solution, loyal friend and treacherous enemy, feared and revered in equal measure, but never to be forgotten. He is there, always there, lurking in the shadows, emerging to leave a curious gift or make a painful point.

In one story, Exu walks the road between two farms, dazzling first one farmer and later the other with his brilliant wit. The friends meet at sundown as they always do, and discuss the remarkable fellow, but one says his hat was black, whilst the other insists it was red. The argument escalates into a fight, and when they are at each other's throats, Exu arrives and doffs his hat, black on one side and red on the other. The farmers thought they were disagreeing over truth, but it was a matter of perspective. When our minds are too small to contain other points of view, right and wrong become defined along the edge of the fields we work, along racial, national, or ideological divisions, and conflict is close behind.

In oral traditions, before the law was carved into stone tablets, the dark side was more ambiguous. *The Bible* retains something of this paradox. Jacob wrestles all night with 'an enemy' and finds him to be God in the morning. The Lord authorises Satan (Hebrew for 'adversary')

¹ Pronounced Eshu, and also called Elegua and Papa Legba. Oxala is Oshala, and the Orixas are Orishas

EXU'S JOURNEY

to terrorise the sinless Job, and he calls Nebuchadnezzar, the genocidal conqueror of Jerusalem, 'my servant'.³ The Catholic Church, however, drove a wedge between the two sides of the mystery, and *The Bible* is generally read as a story of good versus evil.

A more honest reading does reveal dualism in *The Old Testament*, but between Chosen and unchosen rather than good and evil. The law often reinforces this division rather than protecting any moral standard. After all, there is surely nothing intrinsically immoral about a foreskin, and marrying out and food taboos were in place not because Gentiles and pigs are evil, but because the Hebrews might have dissolved into the surrounding unkosher tribes had they shared food and family. The patriarchs are neither lawful nor moral. Abraham pimps his wife,⁴ Lot tries to pimp his daughters⁵ and ends up bedding them,⁶ Jacob scams his starving brother⁷ and his blind father,⁸ and all are rewarded by the Lord, whose purposes they serve. The harshest punishment is reserved for other tribes who dare to mix with the Chosen. When the Hivites invite the Israelites to stop wandering and live amongst them, they agree on the condition that the Hivite men circumcise themselves. The Hivites acquiesce. Three days later the Israelites invade, massacring the men 'when they were sore', and stealing their animals, their wealth, their women and their children, and all because the soul of a Hivite prince 'clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob.'⁹ Even this was not enough for Moses when his people punished a similar abomination in the same manner. 'Have ye saved all the women alive?' he cried, wrath at the half-arsed massacre. Kill them all, he insisted, and only 'the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves.'¹⁰

The difference between Chosen and unchosen is simple in *The Old Testament*, but good and evil are complex. Even the Lord states His ambiguous nature, when He says 'I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil.'¹¹ The text contradicts itself repeatedly, the rabbis of *The Talmud* contradict each other, different names of God make pronouncements at odds with each other. The very essence of Judaism is in the debate over ambiguity, as we explore in *Neuro-apocalypse 2*. For now let us stick with the mythology of the character at the boundary.

Jesus spends his life transgressing boundaries, often simply because he is peckish. He decides that religious fasts are not,¹² he snacks on the priestly bread,¹³ and his disciples pick corn on the Sabbath, which is a capital offence.¹⁴ He bids a man shirk his religious duty to his dead father: 'let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God'.¹⁵ For Jesus, as for Exu, the message is what is

important. He flaunts the laws of physics with his ostentatious transmutations and water-walking. His scrap with the moneychangers¹⁶ and rows with the Pharisees go against social convention. When he suggests that he who is without sin cast the first stone at an adulteress,¹⁷ the angry crowd look sheepishly at each other and quietly abandon the Mosaic Code. Catholic iconography has long favoured his passive side, picturing him helpless, either as a baby or on the cross, but Jesus was a firebrand whose sermons caused arguments,¹⁸ who attacked his enemies with a whip,¹⁹ who resisted and insulted the authorities even until death, when he questioned even God.²⁰ Jesus came 'to send fire on the earth', to promote not peace 'but rather division',²¹ to offer an anarchist alternative to *Leviticus* with only two principles:

The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.

This is explicitly anti-dualistic. There is one force behind both triumphs and trials, and we must love it in all its manifestations.

And the second is... Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.²²

Charity is the most exalted virtue in *The New Testament*, but we are not talking about feeding the poor.²³ In *The Bible*, charity is tolerance in judging others. Exu's stroll warns of the consequence of forgetting charity, of favouring your viewpoint over your neighbour's.

Jesus is typical of Jewish prophets in many ways, but his rebellious streak is new. Another difference is that the miracles of Moses and other prophets are all explicitly acts of God, but Jesus performs healings and miracles with his own hands; the distinction between God and man is much more blurred in his stories. We might ask why he is different, and where this character comes from. But Rabbi Nechmun's biggest question is about the cross.

There is absolutely no mention of a cross anywhere in *The New Testament*. In the Gospels, Jesus dies on a '*stauros*', meaning upright pole, and in *Acts* it is figuratively called '*xylon*', meaning tree.²⁴ Other contemporary texts do not mention crucifixion. Tacitus (c.55 AD-c.117AD) recalls that Christus, leader of the Christians 'suffered the extreme penalty ... at the hands of ... Pontius Pilatus',²⁵ though the penalty is unclear, and in *The Talmud*, Yeshua was stoned and then either hung up or impaled on a stick (the language is vague, of course, but there is certainly no cross, and no resurrection either).²⁶ Early

Christians used the symbol of the fish, not the cross, in their churches. The first mention of the symbol in the Christian corpus is in 201, when Tertullian wrote 'we Christians wear out our foreheads with the sign of the cross,'²⁷ along with an admission that there is no scriptural basis for this act.²⁸ It was a good luck symbol at this point. The association with the execution came many generations later, and the earliest known crucifixion scene dates from the fifth century;²⁹ for centuries the cross and crucifixion are 'curiously missing' from images, according to a Christian art historian.³⁰

The heretic Yeshua met a nasty end on a stick, but Jesus Christ Superstar rose from the dead to become the centrepiece of an enormous cosmology. The figure morphs as his story is retold in different Gospels, and changes again in the rest of *The New Testament*. There is something decidedly fishy about this fisherman. Where does this story come from?

In the first few centuries of our Lord, our Lord was not the only god-man in town. A character at the boundary between human and divine worlds was called a 'hero' in Greek. Perseus, Hercules, and Theseus were all heroes born to divine fathers and virgin mothers; like Jesus, all three struggled with the limitations of the flesh, and all were deified after their deaths. The image of a god or hero bound and tortured between the worlds is common to Theseus and Hercules, to Prometheus who stole the sacred fire, and also to both Odin and his brother and enemy Loki in Norse mythology.

It is tempting to see them as the same legend reworked, but the differences are as interesting as the similarities. Adonis is in many ways a dead (and risen) ringer for Jesus. He arrived from the Middle East bearing the Semitic name of Lord (with the same root as Adonai). He was born to the virgin Myrrha, whose name recalls Mary, and she went on to be transformed into a Myrrh tree, one of the gifts of the Kings. A grove sacred to Adonis shaded Bethlehem, a name meaning 'house of bread'. Adonis was the spirit of corn, from which bread was made,³¹ as Jesus was 'the bread of life'.³² Like Christians, his worshippers sought salvation through the blood of a sacrifice, as did worshippers of Mithras, another hero born surrounded by shepherds, who was carried throughout the Roman Empire by the many soldiers initiated into his mysteries. His cult became the official Roman religion in around 270 AD.³³

The virgin birth-day of Adonis and many solar heroes was December 25th in the old Julian calendar, the morning after the longest night of the year when one year crossed over into the next. It is also the day the constellation of the virgin pops over the horizon. Pagans celebrated the

day the sun begins to dominate winter with the feast of Sol Invictus. *The Bible* does not mention when Jesus was born, only that shepherds were out in the fields, watching their flocks,³⁴ and even Church fathers conceded that sheep were kept inside during cold December nights.³⁵ The earliest reference to Christ's birthday on the solstice was in 354,³⁶ and it was probably set here to compete with Mithraist festivities on that day. Christianity became the state cult in 324, ousting Mithraism after only one generation.

Jesus was already associated with the sun in the semi-pagan Gospels, which wrote into a Jewish story the Virgo birth and twelve Apostles for the twelve houses the sun passes through. The association increased; it makes perfect poetic sense. The sun stains the sky red as it dies, before rising immortal again in the morning, and even in nominally Christian countries, the natural tendency is towards paganism. My favourite Brazilian begins her day with three *Pai Nosso's*, three *Ave Maria's*, and a big friendly '*Bom dia Jesus!*' to the rising sun. A decade after Jesus' birthday was set, church authorities fiddled the calendar again, moving the day of worship to **Sunday** (day of **Sun** gods, including Mithras³⁷), and ruling that those 'judaizers' who rest on the Sabbath are an anathema.³⁸ Hence, obeying the fourth commandment became punishable with excommunication, and Christianity moved further from its Jewish roots to its pagan fruits.

Things changed as Rome was Christianised and Christianity institutionalised, and the cross changed from symbol of luck to symbol of power. In the early fourth century, Constantine the Great, the saint who had his son poisoned and his wife boiled alive, had it painted on military banners.³⁹ He did this after claiming to receive a divine command to conquer under the symbol, which he saw superimposed on the sun.⁴⁰ Despite making a career of attacking pagan superstitions, Tertullian did not note the pagan roots of the cross, but they are deep and well spread. A shape like the letter T was the symbol of Tammuz of Mesopotamia, the divine shepherd and dying saviour who descended into the underworld to emerge on the winter solstice. In Egyptian art, priests and gods held the Ankh cross in their hands, and sun-worshipping pharaohs were mummified with their arms crossed over their chests. This is the position children in convents are still taught to sleep in today, and it symbolises Osiris, another dying and resurrected god of both bread and wine.

The cross was painted on tents, tattooed on foreheads, and offered to rivers in Algeria, Ethiopia, Tanzania, across the desert to Niger,⁴¹ and on to the lands of the Yoruba, to the master of the crossroads and the double-cross. Older still is the Swastika, found in prehistoric sites from

EXU'S JOURNEY

the British Isles to China, and in Neolithic India. Constantine's sun-cross (a cross within a circle) is found on Bronze Age artefacts⁴² and North American aborigine art. Even the snake god Quetzalcoatl bears the sun-cross on his shield as he slides over Aztec sands, his belly scraping the earth and his feathers to the sky,⁴³ another hero between the worlds, born to a virgin and descending into the underworld.⁴⁴ It is safe to say that both cross and crosser are universal forms, even without direct transmission, and the hero born of mortal and immortal parents appears all over the world, from Gilgamesh of Uruk to Merlin of Albion.

Back in West Africa, the crossroads was sacred to Exu when the virgin mother was still in pigtails. Exu is always the first called and the last thanked, so ritual opened and closed with the cross many generations before Christ was pinned to his. The Orixas can only be reached through Exu, who is Onibode of the gate, Olena of the road, and Elegua of the crossroads. In *The Bible*, God can only be reached through Jesus:

I am the door... I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.⁴⁵

These two walk at the boundary, carrying shepherd's crooks, and sacrifice is the essence of both. Jesus is sacrifice incarnate, and is anointed with oil by Mary sister of Lazarus, whilst a measure of oil is often poured on Exu's sacred mounds,⁴⁶ and he always receives a sacrifice when any Orixa is petitioned. Exu's sacrifices are given at boundary zones, at the shore or riverbank, at the crossroads or town gate, or up a hill. Jesus' sacrifice at Calvary is both on a hill and at the edge of the city.

There is treasure beneath this X, but can we dig up anything more than cross-ponderances? Did the cults influence each other, or did something reach out to each from the darkness? Who knows how a symbol arises, or what is the architect of an archetype? Who knows how minds intertwine and crosses cross? Only Olodumare knows, and only Exu will pass on the question. Exu is one, but many. In Africa he had two sides or 21 faces, and Brazilians say there is an Exu for every person, even an Exu for every Exu. By contrast, Jesus is the only Son of God, but perhaps there is another side to him.

As Exu travelled through the centuries, his sides split down the middle. One pre-Christian boundary figure was Dionysus, who was born in a stable, killed and reborn, and performed a miracle with wine.⁴⁷
⁴⁸ ⁴⁹ His worshippers ate the flesh and drank the blood of a sacrifice

trans-substantiated into his own flesh,⁵⁰ and he even looks like Jesus with his long hair and magnificent beauty, but he also had another face. Ovid called him:

the most beautiful sight in the depths of the morning and evening sky, your face like a virgin's when you stand before us without your horns.⁵¹

Here in the Eleusinian mysteries, his two sides come together. Generally they were separate, but close. Dionysus was always accompanied by Pan, his servant and friend, but in Christendom Pan's horns, hooves and appetites went over to the dark side.

The New Testament does not force this dichotomy upon us; in fact, Jesus' meeting with the devil echoes Jacob's battle. The devil approaches with three temptations when he is walking alone, immediately after meeting John baptises him. Jesus passes the tests, and before the end of the chapter his ministry has begun, and 'the people which sat in darkness saw great light'.⁵² Here Lucifer the light bringer passes to the saviour the power to bring light. There are other links between the two. Jesus is the Son of God, who descends to earth to suffer, and Lucifer is God's favourite angel, who descends to a pit of suffering. There is a yeasty enigma; leaven symbolises the devil and everything bad in some *New Testament* passages,⁵³ but the Kingdom of heaven elsewhere.⁵⁴ The feast of Passover, the occasion when Jesus became sacrifice incarnate, is the festival when Jews sacrifice yeast from their bread, and eat *matzah* unleavened. There is also the manner of his birth. In pagan mythology, when a woman is impregnated by spirit, the child is born a trickster or a hero. In Christian mythology, when the woman is Mary, the father is God and the child is Christ, but if it is any other woman, the father is an incubus and the child is a demon. There is also Jesus' curtain call on the final page of the Bible: 'I am the ... bright and morning star'.⁵⁵ This recalls *Isaiah's* 'how art thou fallen from heaven, O shining one, son of the morning!'⁵⁶ Shining one is *cheyel*, translated as Lucifer in the *KJV*. In Hebrew it refers to a Babylonian god of the Morning Star, or Venus, which reflects the light of the sun when the sun has set.

Christ and Lucifer are not exactly the same, of course. They are as different as heads and tails, two sides of the same coin. The relationship is close and complex, as was the relationship between good and evil in *The Old Testament* and the Gospels. Church fathers, however, preferred to steer clear of complexity, and besides, the bogeyman was far too useful for scaring the bejeezbeub out of people. The glorious ambiguity and amorality of paganism and early Christianity was painted in black and white, and Satan became a convenient repository for everything

EXU'S JOURNEY

bad. St. Justin, for example, declared that devils had heard the prophecies about Christ in *The Old Testament*, and spread signs for false prophets before his arrival, including the murder and resurrection of Bacchus, the virgin birth of Perseus, the healing touch of Asclepius, and the rites of Mithras.⁵⁷ 'Those who believe these things we pity,' he wrote, 'and those who invented them we know to be devils.'⁵⁸

The dichotomy between truth and the lie also manifested in another manner, which Allen Watts calls 'the Tragedy of Christian history.'⁵⁹ Whereas Greeks were conscious of myths as timeless truths expressed in nature, Catholic dogmas fixed the story in time, and Jesus' resurrection in the flesh became a historical fact to be believed, on pain of eternal punishment. An authoritarian and moralistic religion was affixed to a story which is nothing of the sort. 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female,'⁶⁰ wrote Paul, but dualism took hold all the same, and held fast. It continues to govern our thoughts and lives today through the intrigues of the bishops of Scientism, who build fences around their fields to keep the unknown out and the inquisitive in.

Logic works well enough within simple fields, but the world is not a set of logical propositions. It is unimaginably complex. The idea that we might be able to understand it is very recent, quite erroneous, and thoroughly catastrophic. In 1935, for example, an Australian imported cane toads, reasoning quite logically that they would eat a pest, the cane beetle. He was absolutely right, but he hadn't factored the rest of the ecosystem into his calculations. They feasted on a wide range of insects and rapidly swelled into a plague which is advancing across Australia, putting competitors on the endangered list, killing predators with their toxic secretions, and carrying salmonella.⁶¹ Other Australian logicians introduced the Common Starling and the mosquitofish to control pests, the red fox for game, and various ornamental plants, which have damaged the ecosystem and driven native species to extinction. A shortsighted Brit decided to cultivate Nile Perch in Lake Victoria in the 1950s, and by 1980 it had taken over 80 percent of the lake's biomass and wiped out over 100 fish species.⁶² American rude mechanicals eager for a touch of class imported birds mentioned by Shakespeare. The sweet song of the English Starling was first heard in New York in 1890, and today it destroys crops and outcompetes indigenous species throughout the continent. We have still not learned. As recently as 1990, the African killer bee was introduced to Texas to boost honey production; it hybridised, and the highly aggressive result is presently advancing north. You must be out of your mind to voluntarily introduce killer bees to your country; or is some joker putting ideas in our heads?

If hybrid killer bees sound scary, just wait for the biotech biosphere. Biochemists have turned their cataraacts towards the genetic code, confident that the spread of their creations can be prevented, forgetting that plants are essentially well evolved DNA-dispersal machines. Engineered grass and other species have already escaped to compete and hybridise in the wild,⁶³⁶⁴ and transgenic ingredients compete on supermarket shelves, but how much do we actually know about genetics? The GENOME project investigates only the DNA sections called 'sense'. The other 90 percent is called 'nonsense' because biochemists don't understand it, and assume its role is purely structural. We are left with a parts list coding for proteins, not an instruction manual. We have very little idea how the proteins are put together, or how the order of expression changes in such a precise and responsive manner, but feel confident enough to fiddle with the code. Is this *The Blind Watchmaker* or the blind biochemist?

The genetic screen is already filtering out fetuses with thalassaemia and Down's syndrome, and an argument was raised over a deaf fetus.⁶⁵ Who is next to lose their right to life? There might be no more retarded people to see through dry dust of etiquette, no more autistics with Buddha-like intensity of concentration. I used to teach a special class, but they were the real teachers, natural, impulsive, friendly, and happy; the exact opposite of normal Japanese teenagers. Could society be rationalised at the embryonic stage if a fascist government got its hands on the technology?

Rationalism has been rationalising society since the seventeenth century, when various groups which did not meet the standards the Age of Reason began to be incarcerated, including paupers, vagrants, outlaws, and the stubbornly irrational. Before this, however, the village idiot was often considered closer to God, and there was a rich tradition of holy madmen. 'Raiseth thou a cry against madness? By thy life, thou shalt have need of it' warned *The Talmud*,⁶⁶ and Christians carried on the merry madness, 'because the foolishness of God is wiser than men'.⁶⁷ St. Andreas drank from puddles and slept naked outside with the dogs, St. Sabas spent the day in a dungheap, and St. Simeon threw peanuts at the church congregation and dragged a dead dog around.^{68 69} Even St. Francis sometimes preached in his birthday suit.

Who decides who is insane? Even professionals have trouble spotting mad people. In the 70s, David Rosenham and seven other

¹ One Down's Syndrome girl became a theatre director after sessions of the Metamorphic Technique.

EXU'S JOURNEY

completely sane people went to psychiatric institutions around the US claiming to hear voices saying 'thud', 'hollow', and 'empty'. Although this was the only strange behaviour they exhibited, all were admitted, seven as schizophrenic and one as manic-depressive. Once admitted, they stopped claiming to hear voices and told staff they felt fine. Though over a quarter of patients suspected they were fakes, none of the staff did, and it took an average of 19 days for them to be released. One hospital challenged Rosenham to send more fakes. Over three months, out of 193 patients approaching the institution, 41 were declared impostors; Rosenham then revealed he had not sent any at all.⁷⁰ Psychiatrists concluded that the problem must be human error, and designed questionnaires to diagnose disorders, but when normal Americans were tested, mental disorders were detected in over 50 percent.⁷¹

R. D. Laing was one of the first psychiatrists to listen to those labelled insane and seek meaning in the madness. According to him, the difference between a schizophrenic and a normal person was that the latter was more skilled at manipulating their mask. Mad people are generally far more honest than sane people, more perceptive, and usually more interesting.¹ ⁷² Patients begin conversations with my friend who works on a psychiatric ward with lines like - 'you know, time doesn't exist.' And they are right. My beloved and serially sectioned granny used to take me on her knee and tell me all about the races on other planets. My parents weren't very happy about it, but my first Fisher Price alternative cosmology provided protection from the heavy shades of the rational universe that teachers, newsreaders, and other sensible people were peddling.

Mental disorders, psychedelic experiences, and other excursions from the bounds of normality are not physically dangerous but dangerous to the status quo, and that is why they are policed. Messages from beyond the boundaries of our fields question our assumptions, disrupting conventional morality and consensus reality. According to Laing:

The statesmen of the world who boast and threaten that they have Doomsday weapons are far more dangerous, and far more estranged from 'reality' than many of the people on whom the label 'psychotic' is affixed.⁷³

ⁱ Neurotics are often, as William James noted, intelligent, obsessive pattern-seekers, thinking outside the normal assumptions. 'If there were such a thing as inspiration from a higher realm, it might well be that the neurotic temperament would furnish the chief condition of requisite receptivity.'

But statesmen are not the only threats, and neither are killer bees, nor the honey-monsters who breed them. Max Planck warned that the 'pure rationalist has no place' in science,⁷⁴ but they have no place anywhere. They carve up the world like a gang of necrophiliacs sawing up a corpse, each having his wicked way with a different hunk of the flesh. Politicians cut through changeable waters with their rigid or's: either you're with us or against us, part of the solution or part of the problem. Lawmakers argue their advantage, judges lock antisocials behind bars to swap secrets and frustrations, generals bomb cities they can't pronounce, mobilizing recruits for their enemies, physicists generate nuclear waste for their descendents. Businessmen suck with all their might on the breasts of the goddess, oblivious to her pain, but blinkered vision is almost a prerequisite for commercial success. Business ethics condone and the law protects loggers pulping ancient Tasmanian forests for Japanese serviettes, whilst fisheries batter and fry Atlantic cod to the edge of extinction.⁷⁵ The Lake Victoria catastrophe is described by many as a success, because some people became rich selling perch. There is, however, comedy amongst the tragedy. According to the Professor of Business Administration at Maryland University, we have 'the technology to feed, clothe, and supply energy to an ever growing population for the next seven billion years.' Obviously this is a man used to doing large sums, but billions of years are different to billions of dollars.⁷⁶

We are slaves to our story and our laws, trapped in fields growing poisonous fruits, whilst overseers reinforce the fences with new truths. There are CCTV cameras to stop us writing on the wall, radar guns and artificial intelligence circuits to codify our infractions. Robots sound the alarm and send fleshy parts of the machine to issue parking tickets on deserted backstreets at midnight, in accordance with law but not with any other principle. The law was never meant to be like this. The original written law of our tradition was part of the Torah, but Torah is not just law, it is the text **plus** the practice of arguing about it (as explained in *Neuro-apocalypse 2*). It was a living tradition, but modern laws are dead letters. Now you can argue, but you pay court costs if you lose, and the council profits from your sin offering.

Before our stories were carved into stone, no one owned the truth, and there were other endings to the same beginnings. In one version of Exu's journey, he leaves the friends to fight, and lets the brawl escalate into a full-scale war between their villages. He finally appears to stroll amongst the smouldering ruins, smiling in satisfaction. Is this where our uncharitable ways are taking us?

EXU'S JOURNEY

Fear not, for there is a crooked old Orixá at the border, seeking gaps in our defences, doffing his multicoloured hat with a sinister smile, carrying postcards from unthinkable places. His messages are buried between the lines in newspapers, coded in the babblings of fools and heretics, locked in the alkaloids of power plants. They are whispered from beyond the fence to the prisoners pushing against it, who scream back in desperation: IS THERE ONIBODE OUT THERE?

There is, and he's back, to force a choice and end the scrap, for Exu has issues to broach. His manners are dreadful and he can't be trusted any more than you can, but his messages need to be heard. He offers hope that logic will not reach its logical conclusion, that we can choose our own ending, and that catastrophe can be averted. He disturbs the peace and questions assumptions, but if we leave him unanswered he will be heard all the same. He'll emerge on our skin as an ominous rash, he'll jump us when we walk the moody streets at twilight, he'll smash through the fence in a hijacked plane if he has to, but he will be heard. Pay attention to his prophets, because only through him can the father be reached and the whole be known. Open the door but keep a damn good eye on him, because the force is strong in him, and his truths are half-lies. Listen to him, however, because he's the only hope we have left.

Maferefun Exu!



1 *The Book of Chiang-Tzu*, p. 46

2 *The Trickster in West Africa: A Study of Mythic Irony and Sacred Delight* - Robert D. Pelton (London, 1980) p. 130

3 *Jeremiah* 27:6

4 *Genesis* 12: 14-16

5 *Genesis* 19:8

6 *Genesis* 19: 31-37

7 *Genesis* 25: 31-34

8 *Genesis* 27:21-30

9 *Genesis* 34

10 *Numbers* 31:15-18

11 *Isaiah* 45:7

12 *Mark* 2:18-19

13 *Mark* 2:26

14 *Mark* 2:23

15 *Luke* 9:60

NEMU'S END

- 16 *Mark* 21:12
- 17 *John* 8:7
- 18 *John* 10:19
- 19 *Matthew* 21:12
- 20 *Matthew* 27:46
- 21 *Luke* 12:51 - 53
- 22 *Mark* 12:29-31
- 23 See I *Corinthians* 13:3
- 24 *Acts* 5:30
- 25 *The Annals* - Publius Cornelius Tacitus, 15:44
- 26 *Tractate Sanhedrin* 43a
- 27 *De Corona Militis* - Tertullian, chapter 3
- 28 Tertullian, chap. 5
- 29 *Notes on the Wooden Doors of Santa Sabina* - Richard Delbrueck, *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 34, No. 2. (June 1952), pp. 139-145.
- 30 *A Sense Of The Sacred: Theological Foundations Of Christian Architecture And Art* - R. Kevin Seasoltz (Continuum, 2005), p. 107
- 31 *The Christian Book of Why* - McCollister, J. C. (Jonathan David Publishers 1983), pp 205 - 206
- 32 *John* 6:35
- 33 Conrad, p 273
- 34 *Luke* 2:8
- 35 *The Two Babylons: Or The Papal Worship Proved to Be the Worship of Nimrod and His Wife* - Alexander Hislop (Kessinger Publishing, 1998) p. 92
- 36 *Christmas* in *The Old Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1913.
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