CHAPTER 6

The Impact of Broader Cultural Discourses

As noted in Chapter 1, esoteric currents construed as intertwined sets of specific discourses are ideal types, and when currents manifest in real-world esoteric groups, philosophies, and practices they rarely look exactly like these ideal typical models. A group may be firmly set in the discourses of one particular current but it will commonly be influenced by other currents as well. One interesting example is the rune magical group the Rune-Gild, which sits at the nexus of three distinct currents – the Left-Hand Path, Neopaganism (in its Heathen variant), and (Radical) Traditionalism – drawing in a fairly equal degree from all three.\(^1\) Dragon Rouge is clearly recognizable as a Left-Hand Path group. However, in contrast to other archetypical Left-Hand Path groups such as the Temple of Set and the Church of Satan Dragon Rouge is heavily influenced by Neopagan discourses. As discussed in chapter 2, the Neopagan current is characterized by discourses pertaining to ‘revival’ or ‘reawakening’ of old European, pre-Christian religion and culture, as well as discourses that posit nature as the principal domain of the divine. In Dragon Rouge, one can certainly find the first of these discourses. Old Norse mythology and religion, particularly pertaining to the runes, has a very central, though not exclusivistic, position in the order. It is, however, the second ingredient of the neopagan current – the focus on nature – that is of particular significance in the order. Many forms of neopaganism have also, from the 1970s, been closely aligned to feminism, and particularly focused on the divine feminine. This is another element in Dragon Rouge’s connection to neopaganism.

**The Primacy of Nature**

The notion of correspondences, the idea that linkages ‘exist between visible and invisible layers of reality...between the seven metals and the seven planets, between these and the parts of the human body, between the observable cosmos and the (super) celestial levels of the universe, and so on,\(^2\)’ is an important aspect of most esoteric worldviews. While this certainly has had a bearing on esoteric

---

1 Granholm, ‘The Rune-Gild’.
perspectives on and relations to nature since at least the Renaissance, the specific interpretations and implementations have varied greatly. Renaissance esotericists such as Marisilio Ficino and Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa operated with notions of ‘natural magic’, as well as conceptions of a ‘book of nature’ that could be read for esoteric truths in unison with the Bible. However, for them nature was animated by external divine forces, and it was not until eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Romanticism that nature started to be regarded as enchanted \textit{in and by itself}. Today, this view of nature as inherently sacred is most prominent in various forms of neopaganism, but the notion has spread well beyond this esoteric current. The appraisal of nature often coincides with a critique of Christianity. The critique of Christianity, and monotheistic religion in general, and its perceived devaluation of nature is a key factor in the Dragon Rouge discourse of the primacy of nature:

...there was a harmony where one did not destroy nature unnecessarily. But then when this started, with Christianity, all forms of nature worship were posited as miscreant idol-worship... In Sweden, for example, this form of earth-religion continued for a very long time. Instead of calling for Odin one called for Jesus, but it was exactly the same force that came.

Instead of a dualistic monotheistic worldview, members of Dragon Rouge advocate a pantheistic, ‘holistic’ worldview where ‘there are connections between everything’ and ‘where the divine light is [still] present in man’.

...there was a harmony where one did not destroy nature unnecessarily. But then when this started, with Christianity, all forms of nature worship were posited as miscreant idol-worship... In Sweden, for example, this form of earth-religion continued for a very long time. Instead of calling for Odin one called for Jesus, but it was exactly the same force that came.

Instead of a dualistic monotheistic worldview, members of Dragon Rouge advocate a pantheistic, ‘holistic’ worldview where ‘there are connections between everything’ and ‘where the divine light is [still] present in man’. The order is opposed to the materialistic notion that, according to official Dragon Rouge material, stipulates that ‘nature and the animals are made for man to use’ and that ‘[m]an can do what he likes with animals and nature’. Not only are nature and non-human animals bereaved of their divinity (and dignity), but the human being itself becomes a ‘soulless organism being compared to cars or computers’. This view of the human being, animals, and nature is considered to seriously impede the possibility to reach beyond one’s limitations and fulfil one’s potential.

\begin{itemize}
\item[] 3 See Lehrich, \textit{The Language of Demons and Angels}.
\item[] 4 Von Stuckrad, ‘Rewriting the Book of Nature’, 421–422.
\item[] 6 Interview 2001–03, April 1, 2001.
\item[] 7 Dragon Rouge, ‘Contra 3 M’.
\item[] 8 Ibid.
\item[] 9 Ibid.